

# The Contender

"CONTEND FOR THE FAITH WHICH WAS ONCE DELIVERED UNTO THE SAINTS" JUDE 3

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## The Book of Life, Part 2



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We ended part one dealing with the apostle Paul's admonition to one of his young co-workers in the gospel, Timothy. To whom he wrote, "But shun profane and vain babblings, for they will increase unto more ungodliness." That is verse 16 of 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy, chapter

1

2. Now surely no one would think that he was meaning more ungodliness in the sense that they would drink more, or smoke more, or gamble more. No. He was talking about how that certain kind of mind is always surmising, projecting ideas that are food for thought, like some of the great theologians of our day. Men such as this appear to some people as being men of great wisdom, but in the eyes of God, their surmises are looked upon as ungodliness. In verse 17 Paul goes ahead to give an example of what he is talking about, saying, "And their word (these who pick at the scriptures, and project ideas that are food for thought) will eat as doth a canker: (Have any of you ever looked up Webster's definition of the word canker? One of the definitions

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given is, To corrupt with a malignancy of mind or spirit, and that is exactly what Paul is pointing to, in the example he gives) of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.” We know nothing else about these two individuals, but it had become evident to Paul, that what they were doing had the same effect in the minds of people, that gangrene does in our physical flesh; it just simply corrupts and eats away that which is there. What those two fellows were doing very plainly demonstrates another characteristic of that tare spirit, for what they were projecting was a false teaching. No. They did not just suddenly spring that teaching on anyone. They built up to it very slowly, by pointing out certain things that would leave just a little thread of doubt in the minds of some people, as to what certain statements meant. The main body of believers that had been taught by Paul, Peter, John, and men like that, were not led astray; but as Paul said, the faith of some had been overthrown by their

teaching, or by their remarks. One thing is sure though: Paul was not going to change his revelation, as he makes very clear in these next verses. Notice now, verse 19, “Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, (In other words, Do not let any of this disturb you saints.) The Lord knoweth them that are His. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ (Those who are truly born again) depart from iniquity,” (or unrighteousness.) If we are truly born of the Spirit of God: we do not need to allow our ears to be filled by adverse opinions, from people who only have selfish motives, people who want to make a name for themselves, or who have been set among you for the sole purpose of trying to lead you astray from the revelation of truth. Nevertheless Paul comes right back to cover the entire scope of what Christianity would identify with, through the ages of time: For according to the parables of Jesus, the tares were destined to get in among the true children of God at some point in time, so notice verse 20. “But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but

also of wood and of earth; and some to honor, and some to dishonor.” This is not the same example he used in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 3:12, where he spoke of gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, and stubble, for in that example, he was dealing with individual works, and here in his letter to Timothy, he is dealing with the body as a whole, which is the house of God, just like Jacob’s children were referred to as the house of Jacob.

## **SPIRITUALLY** **HEALTHY CHRISTIANS**

Paul had been in governors’ mansions, and the homes of various dignitaries, and he had observed the different vessels sitting around, and the fact that some of them were priceless, and others were of little or no earthly value, so he used that in speaking of the different vessels (people) associated with the house of God, which is the Church. There would be those worthless vessels sitting in the church, waiting for an opportunity to participate in the

affairs of the body, and the way the devil would use them, would prove that they were vessels of dishonor. Therefore he concludes by saying, “If a man therefore purge himself from these, (a true son of God will) He shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet (or fit) for the Master’s use, and prepared unto every good work.” You have to realize that the tare spirit did not get in, by the devil bringing someone down the road, that wanted everyone to start drinking again. No. It was through individuals that presented little revelations contrary to apostolic teaching, and there had to be some who believed them, or it still would not have worked as it did. But the person that is truly born of the Spirit of God, has a longing deep down within his heart, to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ, and they are ever searching for spiritual food that the Spirit in them will bear witness with. The Spirit of God in them causes them to hunger and thirst for His true word; for that is how they grow in the stature of Jesus Christ. Let us go to the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter of 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter, and notice what he had to say, along these lines. Verse 5, “And

besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.” Of course the word charity means love, the kind of love God has for us. This is Peter’s formula for becoming a healthy Christian, fit for the Master’s use. When you catch a true picture of what Peter was really talking about, you realize that it is something that could not be preached in a denominational church; they do not want to hear it. Oh they like to harp on love and unity, which is what has led most of them into the great ecumenical movement that is sweeping the world today. But Saints: The unity they have is built upon compromise, rather than Christ-likeness. They are not interested in the kind of knowledge that reveals what the true plan and purpose of God is, concerning lost mankind. Their greatest concern, is to be faithful to their particular system’s teachings and programs. You try to talk to them about the deeper things of the word of God, and

they will puff out their chest and say something like this; I’ll have you know that I have been faithful to my church for 31 years. I have such and such a number of awards for perfect attendance in Sunday School, and I have always paid my tithes, so do not try to tell me that I still need more. There is just no spiritual hunger there. Instead, there is pride and conceit, and self-centered ambition. Well these things that Peter mentioned, are the spiritual attributes of Jesus Christ, that are to be molded and fashioned, not in the flesh, but in the spiritual character of our lives. This is a picture of the image that God has predetermined to make us conformable to; therefore Peter is not talking to the general multitude of religious people in the world; he is talking to the elect, the foreknown of God. Verse 8, “For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” The end result of all of this, is that the branches are pruned to the point where they will bear fruit of the nature of Christ. The average churchgoer never really sees the Jesus of the Bible, that was always busy about

doing the Father's will in every area of His life. All they will ever see is a baby in a manger, and a sacrifice on the cross, and they have no real revelation of that, or they would not be sold out to a denominational system of religion. A true revelation of the word of God produces a unity of the faith, that is genuine. Yet each one of these denominational systems have certain doctrines they teach, that the other denominations disagree with. That is why I said their unity requires a compromise. But as Peter writes a believer he says, concerning these attributes of Christ, "But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall." The true child of God does not just drift along, depending upon God's foreknowledge and predestination, without ever taking precautions, and without applying righteous principles and motives in his life. For we have all been made to realize that the devil is always setting traps for the

children of God, trying to get them off course in one way or another, and he will do it, if we do not keep our guard up. Now am I saying that you will lose your salvation? No. Not if you have the real thing. But you can sure get yourself into lot of trouble, if your dedication is not what it ought to be. For the benefit of you who need to hear it again, let me say, You will never be born again by the Spirit of God but one time. The reason so many people think otherwise, is because of the picture tares have painted. Their version of Christianity has people saved today, lost tomorrow, and saved again in the next revival. The one thing that you need to remember, as you consider all of this, is that a tare is a make believer. He may feel real religious at times, but without the Holy Ghost abiding in him, he has nothing at all to secure him, when fleshly demands require him to turn back to the world. Preacher: Do you mean to tell me that those people deliberately come to church and pretend to get saved, and that it is all known of them ahead of time? No. They hear the gospel call, but the devil will not let them surrender their lives

completely to God; therefore what they thrive on is a mental concept of what a Christian is supposed to be, and do, and that is what causes them to put so much emphasis on their good works. But regardless of how many good works they do, that tare spirit in them puts them exactly where Cain stood that day; when he had brought the best of the works of his hands for an offering to God, and God had no respect for his offering. Bro. Jackson: Why are you saying all these things about these people? Sometimes it is more effective to show what a Christian IS NOT; than to try to paint a picture of what a Christian is. It is one thing to say, A Christian is a person that has truly been born again by the Spirit of God, but for many people, there are still a lot of questions to be answered after that, and this helps clear them up.

## **WHAT ANTICHRIST SPIRITS DO**

Alright let us turn right on over to the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter of 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter, where

he is dealing with that tare spirit he saw coming down the road. Actually the last two verses of chapter 1 are what opens up the door for what he says in chapter two; so let us read them first. “Knowing this first that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.” (They do not mean one thing to one person, or persons, and something else to someone else.) For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, and what ever they meant, they were to mean the same thing to everyone who received a revelation of them. They were never meant to be used to prove a point for our personal gain. But just like today, wherever there is a genuine, you will usually find a false somewhere around, and that is what Peter leads into, in chapter 2. “But there were false prophets also among the people, (back there in the Old Testament times, always trying to disrupt the plan of God) even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, (little deviations from the truth at first) even denying the Lord that bought them (Yes, the

