

denying its power' (2Tim.3:5)?

I would have a cautious approach to teachers who might include this form of antinomianism which the apostles clearly rejected. It is simply dangerous, deceptive, unloving and unholy to give people excuses for remaining 'carnal' in their nature and yet give them the hope of Heaven, much less a place of 'outer darkness' with 'weeping and gnashing of teeth' in heaven?

(Recommended resource: 'What Should We Think of The Carnal Christian?' by Reisinger).

Hi Terry,

My father...was a fan of your Diakrisis newsletter and was often heard quoting various articles or insisting people read them. He has now made the final journey and is with the Lord, having passed away...at the age of 92...On behalf of Dad, thank you for your diligence in pursuing the truth. From me, let me encourage you to build up the saints and encourage those who endeavour to serve the Lord irrespective of whether they have the same view as you...

(P.R., NSW)

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Please view and support the new *Diakrisis TV* topics by subscribing and passing them onto others. The latest topics are '**Disasters, Pandemics - What Is God Saying?**' and '**Healing - The Truth**'. We hope that these short youtube clips will be an encouragement as well as the Gospel being presented to many.

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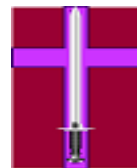
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TA Ministries is a non-denominational faith ministry, **teaching, informing and equipping** the church.
Editor: Terry Arnold (Dr.Th; MABS; Dip.Bib.&Min.)

The editor may not necessarily agree with all the views expressed by subscribers in this newsletter.

We welcome comments or items contributed by readers. Unless otherwise requested, these may be included in following newsletters at the discretion of the editor.

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The Forgotten Doctrine – an Alien Righteousness

The most important question for any human is one that concerns their eternity. *How can a person be made right with God so as to enter His eternal Heaven?* What is imperative within this question is this: *How can we who are so imperfect enter a perfect righteous holy Heaven and live with a perfect righteous holy judge?* This is the problem of the ages, the paradox of eternity. How can sinful man be rightly judged in God's court and yet justified as righteous to allow a welcome entry into God's kingdom?

The one doctrine that answers this question is the doctrine of Justification through the imputation of God's righteousness. *This doctrine is at the very core of the Gospel.*

A recent survey of pastors at a national 'Evangelical' conference showed that 67% had not a clue as to what this doctrine of imputation was (<https://www.whitehorseinn.org/show/understanding-imputation/>). Even some who had some knowledge of it did not think it important enough to teach it as it is revealed in scripture. Others confused it with Sanctification and in error stated it was a 'process'. Yet it is this doctrine that was so potent in the historic awakenings, the revivals and the Reformation.

The answer to the question *How is a man made right with God?* may determine whether one has a real or a spurious faith. Romans chapter 4 and many other passages are replete with this doctrine. God clearly has laid out a plan to declare a man 'righteous' in His sight although such a person remains unrighteous. It's an impossibility made possible. It will be a wonder in Heaven. Angels look into this salvation plan wanting to understand the mystery of it (1Pet.1:12).

The Problem

God's plan is a solution to a serious problem. Adam and Eve sinned, broke His law and that sin was transferred to all mankind. *'Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned'. Hence 'All have sinned and come short of the glory of the Lord'* (Rom.3:23).

The problem is that God is sinless, perfect, holy and he lives in a sinless, perfect, holy kingdom. He cannot be touched by sin or be in its presence. But we are sinners, imperfect, unholy and live in unholy and dying bodies. *God says you have to be perfect to enter the kingdom of Heaven! 'Be you therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect'* (Matt.5:48). Other scriptures repeat this over again (Matt.19:21; Phil 3:15; John 17:23; Col.1:28; Col.4:12). We must have *'the spirits of Just men made perfect'* (Heb.12:24).

But how can an imperfect sinner obtain the perfection needed to satisfy a perfect judge in a perfect kingdom?

The Solution

When non christians are confronted with this problem they invariably justify themselves with *'God is loving. I'm not so bad. I have done some good. God will*

is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God...They that are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwells in you' (Rom.8:1-9); *'They which are the children of the flesh, they are not the children of God...'* (Rom.9:8); *'he that sows to the flesh shall reap of the flesh corruption...'* (Gal.6:8)...

Those who walk after the flesh are either unregenerate or *acting like the unregenerate*. In Galatians 5:16-24 we have only two classes again - those who do the works of the flesh and those who are led by the Spirit *'who have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires'*.

If our sinful nature has not been crucified and there is no change then we are not a 'carnal Christian' but rather no Christian at all! In all the major Confessions of Faith there is no hint concerning the possibility of a 'carnal Christian'. Yet this is a popular teaching today.

A Christian may have degrees of 'carnality' in their life because the *'flesh lusts against the spirit'* (Gal.5:17). There are no doubt progressive degrees of sanctification and holiness, which are 'worked out' during our lifetime. However, *we should never excuse carnality as possibly Christian*. It is one thing to act like unconverted people sometimes in some areas, but it is another to be 'carnal' as a dominant part of one's life. The question must be asked - are they really true believers?

Arguably, this is one of the biggest problems in the church today - that 'carnal Christians' profess to be Christians and the church accepts and excuses the 'carnal Christian' teaching without question. This is surely part of the greatest deception ever - that of Matthew chapter 7 where Jesus says to *professing believers* 'depart from me'! A person who has been justified must be sanctified, for without holiness *no man shall see the Lord* (Heb.12:14).

Modern evangelism unfortunately has substituted repentance for a 'decision' and Stanley has arguably played into that deception (eg. see his quote P.190 above)? The apostle Paul fiercely opposed this antinomianism ('against the law') when he wrote: *'shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid!'* (Rom.6:1).

