

Hi Terry, I am contacting you after my Pastor...recommended your newsletter - which I would like to subscribe to...I have been on a journey over the past few years in finding the actual truth, after being caught up in the AOG/ACC/Hillsong/Bethel church movements for most of my life. I have been accessing resources from John MacArthur, Costi Hinn and Justin Peters but am very keen to hear your Australian version, and keep myself in check by reading regular material and constant bible reading.

...I read your most recent newsletter and was very encouraged and challenged. I am in the process of what I call open heart surgery - to remove the false doctrines that I have been operating under and replace them with truth. I'm grateful for the assistance that my Pastor...has provided, but also for others such as yourself that provide material to challenge, encourage, equip. So thank you!

(J.J. Vict.)

Hello Terry, I just finished working through your sermon 'How Do We Hear From God?'. Thank you for the clear explanation of Scripture and I agree with it 100%. Thank you and regards to everyone at church. Regards and Blessing.

(J.V. Qld)

Diakrisis TV

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.

The site is '*Diakrisis TV*'; or the link is:

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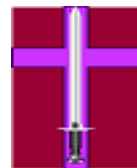
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Diakrisis (Australia)

'But strong meat belongs to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern [*diakrisis*] both good and evil', (Heb.5:14)

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TA Ministries is a non-denominational faith ministry,
teaching, informing and equipping the church.

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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.

Articles in this newsletter may be copied or reproduced provided it is in context and proper credit and references are given. We encourage distribution of this newsletter that others might be *taught, informed and equipped*.

This newsletter is distributed bi-monthly *free* of charge. The cost to this ministry is approximately \$20.00 per subscriber annually. Any donation to help with these expenses is received with gratitude.

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Editors Travel Plans

Because of the situation interstate with the Corona virus, the editor is now looking to more churches within Queensland for a possible ministry itinerary.

If any pastors and fellowships are interested in being included please contact Terry.

A list of expositional and topical sermons as well as seminars on a variety of topics are available.

The Demise of Denominations

The 'Downgrade' 19th Century

In the middle of the 1800's one of the greatest preachers of the Christian church faced the biggest battle of his life. Charles Spurgeon, dubbed as 'the prince of preachers', was facing an apostate church in his own denomination - the Baptist Union in Great Britain. The world and its philosophies were knocking at the door of many churches. In 1859 Darwin published his famous '*On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*' which made out the creation account in Genesis to be a myth. In addition, three new cults were added in the same century - Jehovah witnesses (1870's), Mormons (1830's) and Seventh Day Adventists (1860's).

But a more dangerous evil was at work in the form of German 'Higher Criticism'. This type of study emerged in German academic circles in the late 18th century and took root in English churches during the 19th century. 'Higher Criticism' interpreted biblical documents as one would any secular document. 'Higher Critics' introduced assumptions and critiques of the biblical writers and took a rationalistic approach to interpreting the Bible. Speculation and hypothesis questioned the accuracy of the scriptures. Miracles were explained in human or scientific terms. *The result was a Bible viewed as not fully inspired, infallible, inerrant and all sufficient.* This was the main foe Charles Spurgeon was fighting!

In a series of articles '*Downgrade in the Churches*' Spurgeon wrote: '*Instead of submission to God's Word (James 4:4-10), higher criticism urges accommodation to human wisdom. It sets human thought above God's revelation and constitutes man the supreme judge of what ought to be true. A chasm is opening between the men who believe their Bibles and those who are prepared for an advance upon the Scripture...The house is being robbed, its very walls are being digged down, but the good people who are in bed are too fond of the warmth...to go downstairs to meet the burglars...Inspiration and speculation cannot long abide side by side...We cannot hold the inspiration of the Word (2Timothy 3:16), and yet reject it. We cannot hold the doctrine of the Fall (Romans 5:12-21; 1Corinthians 15:22), and yet talk of evolution of spiritual life from human nature. One or the other must go. Compromise there can be none.*'

Although Spurgeon was recognised as a great preacher, many preachers in the Union increasingly did not agree with him. Dr. John Clifford, president of the British Baptist Union and later first president of the Baptist World Alliance, declared in 1888 '*It pains me unspeakably to see this eminent preacher [Spurgeon] rousing the energies of thousands of Christians to engage in personal wrangling and strife, instead of inspiring them to...heroic effort to carry the...Gospel to our fellow-countrymen*'.