price he paid was sufficient for all who would acknowledge it) and bring upon themselves swift destruction.” That is the final state of those who allow Satan to use them in this way; no matter how religious they may seem to be. Being religious is not necessarily the same as being a child of God. As we have already pointed out, Cain and Judas were religious; but they were not sons of God. Well Peter wrote this letter along about the same time that Paul wrote the 2<sup>nd</sup> Epistle to Timothy, when gentiles were being converted, right out of raw paganism where they had been used to worshipping all sorts of deities. Therefore it was hard for a lot of them to rid their mind of all that pagan junk, and it made them easy prey for these tares to work among. Those Judiastic tares did not attack the Godhead; they would reach back into the law and bring up something that they would hold up before the Gentiles saying to them that they could not be saved unless they observed so and so. That is what the Galatian Church was going through, when Paul wrote to them. Those tare preachers from Judaism had come among them, and got them in an

uproar; so when he wrote: he reminded them that neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love. (Gal. 5:7) “Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? This persuasion cometh not of Him that calleth you.” He reminded them that it was not God sending these preachers among them, and he had already said in chapter 1, if any man preach any other gospel unto you, different from that which you have already received, let him be accursed. He used no uncertain terms, concerning anyone who would preach something different to them, than the revelation he had preached, which was the gospel of their salvation. Paul knew that what they were preaching was antichrist doctrine, and he knew that it was of a tare spirit, so he did not need to beat around the bush about it, and Peter felt the same way: as is evident in what we started to read. Speaking of the false teachers that would one day be among them, he said, “And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.” He knew that sooner or later, that

tare spirit would come among them, and would corrupt the minds of some that were not already established in the truth. It is hard for us to look back 1900 years, and really perceive how all of this was brought about. Christians in the world today have always had tares among them, and therefore have not known what it was like to have that tare spirit knocking at the church house door, trying to get in. As a matter of fact, this generation has experienced almost the opposite of that. For truth was on the outside knocking, and the tares tried to keep it out. Well they managed to keep the truth out of their systems of religion, but they could not keep the truth from pulling those predestined seed of God out from among them. You will not find the true children of God to be conformable in the ritualistic programs of those systems this late in time, for God has already sent His messenger to this age, to pull them out. God is giving us every opportunity to understand the real truth of His word, and He is doing it in a slow, progressive way, giving us plenty of time to allow the Holy Spirit to open it up to us. That is why we

are able to recognize that tare spirit when it is sitting among us; for sooner or later, it just has to deviate from the truth a little bit. The spirit that causes these people to say, Well I just do not see it that way; I see it more like this, is the spirit that keeps them from going all the way with God.

## **EAGLES AND** **BUZZARDS**

Let me just use a little illustration to show you how tares act, and react. When Bro. Branham was still alive, before it became obvious that certain people were actually projecting the thought that he was Jesus: you would not have imagined that such a thought would enter anyone's mind. Everyone sat there so nice and quiet; it just seemed that they were all like little birds feasting on nice juicy worms, the way they appeared to be feasting on the truth of God's word. They were thanking God for sending a prophet, and declaring that they had never heard it like this, while they were in those systems of



religion. That little man would stand there and preach about the eagle stirring her nest, and oh, how everyone would rejoice; yet God knew that not every one of those characters inside that nest were eagles. No Sir: Not that nest. There were characters in that nest that never should have been there in the first place, for they were Spiritual buzzards. Their kind were still back there in those places they came out of. Well we know now that him being the messenger to this age: he cast out the huge net and it was filled with some of every kind. That is how God manifests those who are truly His; they are given the word test, and their answers determine what spirit they are really of. So as we look a little further here, After the man delivered the message to this age, which was the light to guide us out of the darkness of those systems; the first stick God yanked out of that nest, was the man that had delivered the message. That left us all sitting there on the edge of a cliff, wondering, Where do we go from here? All of those that had been sitting so comfortable in that nest, being fed the best that the Creator had, when that nest was torn to