Spurgeon warned his students: *'If the professed convert distinctly and deliberately declares that he knows the Lord's will but does not mean to attend to it, you are not to pamper his presumption, but it is your duty to assure him that he is not saved. Do not suppose that the Gospel is magnified or God glorified by going to the worldlings and telling them that they may be saved at this moment by simply accepting Christ as their saviour, while they are wedded to their idols, and their hearts are still in love with sin. If I do so I tell them a lie, pervert the Gospel, insult Christ, and turn the grace of God into lasciviousness'*.

As another writer well said: *'Why is today's church so weak? Why are we able to claim many conversions and enrol many church members but have less and less impact on our culture? Why are Christians indistinguishable from the world? Is it not that many are calling people Christians who are actually unregenerate? Is it not that many are settling for a 'form of Godliness but*

Of the 'outer darkness' Stanley writes: *'The final verse of this parable is so severe that many commentators assume it is a description of hell. It is not! Keep in mind this is a parable. A parable makes one central point. The point of this parable is that in God's future kingdom, those who were faithful in this life will be rewarded, and those who were not, will lose any potential reward. Some will be given more privileges and responsibility while others will have none...The outer darkness refers to 'being thrown outside a building into the dark' and in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'*

To suggest that *'weeping and gnashing of teeth'* awaits some people in Heaven is contrary to the doctrine of Heaven and salvation. How can this *'outer darkness'* be part of Heaven or the lot of the redeemed when in Matthew 24:4:51 and 25:30 it is for the *unfruitful* and *hypocrites*? In Luke 13:28 it is also clearly separate to *'the kingdom of God'*.

It is important to note that there is an underlying theology that pervades Stanley's teaching here and is widespread today. It is the *'carnal christian'* teaching which allows the idea of unfruitful unholy believers.

Quotes from Stanley's sermons and his book *'Eternal Security'* show this: *'Even if a believer for all practical purposes becomes an unbeliever, his salvation is not in jeopardy'* (P.93); *'...believers who lose or abandon their faith will retain their salvation, for God remains faithful'* (P.94); *'Christ will not deny an unbelieving Christian his or her salvation because to do so would be to deny Himself'* (P.94). In Stanley's book *'Handbook for Christian Living'* he writes: *'You and I are not saved because we have enduring faith. We are saved because at a moment in time we expressed faith in our Lord'* (P.190); *'Discipleship has nothing to do with whether you will go to heaven or not'* (P.505); *'It is possible to be a child of God and never a disciple of Christ. We can live the Christian life with the assurance of heaven as our ultimate destiny but miss the process of maturing as a disciple'* (P.505).

The idea of the *'carnal christian'* is a modern teaching. The early church never considered the idea of a *'carnal Christian'* in Christian life, much less to be a doctrine. The *'carnal christian'* theory is not taught in the Bible. Those who teach it attempt to derive it mainly from one text in 1Corinthians 3:1-4: *'I brethren could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ...are you not carnal?'*

1Corinthians was written to correct *wrong and carnal behaviour* in the church at Corinth. Paul is here rebuking them for *acting like unregenerate people*. Paul clearly taught only two types of people. In chapter two he separates them into *'natural'* (unsaved) and *'spiritual'*.

Christians are *'a new creature: old things are passed away...'* (2Cor.5:17). This is not a Christian *remaining* carnal but a conversion from the old man to a *new creature* in Christ. Throughout the New Testament there is a definite division between the spiritual and carnal, between the flesh and those of the Spirit: *'...in my flesh dwells no good thing...'* (Rom.7:18); *'There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit...to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded*

accept that...', etc. The religions of the world foster this deception by their own ingenious systems of works. But none of the world's leaders could stop their bodies from sinning and dying. Buddha, Mohammad and all the religious leaders are still in the grave. The Pope says the grace and righteousness needed to satisfy God can be obtained through sacraments. But the problem is the righteousness they say is *infused* into your soul by sacraments is lost when you sin again and have to keep taking sacraments to apparently receive more grace. It's an endless cycle of sacraments, works, infusions, and you then still end up in a mythical *'Purgatory'* suffering and separated from God for your sin - until someone else down on earth spends enough on *'indulgences'* to have you *'spring'* from such a captivity. This madness is diametrically opposed to God's plan of imputation.

The Bible speaks of a solution which is twofold: *Because of a substitutionary sacrifice which God will accept, there is an imputation of righteousness by which God will justify, declare an ungodly sinner righteous*. At least three terms are in view here for this glorious plan of salvation: *'Justification'*, *'Substitution'* and *'Imputation'*.

Justification

What is Justification? - it is when God declares you righteous in His sight. The verb is *'justify'* (*'dikaiois'*); the noun *'righteousness'* (*'dikaioisune'*). The Hebrew and Greek words are often used in the context of judgement, hence are said to be *'legal'* and *'forensic'* (Is.45:24; Ezek.16:51,52; Dt.25:1; Lk.10:29; Lk.16:15). Paul says *'...am I not Justified; but He that judges me is the Lord'* (1Cor.4:3,4).

Romans chapter 4 has to be one of the most powerful passages in the Bible for this Justification. Both the verb and noun are shown: *'For what says the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness...But to him that works not, but believes on him that justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness'* (Rom.4:3,5).

All the verbs here for *'justify'* (and *'counted'*/*'imputed'*) are Greek Aorist Indicative Passive - something that happens at a point in time (not a process), unrepeatable, and passive on man's part.

Verse 5 succinctly shows God's solution for the problem of our ungodliness: *'him that justifies the ungodly'*. But how has God planned to achieve this?...

Substitution

Righteousness with God can only be declared if our sins have been paid for. *'The wages of sin is death'* (Rom.6:23). There has to be a death. Christ was willingly sacrificed to satisfy God for our sins. *'He shall justify many for He shall bear their iniquities'* (Is.53:11).