Dr. Clifford presided over a meeting January 18, 1888 which agreed to 'censure' Spurgeon. The Baptist Union assembly met in April 23 in the City Temple Congregational church, London, (pastored by Dr. Joseph Parker, a critic of Spurgeon). Two thousand voted for the motion to censure Spurgeon. Only seven were against it. An observer, Henry Oakley, wrote: '*...I listened to the*

to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth'. The context of the passage in John ch.6 is also about believing - vs.32-35 '*Jesus said...my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which comes down from heaven, and gives life unto the world...I am the bread of life: he that comes to me shall never hunger; and he that believes on me shall never thirst*'. John concludes '*you have the Words of eternal life*'.

I don't see that the passage in Revelation mentioning the twelve tribes is anything like figurative language, especially considering the Jewish nature of so many chapters mentioning tribes, Jews, Jerusalem, etc. Added to this is the many Old Testament and New Testament books matching perfectly the scenarios to do with the Jews and Israel in the book of Revelation?

Your reference to 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12 & the 'tribulation' P.12,13 makes me wonder if you are a dispensationalist. [I am not a 'dispensationalist' as in having many (seven?) 'dispensations'. I just teach the Biblical covenants and at least a 'dispensation' between Israel and the church]

I am curious as to how my friend Spiros Zodhiates deduces that the only people saved during the 'tribulation' are those who hadn't heard the Gospel before. It seems a strange statement to me. [Perhaps an assumption by him]

*I was surprised that John 3:16 was not involved in the discussion on God's love to the sinner: 'God so loved the world..' I assume you wouldn't interpret 'the world' here as the elect. [Perhaps I should have mentioned Jn.3:16. Who the 'world' is in John 3:16 is arguably not as easy as what some people might give meaning to it, considering the word 'world' has numerous and differing contexts and thus interpretations by various commentators? The context varies from a meaning of Jews and Gentiles (Jn.18:20), humanity in general (Jn.7:4), the world system (Jn.12:31), the believers, elect (Jn.6:33,51; 12:46-47; 1Jn.4:14)...(and others fully expanded in our book '*Calvinism & Arminianism - Out of the Maze*'). When Paul said '*God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself*' (2Cor.5:19) - he meant only believers, as is proved by the words following: '*not imputing their trespasses unto them; and has committed unto us the word of reconciliation*'. The 'world' here is not everyone but those who '*have not their trespasses imputed to them*' and those who are '*reconciled*'. The rest who are in the 'world' here will still have their sins imputed to them. Another example of variation is - '*all the world*' in Luke 2:1 is not the whole world but only a 'taxation' for Israel. When it was said '*show yourself to the world*' (Jn.7:4) it was not the whole world...*

...With this in mind, in John 3:16 the context of 'world' is arguably debatable. Many commentators, even the Puritans and Reformers had differing views on the 'world' in Jn.3:16...I personally cannot be dogmatic about the meaning here. However, I fail to see how the 'world' here can be used for God loving sinners and the 'whosoever' ('the believing ones') alike, when the context is about the necessity to be born again and sinners under judgement in the surrounding verses. In our articles and comments we see this as much more necessary to the Gospel than one that begins with 'God loves you' based on Jn.3:16?]

Greek commentator Zodhiates says of the word ‘curse’ (‘katára’) that it is ‘an imprecation (a spoken curse), a malediction (an evil)’. The opposite in Greek is ‘eulogía’ - a blessing (James 3:10; Sept.: Gen.27:12,13). The same antithesis occurs in Gal.3:10,13; Heb.6:8; 2Pet.2:14; Sept.: Deut.28:15-68; Judg.9:57; Prov.3:33; Dan.9:11; Mal.2:2, and means the rejection and curse proceeding from God, the destruction resulting from judgment. It is equivalent to judgment without mercy in James 2:13. The word involves both the sentence of the divine judgment and the ruin therein inflicted...The expression, ‘Christ who became for us a curse [katára]’, means that the Lord Himself and the curse He bore are not to be separated from each other (Gal.3:13)’.

In Col.2:14 God has crossed out the ledger book of the law. On the cross Christ bore the ‘curse’ and penalty of the law for his people. 2Cor.5:21 is also important - it has the solution to the curse of the law in two doctrines - substitution and imputation...