pieces; had to go out and live on their own. Brother! The wind picked up some of them, and blew them away, and they have not been heard from since. But there were some others, that began to flap their stubby little wings, and try to fly, when the truth is, they were not even able to walk. These are the ones that have taken the man's sermons and made them their Bible for this day and hour. Why did they do that? Because the Spirit they already had in them, is what interpreted those messages for them; and I can tell you for sure, it was not the Spirit of God. They still think they are eagles, but they have never yet been able to fly, and the truth is, They never will. But as Peter said, "Many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of." Verse 3 really sums it all up, especially the first part, which says, "And through covetousness (wanting to be recognized as having sat under the teaching of God's prophet) shall they with feigned words (false doctrine) make merchandise of you." Those who try to follow these characters, are forever being sold out, and traded around, like a

pocket knife, or a two dollar watch; for their revelation is always changing, every time you meet one of them somewhere; it seems that they have just received a new revelation from some statement Bro. Branham made; in such and such a message. We have just taken what Peter said, over 1900 years ago, and given it a twentieth century application. Peter saw that tare spirit coming, and we can look back and see where it has been; but to face stark reality, is to recognize that it is still very much among us. Peter wrote this epistle in 66 A.D., and by 96 A.D., that tare spirit was knocking on the door of every little assembly of saints. I do not mean to make it sound like only the small assemblies were troubled; that is just my way of expressing it.

### **IDENTIFYING THE TRUE - AND THE FALSE**

Let us go on over to the little epistle of 2<sup>nd</sup> John, written in 90 A.D., by the same apostle who wrote the gospel of St. John, and

also the book of Revelation. The book of Revelation was written in 96 A.S., and John was the only one of the original apostles, that was still alive at that time. So here in this little epistle, we will start with verse 6. He is admonishing them, because of the tare spirit that is running the roads, and says, "And this is love, that we walk after his commandments." (The commandments of Christ, which all of the apostles taught.) That is why I preached the message, "Born Again, And Know It." That takes church membership out of the picture, in this present hour of time. For the person who is truly born again by the Spirit of God: has a yearning deep down within his heart; God teach me. He does not give us this new birth just to make us a better Baptist, or Catholic. It does just the opposite of that; it pulls you out of those systems. "And this is love." In other words, This is the way to see the real love of God. "That we walk after His commandments." The Charismatics out here in the world today, think they have found the true application of this love the scriptures speak of, but they are missing it altogether; because their revelation of the

Godhead is wrong. You cannot know anything about the real love of God, (how to express it) when you are rejecting the very truth that would enable you to know Him. Verse 7, "For many deceivers are entered into the world, (knocking on every church house door) who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist." Not the major one that is yet to come; but a minor one, of many that have plagued the true children of God all these many centuries of time since those apostles of Christ passed from the scene. "Look to yourselves, (He is talking to the elect,) that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward." In other words, this is John's way of saying, Hold to those things you have been taught, so that we who have labored among you, to accomplish this for God, in your lives, do not come up short of a reward. My, my: Listen to verse 9. "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, (or teaching of Christ, as has been related by His apostles,) hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath

both the Father and the Son." Not two persons, (for Jesus was the only person) but the Spirit of both the Father and the Son, because they were merged into one Spirit. That is why, in some scriptures, we read that we have the Spirit of God in us, and then again, that we have the Spirit of His Son in us, or the Spirit of Christ. It is all one and the selfsame Spirit, for when the Omnipresent Spirit of the Father incarnated His Son Jesus, there at the Jordan that day, they became one Spirit. "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed (God bless you) is partaker of his evil deeds." John was an old man when he wrote these scriptures. He has stood for truth, fought the battles, seen a lot of things come and go, and here it seems that he is taking time to write this letter to the ones he loved: to tell them how to behave themselves; and how to carry on, in order to stay out of Satan's traps. John know Satan would really be after the next generation of believers, and he desired to reinforce them before his departure, that they also might

continue to bear a true image of Christianity.