What has this got to do with the Gospel? *'...I declare unto you the gospel...By which also you are saved...unless you have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures'* (Cor.15:1-4).

The Gospel here is the death, burial and resurrection but also *substitution* -

'for our sins'. The doctrine of substitution is seen in many places in scripture, from Genesis to Revelation. An animal and its death was substituted for Adam & Eve's sin (Gen.3). The Lamb and its death was substitute for the death/sacrifice of Isaac (Gen.22). In the Old Testament an animal and its blood was substitution for sin (Lev.17:11). In the New Testament there is a final Lamb slain - Jesus Christ (1Pet.1:19,20; Rev.13:8). It's by a substitutionary sacrifice that God can justify. But how does He finally justify?...

Imputation

Now that God has been satisfied with a perfect offering, God can impute/credit His own righteousness to our account. This is where all other religions depart and run to man's works, sacrifices, even 'purgatories'! This word 'impute' and its doctrine is at the core of the Biblical Gospel and it separates all false man made religion from the true. The Greek word 'logizomai' is mentioned 11 times in Romans 4 alone! (vs 3,4,5,6,8,9,10,11,22,23,24)! We know of no other Greek word to do with salvation found so many times in one chapter! It is translated into many different words: imputed, credited, counted, reckoned, numbered, accounted...For space here we present just one verse for this word which is so vital to salvation: 'But to him that works not, but believes on him that justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted ('logizomai') for righteousness'. Here the Justified one does not work; he trusts only, and on 'Him'; the one to be justified is 'ungodly' - God will not justify those who see themselves as already righteous; the justified one's faith is 'counted' (imputed/credited) for righteousness. This 'righteousness' is not his own but an 'alien' righteousness (Phil.3:9; Rom.10:3).

How important is this doctrine when God says 'Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin' (Rom.4:8)? How important is this imputation when we were sinners under the wrath of God and the 'wages of sin is death'? Our response must be to seek a righteousness not of our own 'filthy rags' (Is.64:6). Upon belief in Jesus and His sacrifice for your sin, God promises to justify you by legally *imputing* HIS righteousness to your account. 'For he has made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him' (2Cor.5:21).

Substitution leads to Justification (God's righteousness) - and that is done by imputation of righteousness! Our imputed 'righteousness' is in Christ the soon coming 'righteous branch' from David - 'a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth..and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS' (Jer.23:5,6).

John Bunyan said of this doctrine: 'Indeed this is one of the great mysteries in the world - namely that a righteousness that resides with a person in Heaven should justify a sinner on earth'.

It's this imputed righteousness you need before your last breath! If nearly 70% of 'evangelical' church leaders do not understand this doctrine then we fear that this vital doctrine has been all but lost. Oh, that the church would give glory to God and teach and treasure this essential Gospel doctrine!

Terry Arnold & Mike Claydon

we were dead in sins; he has given us the grace of repentance and of faith...Oh love Jehovah, all ye his saints'...

The sermon is about Christ's love to *us* who Spurgeon calls 'the chosen ones'. Spurgeon pleads for the saints to 'love God because he first loved us'.

What you may also have not realised is that the same day morning sermon was a defence of 'Calvinism' and against 'Arminianism'. It was titled '**High Doctrine**'. The night sermon no doubt was a follow up.

Finally the statement '*How cold and hardhearted we must be to ever question the Lord's love toward us*' which you have applied to us - this is *not* in Spurgeon's sermon.

The next reply by subscriber:

Take it on the chin Terry. I believe anyone who denies God's love for all sinners is 'cold and hardhearted'. Bit rich coming from a person who makes it his business to accuse other believers he doesn't agree with. Perhaps read the scriptures and believe them rather than putting Spurgeon on a pedestal...So sorry for you Terry. If you can't love those who disagree with you you must have a serious heart issue.

Final reply by editor:

With respect, your e-mail was a quote from Spurgeon not scripture!..Do I 'put Spurgeon on a pedestal' by replying to a quote given by you from Spurgeon and one taken out of context? Rather than personal judgements, lets get to scripture: 1. Where in your Spurgeon quote/sermon does it state God loves all sinners? 2. Where in the scriptures does it explicitly or doctrinally say God loves all sinners...I am happy to look at anything you say and change my mind. May I also add with respect, I am not in a 'business' but a ministry which does at times expose and defend. If it is not your ministry, why judge the person? May the Lord give us more love and understanding...

No further reply was forthcoming from this subscriber.

Charles Stanley

Terry, in Charles Stanley's book 'Eternal Security' (P.90,124-125), re: the talents (Matt.25:14-30), mainly vs.30 - Stanley has the 'outer darkness' as something like a Protestant 'purgatory'? Any thoughts on his doctrine?

(Name withheld)

Editor's Reply:

I have watched a few of Charles Stanley's sermons over the years and felt some were of much value. But I respectfully question the measure of psychology added into some sermons and also his own revelations (in one sermon he speaks of God telling him where to buy a Turkey for dinner).

Stanley's teaching that the 'outer darkness' (Matt.25:30) is part of Heaven is surprising. Some have stated this is similar to a 'purgatory' but not Hell.

God Loves The Sinner?

Editor:

The following letter below is a second response to a *Diakrisis* article 'The Myths We Believe' (May/June 2019) in which we explored the modern saying 'God loves the sinner and hates the sin'. In the first response (*Diakrisis* July/Aug) this person accused us of 'twisting scripture' and stated: 'Scripture from Genesis to Revelation declares over and over God's love for sinful man...Stop messing with words...If you don't believe God loves sinners then you have no gospel to tell'.