Correction and Clarifications

[Editors comments in bold and brackets]

Dear Terry, I always enjoy ‘Diakrisis’. Thank you for it. On page 10 of July/August edition you stated that ‘bow’ translates the Greek verb ‘nikao’. This word means ‘I conquer’...from the noun ‘nike’ - victory. ‘Bow’ is ‘toxos’ - see the English word ‘toxophilite’ - a lover of archery. **[You are correct. I had the wrong Greek words here for the English words...].**

I am surprised some scholars are baffled that the rider on the white horse is not given arrows but only a bow. Surely the implication is he already possessed these, but they would be useless without a bow...**[The ‘implication’ may be correct, however in exegesis I fear to go beyond the text into assumptions]**

Also I wonder how any interpreter could consider the rider of the white horse being the Antichrist in the light of Revelation 19:11 which you quote. **[19:11 is definitely Christ. Of 6:2 we write: ‘Some say the rider is the antichrist, others Christ’. We ourselves do lean toward the view it is Christ]**

You say that spiritualizing the 12 Israelite tribes in Revelation 7 does a disservice to the text: yet you would have no trouble spiritualizing John chapter 6 & the words of the Lord Jesus ‘this is my body,’ ‘this is...my blood’ as against the doctrine of transubstantiation. **[In parts 1 and 2 - I explained...figurative language is obviously figurative. If not obviously figurative, then the language should be taken plainly as literal. This I argue is the most consistent approach to exegesis and then interpretation. John 6 is obviously figurative and can be interpreted with other scriptures and in the same passage. Jn.6:63 says ‘The words I speak to you are spirit and life’. Jesus said ‘I am the bread of life’ (Jn.6:48) - obviously figurative - He is not a literal piece of bread. The Bible says to ‘do this in remembrance of me’, hardly a literal eating of the ‘body’ and drinking of ‘blood’. Similar figurative language is: Jer.15:16 ‘your words were found and I ate them’; Ps.119:103 ‘How sweet are your words**

speeches...When the motion of censure was put, a forest of hands went up...Before any announcement of the censure number was made by Dr. John Clifford, the vast assembly broke into tumultuous cheering, and cheering, and cheering yet...some of the older men their pent-up hostility found vent. From many of the younger men wild resistance of ‘any obscurantist trammels,’ - Spurgeon’s preaching - as they said, broke loose. It was a strange scene. I viewed it with tears. I stood near a man I knew well. He went wild with delight at the censure. I say, it was a strange scene, that that vast assembly should so outrageously be delighted at the condemnation of the greatest, noblest, and grandest leader of their faith’.

Spurgeon’s wife Susanna later stated that the controversy cost Spurgeon his life. Spurgeon himself once said to a friend in May, 1891 (eight months before his death at age 57), ‘This tragic fight is killing me’. Yet Spurgeon also was heard to state ‘The distant future will vindicate me’.

The Baptist churches began to die. Baptism numbers decreased rapidly. Missions closed. One hundred years later a biographer, Dr. Arnold Dallimore, declared: ‘Where there is no acceptance of the Bible as inerrant; there is no true Christianity. The preaching is powerless, and what Spurgeon declared to his generation a hundred years ago is the outcome’.

The ‘Downgrade’ 20th Century

A similar further ‘downgrade’ occurred in later years of the 20th C. in the Southern Baptist denomination in the U.S. But then a resurgence of Biblical Reformed teaching, the same as Spurgeons, overcame much of the liberalism that had infiltrated churches. However, today again the threat of liberalism and weak views on inspiration and an all sufficient Bible, is once again at the door.

Today colleges and church leaders mostly seem blind to this dramatic shift. Interestingly secular media was already reporting this. In ‘Diakrisis’ (May/98, P.3) we quoted a secular Newsweek article: ‘Denominational loyalties are disappearing. Seminaries float theories that once would have been blasphemous...divine authority is hardly absolute. On top of that, current literary theory holds that texts are determined more by the reader than by the writer...’

This author has travelled to churches in and out of denominations and noted that most denominations no longer have a high view of the all sufficiency of scripture. The blame too must be laid at the door of Bible colleges and seminaries where trusted lecturers introduce speculation, have fallen away from, or pay lip service only to an all sufficient Word. Yet if these doctrines are not defended, they will be lost amid the tide of liberal, critical and subjective hermeneutics. How can God bless a pulpit where his Word is lowered from its lofty moorings, where inspiration is questioned, where the word preached is little more than homilies of men rather than an expectation of power from an all sufficient Word?

The author has personally met students from some colleges who have never quite recovered from sitting under lecturers who were not convinced of the Bible being inspired and thus inerrant and all sufficient. Such unbelief surely then plays out in preaching, in pastoring, in pastoral counselling to come.