## **WHY I SPEAK OF TARES**

We will get into the book of Revelation later, where we will see that by 96 A.D. the tares had been successful in getting into some of the churches, and were beginning to set the stage for the devil's long awaited plan; whereby he would disrupt the whole redemption process of God's redeeming grace. He was never able to keep any of the predestined seed out of the kingdom of God, but he sure did succeed in destroying the apostolic image, that the Church had carried, through those early years after it's birth. As I said earlier, It is in the book of Revelation that we read where our names were written in the book of life before the foundation of the world. But there are many scriptures that speak of the Elect, predestination and foreordination according to foreknowledge, and all such as this; enough to let us know that those apostles of Christ

all believed the same thing. Oh they each one had their own style of presenting the truth, but you will never find where any one of them ever preached anything contrary to what the others preached. There is an awful lot of criticism out here in the world today, of the doctrines of predestination, eternal security of the believer, and what God did through His foreknowledge. But I just have to say, Any preacher that would preach against any of these Bible doctrines, is sure not anointed of the Holy Ghost. They really resent hearing anyone refer to tares in this day and hour, but I just have to feel that Jesus tacked that title on to the negative element of what is referred to as Christianity, for a reason, and I feel that if He called them tares, it is all right for me to do likewise. I do not try to pick them out; I leave that to the Holy Ghost; but when you see manifestations that you know could not come from a born again child of God, can you help that? Just remember this; A tare is not one thing, and an antichrist something else; it is all of the same spirit. It is just two different expressions of the same thing; for in reality, Satan is the father of it

all, and God knew every one of them would be what they are, before the foundation of the world. You may sometimes feel that I am going to seed on certain things, but I just have to turn back to the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter of Ephesians, and read it again, because it states so well, in such few words, what men have wrote volumes trying to explain. Paul was a prisoner, in Rome, but he knew full well that those Ephesian believers truly exemplified the elect of God, chosen in Christ. This church was born off of that great revival recorded in Acts 19 and 20, and they bore a true image of Christianity all the way through the first age of Christendom. But actually, when Paul wrote this, in 64 A.D., it carried an application to all believers of the 1<sup>st</sup> age.

## WE ARE BLESSED

In chapter 1, verse 3, we read, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." When Paul used the word

US, he knew who he was writing to; he knew their lives and the image they bore as the elect of God. Now as we have already stated, Only those who were foreknown of the father will ever experience the new birth, but nevertheless, the gospel call has always been whosoever will, let him come, or let him take the water of life freely. Jesus purchased enough salvation for all men and women, and boys and girls, who would ever live in this old world: and it is free to all who will accept it; but God forces it upon no one. You may think, because we preach and teach election and predestination, and that no one can come to Jesus unless the Father (Spirit) draws him, that we believe God forces His elect into the kingdom; but that is not true at all. He does not force anyone to accept His plan of redemption, but I assure you, He knew from before the foundation of the world: who would accept it, and who would reject it. That is how some come to be referred to as the elect; because by foreknowledge, God knew what their choice would be. But even the serpent seed have felt the drawing power of God, for God

gives every one of them their chance to go all the way with Him. That is why Paul said in Romans 9:14, "What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid." I will say this though, Unrighteous mankind does not just up and choose the time when he or she is going to accept the Savior and become born again. The Spirit of God controls that; for most of the time, we as individuals are not looking for God when we come face to face with Him; (so to speak) He finds us. Well I said I wanted to read these scriptures again, so let us read verse 4. "According as He (God) hath chosen us in Him (Jesus the Christ) before the foundation of the world, (Because of his foreknowledge) that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love." Do not ever picture God as trying to get something done, but gets all mixed up, and ends up with a lot of mistakes. No. He knew exactly what He was doing, every time He made a move. His final purpose is, "That we should be holy and without blame before Him in love." The children of the very fountain of love, should also have that same kind of love one for

another, just like God has for us. That is what John was talking about, over in his little epistles, and that is also what Paul is thinking about as he states what this sovereign God has done, and why He has done it. He continues in verse 5 saying, "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, (According to what?) According to the good pleasure of His will." Saints: That one verse, standing alone, is enough to let us know that we are never going to get God to change his mind about anything, for because of His foreknowledge, everything was already a completed picture in His mind, before He ever started to create anything. He knew how stubborn I would be. He knew how critical you would be. But He also knew when we would accept Him; therefore He knew when to draw us, by His convicting Spirit, that we might receive the inheritance, or at least a measure of the inheritance, that was already set aside for us, so to speak. In every case, these epistles were written to the faithful in Christ, the elect. They speak of that negative element, which are tares, but there is no

message nor admonition in any of them, that is to the tares. All of those writers of the epistles, were aware of the antichrist spirit that would run parallel to the Spirit of God; in an effort to throw the church off course; but as long as they were alive, they stood against its influence, and kept it under control. It was only after the death of the last one of the original apostles, that the devil seemed to get the go-ahead for his evil plot against the Church of the Living God. But when he got the thing rolling, it rolled right on through centuries of time, and almost swallowed up all the light of truth. Nevertheless God always preserves a seed, no matter how dark things may get, because He has already determined to perfect an element of people, and mold them into the very spiritual image of His only begotten Son.