The recent letter: *Spurgeon on Christ's love for sinners: 'Christ's love to us we sometimes guess at, but, ah, it is so far beyond our thoughts, our reasonings, our praises, and our apprehension too, in the sweetest moments of our most spiritual ecstasy, who can tell it? Oh how he loved us!'*

Short portion of sermon preached on 3rd June 1860. Followed by footnote: 'How cold and hardhearted we must be to ever question the Lord's love toward us'.

(G.W., S.A.)

Editor's Response:

If the original article (May/June 2019) is read carefully we were lamenting the false gospel today of 'God loves you' and the lack of content of the sinfulness of man. In our reply to you (July /Aug 2019) we stated 'if a case can be built for God loving all (eg.Matt.5:44,45?), elect or non elect, is it the same kind of 'love' for his elect, his church?' We showed scriptures which clearly showed God's love is directed at 'us', the 'beloved' (Rom.5:6-8). We also stated that the phrase 'God loves the sinner and hates the sin' is a saying popularised by Hindu Mahatma Gandhi in 1929.

We asked you for explicit scripture regarding 'God's love for sinful man' and received none. We stated that past leaders taught on this same subject with similar warnings as well as modern Bible teachers: (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fcOzTZUOBn0&feature=youtu.be>).

Another discussion is: <https://billmuehlenberg.com/2020/06/01/hate-the-sin-love-the-sinner/>

Lets now look at this Spurgeon quote from you. This is *not* a sermon by Spurgeon on 'Christ's love for sinners' but a sermon about God's love for US titled 'Constraining Love' referring repeatedly to believers and 'saints' to love God. I venture you have not read this sermon - because Spurgeon was not speaking to or about the unsaved at all.

I agree 100% with what Spurgeon teaches in this sermon! The phrase 'love the Lord all ye his saints' is repeated over and over. The sermon is addressed specifically to the saints. Here is an excerpt: 'God the Father demands your love, and he deserves the warmest affection of your hearts. He has chosen you from before the foundation of the world. He has given his Son that he might redeem you with his precious blood. He has taken you into his family by divine adoption...' "Oh love the Lord all ye his saints...He has quickened us when

The Hypocrisy of the Ecumenical Movement



The picture with Roman Catholics, Evangelicals, Pagans, Muslims, Buddhists...(September 2019 United Nations Alliance of Civilizations Religions for Peace World Assembly) shows the hypocrisy of differing opposing faiths claiming to have 'unity' in one God, yet with opposing gospels.

The word 'Ecumenical' comes from the Greek 'oikoumenikos' - 'of the inhabited earth'; 'an earthly thing' (Aust. Oxford Dictionary). The Greek for 'church' is the opposite 'Ekklesia' - 'called out' - something *exclusive!*

The world body for this movement is the *World Council of Churches (WCC)* - a social/political organisation which accepts any church that professes 'Christianity', whether homosexual, liberal, modernist, humanist, universalist, Baptismal Regenerationist...and more. They have supported communist revolutionaries and endorsed Arab Palestinians and condemned Israel. They do not accept the word of God as the one book being inspired, infallible and the only rule of true faith. Most denominations are members of, or support the WCC, or are members of national subsidiaries of it.

Which gospel and which Jesus does the ecumenical movement aspire to? All of them! The ecumenical movement focuses on love. Unity is declared at the expense of truth. The Reformation was a mistake. Catholicism is now 'Christian' despite its gospel of sacramental works and the continuing sacrifice of Jesus, and being diametrically opposed to Biblical justification by faith alone. It has been said that *ecumenical love has sacrificed Biblical truth on the altar of church unity.*

The ecumenical movement denies the teaching of separation (Rom.16:17; 2Thess.3:6,14,15), but rather welcomes all as in one fold. This end time 'church' is indicative of the falling away (1Tim.4:1-5; 2Thess.2:3). It is worldly, popular, compromising and unholy and will be judged with the wrath of God, an example of which is in Revelation 17.

We urge readers to remain lovingly non-ecumenical because we would care for people's souls and for the true Gospel. Jude 3 '*...you should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints*'.

Amos 3:3 '*Can two walk together, except they be agreed?*' ...

Psalms 1:1-3 '*Blessed is the man that walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful. 2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he does shall prosper.*'

Separation is really the doctrine of holiness. That Holiness is predicated not on a hypocritical union, but on *truth* (Jn.17:17).

Terry Arnold

How The World Sees 'Hillsong'

In a recent *Womans Weekly* article titled 'You Gotta Have Faith' by Beverley Hadgraft, a secular magazine reports on how the world sees Christianity, especially the Pentecostal churches and 'Hillsong'.

The article examines 'what's firing the passion for this effusive Christianity'. Hadgraft writes: '...hundreds of chattering youngsters make their way to their armchair-plush seats as a rock band blasts out music, the musicians' images projected onto huge screens. A dry ice machine blows smoke on stage as a pastor in black jeans and boots describes his wife as 'a fox', refers to Jesus as 'dude' and asks us to give lots of money - credit cards accepted. Later he promises to cure anyone with a migraine and sufferers flock forward as the congregation shouts, sings, dances and lifts hands in the air...The message is the same - God loves us - but the way it's communicated is experiential, and that works for today's generations...The style of leadership is one of influence, not authority from above, and people choose to follow them because they like their character and values...They understand the power of music for lifting people's spirits'.

The article goes on to cite C3's pastor Phil Pringle as openly 'teaching people to be entrepreneurs and build a businesses'. He says 'We encourage them to invest...You can only give what you raise'. That is probably why the likes of Hillsong announced total assets of nearly \$60 Million, up by \$10 million from 2017 and cash assets of nearly \$15 million up by nearly \$4 million. They have a total comprehensive income of nearly \$6 million up from nearly \$2 million last year. Giving was \$16 million which was used for 'charitable initiatives' and to open new venues in Brisbane and Melbourne. Books and CD's and apparel are also sold, all tax free. Some of the books have titles that apparently have sold well, such as 'Kingdom Women Love Sex' (later changed to 'She Loves and Values Her Sexuality'). 'Shine' courses teaches girls in 'caring for skin, hair, nails and makeup' and by end of the course they see themselves as 'princesses'. Image is important in Hillsong as can be seen in the dress and style.