Many pastors will say they believe in ‘inspiration’ and ‘inerrancy’, yet not be

Calvinism Akin to Roman Catholicism?

willing to defend it. Others will say they believe in it yet not preach from the Word as though the Word and the Spirit alone are the only agents to effect change in a persons heart. New methods and programmes are easily adopted. And how can Pentecostal/Charismatic preachers claim to receive extra biblical and personal words from God and yet still claim to have a fully inspired, inerrant and all sufficient Word within the Bible? How can they claim that this Word was ‘once delivered to the saints’ (Jude 3), that every word of Scripture ‘is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness’ (2Tim.3:16), and that the scriptures are ‘the more sure word of prophecy...the prophecy of the scripture’ (2Pet.1:19,20)?

In western countries most denominations are simply not teaching the doctrines they used to teach. Most have radically changed their view on the Ecumenical movement, the Roman Catholic church as a false religion, women in teaching ministry, Pentecostal/Charismatic doctrines, and more. The idea now is to be more of a social help to the community rather than a bringer of the all sufficient word of life to dead souls on the broad road to a soon coming fiery judgement.

The ‘downgrade’ we are seeing is well beyond what Spurgeon fought against 130 years ago. But at the root of it is still the low view of the all sufficiency of scripture. We would do well to learn from history.

Christ warned that a church with lukewarm views He would ‘*spew out of his mouth*’ (Rev.3:15,16).

If we discredit the written scriptures or diminish them in any way, we surely discredit the author! The issue is not just does the Bible have errors, but can God allow errors into His Word! * *If God created the universe in a perfect order, is He not capable of inspiring and keeping a perfect Word?* If the Bible contains errors and is not preserved as inerrant, then God might not be completely omnipotent and omniscient. Why would the Psalmist say ‘*Forever, O Lord, your word is settled in heaven*’ (Ps.119:89); ‘*The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. You shall keep them, O Lord, You shall preserve them from this generation forever*’ (Ps.12:6,7)? We cannot expect the Word of God to ‘*divide asunder soul and spirit*’ and to ‘*discern the thoughts and intents of our hearts*’ (Heb.4:12) if we do not believe the Word of God is one hundred percent God breathed and accurate. How can we be fully surrendered to the sanctifying work of the Spirit when *that work is done by the word of God* (Jn.17:17) and yet we have diminished that very word in our churches? *We must receive every word as from Him and not judge it but be judged by it, because that is the very standard by which we will one day be judged!* ‘*He that rejects me, and receives not my words, has one that judges him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day*’ (Jn.12:48).

‘*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness*’ (2Tim.3:16).

Terry Arnold

*We are not saying translations are inerrant but rather the original autographs of which we have accurate copies. A further resource is ‘*The Battle For The Bible*’ by the author, which discusses inspiration, preservation and translation in more detail.

Hi Terry & Mike, I recently read the following in an American Christian newsletter of some repute [Berean Call]: ‘I have been told by several Calvinists that I can’t understand the Bible - not even John 3:16 - because I don’t know the original languages. If so, then neither does the average Christian, but he must look to experts to interpret it for him - experts who therefore stand between him and God. Far from biblical, this is elitism similar to Roman Catholicism, which discourages ordinary members from studying the Bible because only the magisterial (bishops in concert with the Pope) can interpret it’.

I know you both espouse the doctrines of the sovereignty of God in the salvation of the elect saints - but is this what you also believe? I do so hope not - to align these doctrines with Roman Catholicism seems to be such heresy? ...

(J.J. NSW)

Sub-editor’s reply:

I have yet to hear of any ‘Calvinist’ making such unscholarly claims. However, John 3:16 is widely misused by many when they assume the word ‘whosoever includes ‘anyone of their own free will’ - which is wrongly read into the text. Anyone who does not ‘know the original languages’ and is an ‘average Christian and not an ‘expert’ can go to an interlinear and see the ‘original languages’ for themselves! Here it is transliterated: ‘For so loved the God the world that the His son the unique [only begotten] He gave that all the believing ones in [on] Him no perish but have life eternal’. The ‘whosoever’ is literally ‘the believing ones’. John 3 shows the context of this also.