### LOOK TO YOUR EXAMPLE

Now even though Satan could not get much of a foothold as long as those original apostles were alive, we can see from these epistles that

as early as 54 A.D., when Paul wrote to the Thessalonian assembly, there was already reason for him to recognize that there was an antichrist spirit to be dealt with. There is one thing we need to keep in mind though: These apostles were all Jewish men. Their lives and mentality had been molded by the Old Testament law and prophets; therefore they knew assuredly that a new dispensation had come upon them; wherein that which they had looked forward to, was now a reality, and God had given to them the original revelation of how it was to be proclaimed. He also gave them the wisdom and understanding to know how to deal with any contrary spirit that might come down the road. Therefore even though Paul was in prison, in Rome, in 64 A.D., he was faithful to his calling; and wrote letters of encouragement, admonition, and warning to the various churches; and in the Philippian epistle, there is something that I would like to call your attention to, at this time. Turn to chapter 3, verse 17, and notice how he says this. This is the Church that was established as a result of Paul and Silas being in

jail, and the old Philippian jailor getting converted. So the years have come and gone, and now from his prison cell, Paul has an occasion to write to them, and here is what I want to call to your attention at this time. Verse 17, "Brethren be followers together of me, (Not of his flesh, but of his dedicated manner of life.) And mark them which walk so as ye have us for an example." In other words, Mark those that follow us in the same pattern of truth and Christian conduct, as you have us for an example. It was not the flesh of the people, but the way of truth that they upheld, that Paul was concerned about, so notice what he says about the tare element he sees coming upon the scene. "For many walk, (are making their rounds trying to get in) of whom I have told you often, (This shows that he had already been warning them of the fact that they would be troubled by false teachers) and now tell you weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things." Now surely, none of you think Paul was talking

about the drunks that hung around the local saloon. No. He was speaking of an element of people among them: that supposedly had been converted, but refused to adhere to the ways of true Christian conduct, and had ideas contrary to the truth that the Church had been founded upon. This has led them into a completely different life style, and caused them to present a picture that was not compatible with true Christianity. But notice, Paul is not saying, pray for them, and try to get them straightened out; he said rather, Their end is destruction. They never were saved; yet they had gone through the process and pretended to be. As I said, That is how tares first got into the assemblies of the saints. You may have thought the tares just stormed the Church and took over; but, No. They first came up from within the local assemblies; that is why it took so long for them to outnumber the true saints. Now as we have also said, In most outward appearances tares looked just like the children of God; so what you have to realize is, that there is a difference in the spirit. That tare spirit, no matter how religious it



may cause people to appear, is an antichrist spirit. It will always lead to a deviation from the truth; and as Paul said, They mind earthly things (instead of being led by the Spirit of God.) “For our conversation (our manner of life) is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, (That is our hope. That is what we are looking for. I certainly would not want to continue on forever in this one, in its present state.) That it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself.” Brothers and Sisters: when you really stop to think what we really do have in store for us, it ought to get you excited. Hallelujah! Brother we will no longer have to be concerned about tooth decay, nor about losing our hair, nor about what causes cancer, tuberculosis, and heart attacks; we will have an immortal body just like Jesus. Death will no longer be in the picture; and tares will not longer be among us. What a glorious thought. That is when God will have the family on earth, that His

great heart has longed for, if I may use that expression.