The article also mention our Australian Pentecostal Prime Minister; and Hillsong's leader, Brian Houston as one 'failing to report allegations of sexual assault against his father'.

Many times the secular media correctly echo what is the warning of scripture which so many Christians seem blind to: '**and through covetousness, they shall with feigned words make merchandise of you...**' (2Pet.2:3).

Over decades we have cited articles similar to this concerning reporting by the secular media. As early as the nineties we were citing examples of how the world was viewing Hillsong and other Pentecostal churches. From the 'Bulletin' Magazine (April 2000) we quoted an article 'Give Me That New Time Religion - Born Again Hip and Booming' by Diana Bagnall: '...Pentecostal congregations are...complete with cafe, youth centres, recording studios...they're big, vigorous, potentially powerful. Brian Houston heads the Assemblies of God...the predominate style is contemporary and prosperous. Hip even. These are places where winners hang out, where the rewards are tangible and tantalising...They

Your Comments and Questions

(Views expressed here are not necessarily those of the editor)

*In every issue of 'Diakrisis' you cite Jude 4, and never verse 20...
(V.T. Viet)*

Editors Reply:

I confess that Jude 4 has been a scripture that has rung loudly in my ear ever since I repented of the false teachings in the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement. Vs.3,4 begin with a graphic expose of false teachers all the way to vs.20 where *the context changes* and then closes with a few verses exhorting the brethren to 'keep themselves' from such evils and to pray.

We did do an article which included verse 20 in 'Diakrisis' Nov/Dec 2000, P.5,6. (This was an article on Tongues and 'prayer language').

Also, in preaching through the book of Jude in 2019 I dealt in depth with vs.20. (These sermon tapes on Jude are available at no charge).

Vs.20 was hijacked by the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement in the 20th C. to be used for speaking in unknown tongues. For years as a young Christian I was wrongly taught that this text was 'praying in tongues' until I began to see that none of the old commentaries taught this, but rather it is as the text states, exhorting us to 'pray in the Holy Spirit'. Here is some of what we wrote in the Diakrisis article of 2000: '*There is absolutely no evidence from the Greek or any other means of interpretation that this phrase means 'praying in tongues'. If it was speaking in tongues then the only way we should pray is in tongues or else we would not be 'in the Spirit'! When Jesus prayed the Lord's Prayer - was it not 'in the Spirit'? When the great men of God in ages past prayed, did they not pray 'in the Spirit'? It is a fact that this new teaching of a 'prayer language' was never heard of for 1,900 years! If this 'praying in the Spirit' is praying in an unknown tongue, then we must always and only pray this way because Ephesians 6:18 says: 'praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit...'*

The meaning of 'praying in the Spirit' has unfortunately changed for some Christians. The phrase once meant no more or no less than - the Holy Spirit helping us to pray! The Holy Spirit is the 'comforter' (Jn.14:16,26; 15:26; 16:7). The word 'comforter' comes from 'parakaleo' meaning 'to comfort, encourage or exhort, referring to an aid'. The phrase 'praying in the Spirit' simply refers to the Holy Spirit aiding us in prayer!

Many Christians would still argue that the Holy Spirit could still give an inspired heavenly 'prayer language'. However, if this is so then it defies and goes beyond Scripture. The word 'spirit' in 1Corinthians 14 is always a small 's' - the human spirit! Any unknown tongue based on any Scripture in this passage is human and not divine. Added to this, why would Paul teach private unknown tongues or a 'prayer language' when he dissuades the use of it in the church throughout 1Corinthians 14?...

night in his temple: and he that sits on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes’.

Another group is now seen in Heaven - the redeemed of the Lord giving worship both to God and the lamb. They attribute their salvation to God and the Lamb. The scene is one of mass worship with ‘multitudes’ as well as all the creatures of Heaven prostrating themselves before God on the throne. One of the elders asks a question as to who those with white robes are and where they came from. Although the question is ‘already known’ it is answered for the glory of God ‘These are they which came out of the great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb’. They worship God ‘day and night’ (vs.15), hunger and thirst no more and feel no more discomfort (vs.16). Everything is supplied by ‘the Lamb in the midst of the throne’!

8:1-5 ‘And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. 2 And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets. 3 And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. 4 And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel’s hand. 5 And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake’.

John sees and hears and experiences a time of ‘silence’ which in earthly terms was ‘about the space of half an hour’. Just as silence pervades a courtroom when the judge is about to render a verdict in a criminal trial, so the occupants of heaven fall silent as they anticipate what the Judge of the universe is about to do with the seventh seal! The ‘seven angels stood before God’ awaiting orders. (Angels are literally ‘messengers’ (‘*aggelos*’) under the orders of God who announce or perform a duty).

‘Another angel’ offers worship to God on the altar before the throne with incense and the ‘prayers of all the saints’. In the Jewish temple, musical instruments and singing resounded during the time of the offering of the sacrifices, but at the offering of incense solemn silence was kept. These prayers ascend to God from the angels hand upon which the angel takes from the altar and throws it upon the earth. This produces an effect that is so often a part of Heaven and the throne - ‘voices, thunderings, lightnings and an earthquake’.

Like birthpangs the judgements increase in intensity as God winds up the affairs of the world. As one reads through these judgements, would it not put the fear of God and a sense of awe into hearts of those who truly ‘love His appearing’? (2Tim.4:8). The great judge and loving Saviour says to us ‘**surely I come quickly**’ and our response ought to be ‘**come Lord Jesus**’! (Rev.22:20).