The Berean Call is well known for its misrepresentation of historic ‘Calvinism’. Our book ‘Calvinism & Arminianism - Out of the Maze’ addresses this. For anyone to state that ‘Calvinists’ aspire to ‘elitism similar to Roman Catholicism’ and ‘discourage’ people from studying the Bible ‘because only the magisterial can interpret it’ - this is a disparaging straw man. Such would be a pathetic attempt to avoid the real issues of sovereign election which we do stand on, along with almost all the Reformers, the Puritans, the martyrs, the commentators, the KJV translators and more. We stand with all these divines and the likes of Charles Spurgeon who called ‘Calvinism’ a ‘nickname’ for what was the ‘Doctrines of Grace’. Today ‘Calvinism’ has become a name attached to unscholarly misrepresentations of, and myths associated with, these Biblical doctrines.

Terry, have you ever done any sermons on Galatians 3:13 and the ‘curse’...

Editor’s Reply:

I may have two or three sermons that at least would mention the ‘curse’?: ‘The Great Nailing’, ‘The blotting out’ and ‘The Great Exchange (2Cor.5:21)’.

Romans 4). The keeping or not keeping any Mosaic laws or rituals did not take away from the righteousness they already had in Christ. Similarly, if one wants to keep Jewish laws, they would be free to do so but it gains not one iota of righteousness which can only be imputed upon belief (Rom.4:1-5).

Acts 24:14 ‘...I confess...so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets’

This is part of a defence before a governor and accusations by the Jews. He worships the ‘God of his fathers’ and believed all things ‘written in the law and the prophets’. All which were TRUE. The ‘law and the prophets’ were the entire Old Testament (OT). In Acts the disciples were reading from the OT. His defence was accurate and true. The Jews had no reply to this.

His ‘righteousness’ was not found in the law but in Christ! Phil.3:9 ‘And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith’.

Acts 25:8 ‘...Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Caesar, have I offended any thing at all’

This further defence is added to chapter 24 (see above). Paul had neither broken Jewish law, or the temple, or Caesar’s law. His crime was preaching Christ the Messiah and a righteousness through him and not of law.

James 2:14-26 ‘...though a man say he has faith, and have not works? Can [that] faith save him? ...faith, if it has not works, is dead...a man may say, you have faith, and I have works: show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. ...the devils also believe, and tremble...faith without works is dead...Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? See you how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?...the Scripture was fulfilled...Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: ...faith without works is dead also’.

This is a passage dealing with a true faith vs a false faith. Note the word ‘say’ referring to a false profession that does not have works. A true faith and the righteousness imputed from that by faith will have works. If it does not have works it is ‘dead’ even if one might ‘say’ he has faith. Vs.16 shows the works that must accompany a true faith. Note the conclusion: ‘Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness’ - quoted in Romans 4 as for a faith without works! The Devil has ‘faith’ but not a true faith or with works (vs.19). Abraham was justified, proved in faith by his work. James speaks of a work before men and a justification by faith but proved by works; Paul (in Romans) is faith before God and the imputation of righteousness without works. Righteousness is only credited on faith alone but ‘that faith’ has works and thus Abraham was ‘proved’ by this to be ‘justified’. Key words are ‘say’ and ‘works’.

The Healing ‘Lockdown’



In the May/June edition of *Diakrisis* in an article ‘Where is the healing from the Corona’ we reported on the hypocrisy of the faith healers. We named many who prior to the epidemic had claimed mass healings, others who stated they would not get the corona virus and yet then they contracted it and without any healing. Some, (such as Kenneth Copeland) even made false prophecies that the virus would be eradicated by a certain date or event. Major Charismatic and signs and wonders church leaders who espouse the doctrines of healing and gifts of healing have fallen sick, some even dying. We asked the question - where is the healing and why are these healers now in ‘lockdown’, hiding and silent?

Yet again recently major Hillsong leaders have fallen victim to the virus. Andrew Gard and his wife, Christina, are lead pastors of Grace City Church in Lakeland, Florida. Both pastors contracted the virus and announced their members would wear masks.* No mention was made of any healing. Instead they submitted themselves to be ‘tested’ and to be found positive. The church activities were paused and members were told to wear masks for a ‘safe environment’ to be established.

The Corona virus continues to sweep across the USA infecting and killing Christians and non Christians alike, including many church leaders who teach and claim the gift of healings. What better way would there be to prove the doctrine of the healing gifts than to go to the victims and start healing people of this deadly disease? Why were they not in China and other countries in the beginning? Why are they silent?

* *Christian Post* report by Leonardo Blair, June 30th 2020

J.I. Packer

Out of concern that the glowing tributes flowing in for J.I. Packer will lead the gullible to search for his writings, and as a consequence also be drawn into supporting his gospel-compromising ecumenical stance, it sadly must be pointed out that J.I.Packer did not practice what he wrote. He could articulate a Biblically sound point of view but then do totally the opposite in practice. He was an Ecumenical in the extreme – he enthusiastically endorsed the 1994 ‘*Evangelicals and Catholics Together: The Christian Mission for the Third Millennium*’ document. Not only did he endorse it but when challenged as to how he could have come to do such a thing he wrote a defence of what he had done. In doing so Mr. Packer had totally betrayed what he claimed to believe about core matters such as ‘justification’. He was disfellowshipped by the likes of Martyn Lloyd Jones, and strongly challenged by John MacArthur and Dave Hunt and others, all to no avail. His writings need to be approached with this in mind – if at all?

Mike Claydon

Phil Pringle's False Prophecy

Phil Pringle of the 'C3' church is well known for false prophecies. Here is another made before 2020 concerning his 'agreeing with God' for a world revival involving a certain number of his churches being planted....

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M83hMhQNsJE>

China's Social Gospel By Persecution



As part of China's ongoing crackdown on Christianity, Communist authorities have converted a number of state-approved Three-Self churches into cultural centers promoting President Xi Jinping's socialist values. Flowing Stream Church in Funing County's Yangzai township, Jiangsu province was forcibly occupied by officials with

China's Communist Party and converted to 'Yangzai Township Flowing Stream Village Cultural Service Center' ...The building is used to promote President Xi's core socialist values and spread 'positive energy' instead of the Gospel. Another church in the vicinity, Beizhouzhuang Church, was converted to 'Beizhouzhuang Cultural Compound' after the members 'voluntarily donated the venue for the village (according to the government)'....In the Yangbu town local authorities demolished the cross of a Three-Self church...to convert the church into a facility for the elderly...Poor Christian villagers in several provinces were ordered to renounce their faith and replace displays of Jesus with portraits of Chairman Mao and President Xi or risk losing welfare benefits...The Chinese government is using mass surveillance and data modelling to monitor and punish citizens who choose to attend church or share religious material.'
(Leah MarieAnn Klett, *Christian Post*, July 21, 2020)

Editor's Comment:

The Chinese government is doing what many, if not most Christian churches have already done in the west. The former is by persecution, the latter by apostasy! Many modern churches are already centres for social/cultural gospels or as Spurgeon called them 'theatre houses'.

How much do we really value the true Gospel? - the one that speaks of Christ crucified because of our sinful nature with such 'filthy rags' that God in His love would send his only divine Son to pay the penalty in full that we could never pay - to satisfy the wrath of a holy God. This is the only Gospel which if man responds in faith to, that any could ever enter into a perfect kingdom and live with a perfect God for eternity.

This is the Gospel the Chinese government will never completely demolish. It is the Gospel which our religious leaders and churches have forsaken for a social, cultural, self centred, entertaining counterfeit.

of Christ Himself who has met all of its claims. The righteousness of the law is also fulfilled in us as we 'walk after the Spirit' (Rom.8:4) and 'fulfil the law of Christ' (Gal.6:2; James 2:8).

The Bible teaches there is *no salvation by the law or the keeping of it* (Rom.3:20). The 'law' was a 'shadow' of things to come (Col.2:16; Heb.10). It had to be 'fulfilled' and 'established' for us (Rom.3:31). Jesus 'established' it in His perfect life by obedience to it...

More scriptures that relate: We are '*not under the law but under Grace*' (Rom.6:14; Gal.5:18); we are 'dead' to it '*by the body of Christ*' and 'delivered' from it (Rom.7:4-6). We are '*not justified (made righteous) by any works of the law*' but only '*by faith*' (Gal.2:16). '*Christ is the end of the law for righteousness...*' (Rom.10:4). '*Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us...*' (Gal.3:13).

These above scriptures are not contradictory unless one has a faulty view of the purpose of the law. 1Tim.1:9-11 '*Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine; According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust*'.

To 'break' ('luo') the law (Matt.5:19) is to loosen, untie, make light of it. The context (and vs.20) also refers to the Pharisees as guilty of this.

The great evangelists of old were *teachers of the law to show sin* and the need of God's righteousness. The 'law of Christ' and all the commands of Christ must also be taught and not be 'broken', lessened.