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promise the good life on earth, and of course, the bonus of eternal life. They offer intimacy and excitement, a sense of belonging and of righteousness. A heady mix...The power of the message is in it’s communication. ‘We scratch where people are itching,’ says Mark Edwards...His sermons are more likely to focus on financial management...work issues, relationships and raising children, than fine theological argument...The most common sign of a Pentecostal experience [‘Baptism With the Spirit’] is that a person begins speaking in tongues, (making sounds that usually they can’t understand and feel they can’t control), but there are other signs such as falling to the ground in a trance or, as happened first in Toronto in the early 90’s, laughing uncontrollably, (the ‘Toronto Blessing’)...



...Pringle and Houston...move at a furious pace, as much entrepreneur as pastor, as much celebrity as preacher...all the while churning out the next motivational book, overseeing...big pools of musicians and singers...The flip side for them is that when the high energy drops off, so do the people...The churches...are designed to be user-friendly for ‘seekers’, as new comers are called...church services are conceived of as multimedia events - display windows for marketing Christianity...‘culturally relevant’ is the buzz phrase...the focus of attention is a rock band...with catchy rhythms and romantic tug of good pop...In fact the services are not unlike Saturday variety TV...Edwards explains: ‘You go to a Barbara Streisand concert and you expect a certain standard of that concert. Why should people who come to our church expect any less?’...(Quoted in ‘Diakrisis’ May/June 2000, P.3).

How accurate is this as seen by the secular world - very! The Christian reader should here see the lack of distinction from the world and its ‘itch’ and how far it is from the Word and the holiness of separation. Yet many simply do not!

In 2007 (‘Diakrisis’ May/June P.5) we challenged the readers similarly in an article ‘The Phenomena of Hillsong Revisited’: We wrote of the ‘lack of distinction from the world, (Rom.12:2; Eph.2:2; 1Jn.2; James 4:4). We challenged ‘anyone to listen to the music, watch the performers and read the lyrics of Hillsong music and honestly say that it does not mimic the beat, the fashions and even the thinking of this world. If that is not evident to Christians who would read this, then why is it that the secular world sees Hillsong ever so clearly as their own?’ Then we gave the following quotes as examples:

‘Every weekend at Hillsong churches in Sydney 19,000 people sing, clap and jump through a two-hour tribute to a God who rocks’ (Jennifer Sexton, *The Australian*); ‘...Most people attending, and everyone appearing at their conference looked irredeemably ‘hip’. The young Asian woman in front of me in Bonnets workshop actually wore a clinging, rather revealing outfit as did many of her fellow delegates...she nodded approvingly as Bonnet said he would happily borrow from Kylie Minogue’s latest CD cover for ideas on how to promote Hillsong’s Darlene Zschech, the music pastor whose Christian rock CD’s have sold more than 5,000,000 copies worldwide...A men only workshop did hear how men need to control their sex drive and that masturbation is the first step to

sexual dysfunction, but most of the presentations were...not especially heavy on theology either. Instead they tended to be of the motivational, self help, 'Seven Habits of Highly Effective People' type, as easily applicable to those building an environmental organization as to a church...' (Weekend Australian, 9/10 July, 2005).

Finally, in 2019 ('Diakrisis' Nov/Dec) we quoted *The Signal* secular journalists Stephen Stockwell and Ruby Jones as printed in the ABC News under 'How Hillsong and Other Pentecostal Megachurches Are Redefining Religion In Australia'. They wrote: 'Lighting and music draw thousands of people for a Hillsong service...in the Sydney suburb of Alexandria and Pastor Natalie Pingel pauses mid-sermon to conduct an impromptu Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson look-a-like contest...to approval and gushing laughter...the band plays anthemic rock music...the big screens either side of the stage light up with suggestions for what people can pray for. The suggestions include financial stability, luck with job applications and visa approvals...This 'prosperity doctrine' is key to how Pentecostal Christianity is attracting new...worshippers, particularly migrants and young people...[a Professor Singleton said]...What is the difference between Pentecostals and other Christians? One of the most recognisable aspects of a Pentecostal church is the singing and music and Hillsong has made music central to its model. 'They really used music as their engine, they wrote their own music and it's now famous worldwide'. Modern Pentecostalism focuses on teaching God will help you be successful. This is what has been dubbed the 'prosperity doctrine'...The tide of secularism is strong and powerful...'

Note how the secular media report this. *It's simply part of their own 'secular' world.* It is sad that the secular world sees Hillsong as it really is and often describes it accurately, yet many Christians are blind as to just how much the Charismatic/Pentecostal movement and Hillsong is of the world! Sadly in many things '*...the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light*' (Lk.16:8).

The apostle Paul put no emphasis on worldly methods but on the power of the message itself (1Cor.2:1,4; 1Thess.2:3-5). We would like to suggest that what is reported here as Christianity is a 'Laodicean church' so close to the values of the world that it will hardly suffer persecution from the world, or be raptured or accepted by Christ. Indeed, Christ says of this 'lukewarm' church He will '*spew out of my mouth. Because you say, I am rich, and increased with goods...be zealous therefore, and repent*' (Rev.3:16-19).

Christ's church is holy and distinct, unspotted from, and not of the world, thus not an enemy of God. His church is poor in spirit, not rich in material prosperity; conformed to the image of Christ, not to the image of others. His church is Gospel focused, not focused on new gospels of healing and prosperity (Eph.5:27; Jn.17:16; James 1:27; 4:4 1Jn.2:15,16; Matt.5:3; Rom.8:29; Rom.1:16; 2Cor.11:4; Gal.1:6).

Of the end time religious system, Christ says '*Come out of her, my people, that you be not partakers of her sins...*' (Rev.18:4).

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2:10-12, that those who hear the gospel before the Tribulation and reject it, will be doomed to spend an eternity without Christ. The only ones who can possibly be saved during the Tribulation are those who do not hear the gospel previous to that time'.

7:1-8 '*And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed a hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel. Of the tribe of Judah were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Naphtali were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Zebulun were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand'.*

Chapter 7 contains a parenthetical section between the sixth and seventh seal judgements. The history of the events *pauses* while John is shown another event in Heaven. In this pause angels are told to hold the 'four winds' and any 'hurt' upon the earth until 144,000 are 'sealed' with the 'seal of the living God' on their foreheads. These 144,000 'servants' are grouped into the twelve tribes of Israel. Some change who these people are and spiritualise them to be figurative of other entities, which does a disservice to the text. (Some cults even make the 144,00 to be themselves). The books of Revelation and Daniel have undeniable Jewishness with constant references to the Jews, Jerusalem and the 'New Jerusalem'.

7:9-17 '*After this I beheld, and, lo [behold], a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sits upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshiped God, Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God forever and ever. Amen. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, you know. And he said to me, These are they which came out of [the] great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and*

element seen and heard here by John with the saints told to wait ‘*a little season*’ for the judgements to be ‘*fulfilled*’. We are also reminded that ‘*vengeance is the Lords*’ (Rom.12:19; Heb.10:30; Dt.32:35,41,43; Jds 11:36; Ps.94:1; 149:7). As the martyrs here cry out for justice, so we should rejoice in justice being done (Ps.58:10; Jer.11:20; 20:12). This latter concept is rather strange today to those who see God as a loving God but not a God of justice. But if we have the mind of God and Christ we will rejoice in the final justice of God in his fearsome judgements upon those who afflicted the saints and the religious institutions who slaughtered millions of saints down the running centuries.

Later in chapter 20:4 there is also a mention of saints ‘*beheaded for the witness of Jesus*’ during the ‘*great tribulation*’ and who then ‘*live and reign with Christ a thousand years*’.

The ‘*white robes*’ (vs.11) are indicative of holiness and the righteousness of the saints. This is repeated in chapter 7 where we are told that these saints with white robes are the martyrs who have come out of the ‘*great tribulation*’ and are ‘*washed in the blood of the lamb*’ (7:14).

12-17 ‘*And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo [behold], there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casts her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains. And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?*’

Earthquakes are common with judgement and several are mentioned throughout the book of Revelation (8:5; 11:13,19; 16:18). Here in chapter 6 the description of the sun becoming ‘*black*’ and the moon ‘*as blood*’ is similar but not the same as that which will occur ‘*after the tribulation*’ and at the second coming of the Lord - when the sun will be ‘*darkened*’, the moon will not shine at all and stars will fall (Matt.24:29-31). The sixth seal judgement will see catastrophic events with stars falling ‘*unto the earth*’, the heavens rolling up ‘*as a scroll*’ and ‘*every mountain and island moved*’. The people of all kinds on the earth clearly understand that this is the ‘*wrath of the Lamb*’ and they attempt to ‘*hide from the face of him that sits on the throne*’.

The phrase ‘*who shall be able to stand*’ is a reminder that to survive the judgements of God one must be those who God will give ‘*white robes*’ to. The righteousness that is needed is a given heavenly righteousness of another - the Lamb. One must be ‘*washed in his blood*’ and have a ‘*testimony*’. As Jesus well said - one must be ‘*born from above*’ (Jn.3). Anything not born from above is doomed to judgement with the flesh of the earth beneath.

In remarks on chapter seven Zodihiates says ‘*It is clear from 2 Thessalonians*

In **Part 1** (chapters 1-4 - see ‘*Diakrisis*’ July/August 2019) the intent was to show that the book of Revelation *is to be understood* at least as far as *what John saw and described*. *What is figurative and what is more literal can be determined with study and referencing to other scriptures*. It is also necessary to have at least studied the book of Daniel first, as much of Revelation is referenced in that book.

The *timing and the order of events* in the first three chapters are presented as events in John’s day *with a divide in time and order at chapter 4* (see 1:19).

In **Part 2** (see ‘*Diakrisis*’ September/October 2019) we continued with chapters 4,5 and again explored *what should be ‘literal’ or ‘figurative’ and why*; as well as the *timing and order of events*. This was done using standard methods such as finding the same *symbols, signs and wording* elsewhere (‘*scripture interprets scripture*’).

Part 3 - Chapters 6,7

Chapter 6 begins with what many call ‘*Jacob’s trouble*’ (Jer.30:7), the ‘*great tribulation*’ (Matt.24:21; Rev.2:22; 7:14) or the ‘*seventieth week*’ of Daniel (Dan.9). God’s judgement upon the earth begins as something *never seen before* (Matt.24:21,22). Three distinct judgements now proceed in the following chapters: the seven ‘*seals*’ (ch.6); the seven ‘*trumpets*’ (ch.8); and the seven ‘*vials*’ (bowls) of wrath (ch.16).

Each series of judgements appear to increase in intensity and severity. In the seal judgements 1/4 of the earth is affected; in the Trumpet judgements 1/3 are affected; in the bowl judgements the affliction is devastatingly widespread.

6:1,2 ‘*And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see. And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer*’.

The ‘*Lamb*’ is the one described in previous verses as the only worthy one, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Lamb slain, who takes the book from God who is ‘*The Ancient of Days*’ (Dan.7). John ‘*saw*’ this ‘*Lamb*’ open one of the seven ‘*seals*’ to come. A ‘*seal*’ (‘*sphragis*’) was an impression upon letters or books for the sake of privacy and security (Rev.5:1,2, 5, 9; 6:1, 3, 5, 7, 9; 8:1). A seal often was used as a mark of something being genuine (Rev. 9:4).