Acts 21:17-26 '...Thou see, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law: 21 And they are informed of thee, that you teach all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs...24 Them take, and purify yourself...that you yourself also walk orderly, and keep the law. 25 As touching the Gentiles...they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication...'

This scripture is a practical example of being '*all things to all men*'. The disciples here fulfilled some Jewish rituals to comply with Jewish customs, laws. (Missionaries today might accommodate customs in similar ways). Verse 25 is a key verse here '*...the Gentiles which believe, we have written...they observe no such thing*' - ie. the purification rituals in the previous verses. They were only required to keep from '*things offered to idols...*'. The word '*signify*' here means a sign that the Jews would approve of. The 'law' in verse 20 is not the 'law of Christ' but *the law of Moses*. Following this the Gospel was preached and there was a riot!

The disciples were already saved by the imputed righteousness (of

Your Comments and Questions

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

Hi Terry, I read your article 'The Forgotten Doctrine - an Alien Righteousness' [Diakrisis July/August 2020]. My question is how do the following scriptures fit in? Matt.5:17-20; Acts 21:17-26; 24:14; 25:8; James 2:14-26...I enjoy reading Diakrisis newsletter.

(T.D., NSW)

Editor's Reply (excerpts):

Matt.5:17-20 'Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven'.

Jesus states he did not come to rid us of the law but to 'fulfil' ('pleroo') for us - to fulfil its demands, requirements, judgements...Christ's substitutionary sacrifice on our behalf does this for believers.

The whole and every law must be kept perfectly! Without the law being kept perfectly, there can be no entrance into a perfect Heaven with a perfect judge. Every sin, transgression of the law, has to be paid for. No one can do this except by a substitution!...This is why we need a substitutionary righteousness! - a righteousness alien to us but credited to us on behalf of what the sinless Christ has done in keeping the law perfectly and paying for every last sin with His blood. A death for our death! This is the righteousness that 'shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees' (vs.20).

In verse 19 'Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments...' - the 'commandments' here are not just the 'ten commandments' as some groups teach (not the 'nomos' law but the 'entoles'). The context is the sermon on the mount in the verses beforehand. His teachings follow - about anger, marriage, divorce, giving, prayer, etc. The 'commandments' ('entoles') - are the teachings of Jesus and scripture. This is much wider than the 10 commandments of vs.18 - 'the law' ('nomos'). They are the laws and precepts taught by Christ. Some refer to this as the 'law of Christ' mentioned after the cross in the New Testament. The 'law', 'testimony', 'statutes', 'commandments' are often synonymous with the NT Word of God itself (Jn.14:15; 1Jn.2:3-5; 1Jn.3:22...). In Jn.13:34 Jesus teaches: 'A new commandment ('entole') I give unto you, That you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another'. There is now a new relationship with the Law - through faith. It still says 'obey' but it cannot say 'disobey and you perish'. Our new relationship to the Law is that

A Fresh Look at Revelation

Part 4

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 the language and referencing to other scriptures. It is necessary to have 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 and tracking the same symbols, signs and wording elsewhere.

In **Part 3** (see *Diakrisis* July/August 2020) we saw the first of three distinct judgements beginning with the seven 'seals' (ch.6), all increasing in intensity.

Part 4 - Chapters 8:6-9:11

8:6-13 'And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound. The first angel sounded and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up. And the second angel sounded and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood; And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed. And the third angel sounded and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers and upon the fountains of waters; And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters because they were made bitter. And the fourth angel sounded and the third part of the sun was smitten and the third part of the moon and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise. And I beheld and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven saying with a loud voice Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels yet to sound!'

The second set of seven judgements begin - the Trumpet Judgements. The angels in turn blow a trumpet followed by a judgement upon the earth.

The first angel sounds and 'hail and fire mingled with blood' is 'cast upon the earth'. All grass and one third of trees are burnt up. These are literal events no less than the plagues of Egypt were real. (This first trumpet judgement bears a similarity to Exodus 9:22-26). Many have spiritualised these events to be events that have occurred in history, but this makes the interpreter the final authority.

The second angel sounds and 'as it were a great mountain burning with fire

was cast into the sea'. The 'as it were' is the manner in which John saw and could only describe it. It is possible John is seeing a meteor or similar object which would cause the damage described here. The result is 'the third part of the sea became blood...the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died...the third part of the ships were destroyed'. (Again similar to one of the plagues of Egypt - Ex.9:14-21). Also note the repetition of a 'third part' which is mentioned eleven times in this passage of chapter 8 alone and often in other places associated with God's judgements. In his mercy God does not destroy all.

The third angel sounds and 'there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp'. Again, note the 'as it were'. John is describing what he sees 'as it were a lamp' falling upon 'a third part of the rivers and upon the fountains of waters'. John calls this a 'star' which makes the waters to become 'wormwood'.

The word 'wormwood' ('ápsinthos') refers to a poisonous bitterness and is mentioned eight times in scripture and associated with judgement (Dt.29:18; Pr.5:4; Jer.9:15; 23:15; Lam.3:15,19; Amos 5:7; Rev.8:11). 'Many men' die in this judgement because of these poisonous waters.

The fourth angel sounds and 'the third part of the sun was smitten [struck]' as well as a 'third part of the moon...and the stars'. All were 'darkened' so that only a third part of the day and night had light. (Again, similar to Exodus 10:21-23).

The next event is a parenthetical clause, a pause, before the last three trumpet judgements. John 'hears' an angel 'flying' through the middle of Heaven. We are not told that angels have wings but we are told they appear to 'fly' (Rev.14:6). Here the angel warns the 'inhabitants of the earth' of the three next 'voices of the trumpet of the three angels'. He cries with 'a loud voice' - 'woe, woe, woe'. The word 'woe' ('ouai') is used 36 times in the New Testament and always in the context of warning or judgement, often used against the scribes and Pharisees. Paul also used it as a warning to himself if he did 'not preach the Gospel' (1Cor.9:16). It is here an expression of indignation and judgement. The next three judgements are called 'woes' (9:12) 'by reason of' what is to come - the stage being set for an increasing intensity in these last three trumpets or 'woes'.

9:1-12 'And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads. And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was the torment of a scorpion, when he strikes a man. And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them. And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men. And they had hair as

the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions. And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle. And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months. And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue has his name Apollyon. One woe is past; and, behold, there come two woes more hereafter'.

The fifth angel sounds and a 'star' falls from Heaven. This 'star' is not a literal star because we are told it refers to a being, an angel who is given 'the key' to the 'bottomless pit'. Angels are referred to as 'stars' (Rev.12:4). (The author does not see this angel as the same as the 'angel of the bottomless pit' in vs.11).

The 'bottomless pit' ('ábussos') is mentioned at least seven times in scripture (Rev.9:1,2,11; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1,3). It refers to a very deep abode, a place where evil beings are confined ('chained'). This is not 'Hades' (the 'Hell' now), or the 'Lake of Fire' (the final 'Hell' - 'géenna'). Many commentators see this 'pit' as the 'Hell' ('tartaróo') mentioned in 2 Peter 2:4 where angels are kept.

When the angel 'opens' the pit 'there arose a smoke...as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit'. If there is 'smoke of a great furnace' and enough to 'darken the sun and air', then arguably this place has fire, as does Hades and Gehenna.

'Locusts' ascend to the earth with 'power as the scorpions of the earth', not to hurt vegetation but 'only those men which have not the seal in their foreheads' (vs.4). Authority ('exousía') is given to these creatures to 'torment' for 'five months' but 'not to kill' men. This torment will be so severe that 'in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it'.

These creatures will not harm 'those' who have 'the seal of God in their foreheads'. (Perhaps in addition to the 144,000 Jews sealed (7:4) their converts, who turn to Christ during these trumpet judgements, may also receive a seal?)

John sees these creatures as 'like unto horses' in battle array with 'crowns', 'faces of men' with 'hair of a women', 'teeth of lions', 'breastplates of iron' and the sound of their 'wings' is as of many 'chariots of many horses running to battle'. They had 'stings in their tails'. Note the words 'like', 'as', 'as it were' which are common when John is describing something future with what he has seen only in his own time and understanding. Many do see the above description of these creatures as strikingly similar to modern day strike aircraft. However, because pronouns are used here and they have a 'king over them', the 'angel of the bottomless pit', whose name is 'Abaddon' (Hebrew) or 'Apollúon' (Greek) meaning 'destroyer', they are arguably more than likely demonic creatures.

These passages are a graphic account of what is to come. God is a God of perfect judgement. His sovereignty is displayed in total control of the events to wind up the affairs of the world. A perfect God has to have a perfect judgement. Our rescue from any of this judgement is in Christ Jesus who has fully paid the judgement of our sin. He comes quickly.

Terry Arnold

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