Then John ‘*heard as it were the voice of thunder*’ when one of the ‘*four beasts*’ says ‘*come and see*’. Note the language here is one that can be understood. Many times in this book a ‘*voice*’ is heard and understood. However, sometimes it sounds like a ‘*trumpet*’ (1:10; 4:1); many times described as ‘*loud*’, ‘*great*’ or ‘*strong*’ (5:2,12; 6:10; 7:2,10; 8:13; 10:3; 11:12; 12:10; 14:7,9,15; 16:1,17; 18:2; 19:1,17:21:3), sometimes ‘*as the sound of many waters*’ (1:15).

Here in chapter 6 the voice is as ‘*a noise of thunder*’. The ‘*voice*’ of God is

often said to be heard as ‘thunder’ (Job.40:9; Ps.77:18; 104:7). Of the 19 times ‘thunder’ is mentioned in the Bible, it is invariably from Heaven and at the hands of God himself (Ex.9:23; 1Sam.2:10). In Revelation 14:2 the same sound is heard when the 144,000 sing in Heaven and later for the multitude of worshippers in heaven (19:6). In chapter 6 the ‘noise of thunder’ is to bring the horseman to earth.

John hears ‘one of the four beasts’ say ‘come and see’ (see the ‘four beasts’ described as heavenly creatures in chapter 4:7-11). It appears this is addressed to the rider on the white horse.

6:2 *‘And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer’*

The word ‘behold’ coupled with ‘see’ is a rather strong expression pointing to the marvel of this horse and rider. Horsemen with bows were fierce instruments of war mentioned many times in the Old Testament and sometimes were angelic (2Kngs 2; Rev.9). (The imagery here is also similar to Zechariah chapter 6).

John saw a ‘white horse’. It could be said from many other scriptures that white signifies the concept of purity or holiness. This is a rider with a ‘bow’ who is then given a ‘crown’. Both the ‘bow’ and the ‘crown’ here refer to *victory*. (The word ‘bow’ is the Greek ‘nikáo’ literally referring to something victorious). The ‘crown’ is not a kingly crown (‘diádema’) but a crown of victory (‘stéphanos’). This rider is set for ‘conquering, and to conquer’. The picture is of war and victory.

Various figurative interpretations can be derived as to what the horse and who the rider is. Some say the rider is the antichrist, others Christ. This white horse appears again in chapter 19 and there it is undoubtedly Christ. This rider in chapter 6 is given a bow but no arrows - a detail which has baffled many scholars.

The horse and rider is what John literally ‘saw’. In other places some believe John is seeing war machinery which to him looked like giant ‘locusts’, flying objects like great birds, etc. However, the main point here is that these horses are the final long awaited judgements by God upon a rebellious earth.

6:3,4 *‘And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see. And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that [so that] they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword’*

Similarly to the first beast, now a second of the four beasts uses the same language ‘come and see’. Another horse proceeds ‘out’ of Heaven, being ‘red’ in colour (literally a flaming or ‘fiery red’) as seen by John.

‘Power’ is given to the rider ‘to take peace from the earth and that they should kill one another’. The weapon is a ‘great sword’. When the ‘peace’ is ‘taken from the earth’ the result is that the inhabitants in unrestraint now ‘kill one another’.

6:5,6 *‘And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo [behold] a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley*

for a penny; and see you hurt not the oil and the wine’.

‘He’ (the ‘Lamb’ of vs.1) opens the third ‘seal’. A third beast uses the same language ‘come and see’. John then sees ‘a black horse’ with a rider with a ‘pair of balances in his hand’. Another ‘voice’ speaks out of the midst of the four beasts with instructions as to the quantity and price of wheat and barley. A ‘measure’ was considered by some to be near equal to a ‘pint’ (about a half litre) which was considered to be an average man’s daily allowance. A ‘penny’ (‘denáron’) was considered an average daily wage (Lk.10:30-37). A final instruction is given to not ‘hurt’ (damage) the ‘oil and the wine’.

Many believe this is referring to a world wide famine and a financial hyper inflation. With the recent global recession and the Covid 19 epidemic it is not hard to see this occurring *quickly* at any time in the future.

6:7,8 *‘And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with [by] the beasts of the earth’.*

The fourth and last beast again uses the same language ‘come and see’. John looks and sees a ‘pale horse’. The word ‘pale’ (‘chlorós’) refers to a pale green colour. The rider’s name was ‘Death’. And ‘Hell’ (‘Hades’) ‘followed with’ this rider. The ‘power’ given to him was the authority (‘exousia’) to ‘kill with the sword’, ‘with hunger’ (famine) and ‘death’ and by wild ‘beasts of the earth’ to *one fourth of the earth*. This is surely a frightening judgement.

6:9-11 *‘And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony of the Lamb which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, do you not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled’.*

The ‘altar’ is probably the heavenly tabernacle mentioned elsewhere in scripture (Rev.15:5); or God himself as the ‘tabernacle with men’ (Rev.21:3). Greek commentator Zodhiates speaks of the ‘spiritual or celestial tabernacle from which the material one is said to have been copied (Heb.8:2; 9:11 [cf. 8:5; 9:23, 24]); the temple in the heavenly Jerusalem (Rev.15:5; 21:3)’. Revelation 11:19 and 15:5 also has a ‘tabernacle’ in Heaven: ‘And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail...(11:19)...And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened (15:5).

Under the altar ‘the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony of the Lamb’ are told to wait for a ‘little season’ so that the blood of martyrs would be ‘avenged’ by God. Interestingly, there is a distinct *time*