### **WHO ARE OF THE SAME MIND IN THE LORD?**

Alright now, notice chapter 4, as Paul brings his thought back to the saints he is writing to. “Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, (Why would he talk like that about them? It was because they were the first fruits of his ministry and revelation.) My joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.” It is obvious that he is directing these words to those whom he knows are chosen in Christ, the elect of God who hold a pure revelation in their hearts. But he has a further word of admonition for two certain individuals within the group, who must have had a little disagreement about something, so notice how he worded it. You can talk like this to those you know are saints of God; for they have the attributes within them, to heed

such an admonition. “I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord.” There is no use talking to tares like that, for the spirit in them causes them to have a mind of their own. You just get away from them, and leave them alone. But these few little verses here, let us know that there was a Spirit in that apostolic hour, that knew how to watch people. It observed first, what they believed, and how faithful they were to it; then the manner of life they lived, and how sensitive they were to the leading of God’s Spirit, and whether they would take correction or not. Brother those old guardians of the faith, were not deceived by that slick talking tare element, Satan began to breed up among them. They knew what they were dealing with, and God gave them wisdom, on how to keep everything under control; so that nothing got ahead of its time. Well Paul went ahead saying, “And I entreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellow laborers, whose names are in the book of life.” That was the first mention of

the book of life, in the epistles of the New Testament. But it lets us know that Paul knew they were true children of God, chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. If he had never mentioned anything about that other element, you might have reason to think He did not know the difference; but it is very obvious that he did. When you study all of the epistles he wrote, you will find that he clearly identified both those of the Spirit of God, as well as those who were of that contrary spirit, the spirit of antichrist, which is the spirit of the devil. He did not call anyone a tare, just because of some personal feelings he might have had about them; he made sure he identified the spirit that ruled their lives first. He had a clear revelation of what was recorded in the book of life, and he knew that God does not own an eraser. He does not need one; for He never makes a mistake.

## **EVIL MEN AND** **SEDUCERS**

Let us go back into the 2<sup>nd</sup> epistle of Paul to Timothy, and in chapter 3, refresh our minds of what he wrote concerning these last days. Approximately two years after writing the Philippian epistle, still in jail in Rome, Paul no doubt has heard reports from those coming to visit him, that let him know what was going on; and how that tare spirit was making inroads, and being the man he was: he took every bit of it before the Lord in prayer, and by the inspiration of the Spirit of God, he wrote this second letter to Timothy, a young preacher that had been much help to him in his ministry; as well as to him personally. In the beginning of the letter, he speaks of the unfeigned faith that was in Timothy, and tells him not to be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord. But the point we want to get to, is in chapter 3. "This know also, that in the last days," I believe we would all have to admit that we are now living in the last days, that Paul was talking about; would you not say so? Furthermore I believe we are living in the end of those last days; and that Jesus will soon come for His little bride. Why do I believe that? Because when I

look at world conditions, both in the world at large, and also in what the world calls, "THE CHURCH," and I think of the rapid deterioration of morals, in the past few years, I realize that at such a downward trend, if the Lord allowed it to go on for many years yet, this generation that is supposed to see the end of all that Jesus spoke of, would pass from the scene, and the world would be filled with one big corrupt mass of humanity, filthier and meaner than animals. Furthermore all of the conditions that Jesus said would be in the world in the end time are already present, even in the realm of religion; so I believe we are living in the end of the last days, Paul was referring to. "This know also, that in the last days, perilous time shall come. For men (and women) shall be lovers of their own selves, (This is a picture of that humanistic spirit, that is running rampant in the world today. That spirit does not give any recognition to God, or Satan. It's attention is strictly focused on the physical being of man, and what man can achieve through his own intellect.) Covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents,

unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.” Now that is a long list of unchristlike attributes, but all of unregenerate mankind is represented somewhere within that long list. Not every word applies to every unsaved person; but certainly it covers the general condition of unregenerate mankind, here at the end of the grace age and especially the part that speak of people being without natural affection, and being lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. Brother, if God is recognized at all, He has to be fitted in, between sports events and personal pleasures. This attitude in the lives of professing Christians, is what Paul was thinking of there in verse 5; when he said, concerning some of these, “Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: (and his admonition was) from such, turn away.” Now I will just sort of skip through these next verses in an effort to get on down to verses 13 and 14. He says these people will be “Ever learning, and never

able to come to the knowledge of the truth.” That condition is at its peak right now, and it is causing people to do some strange things, even to the point of what you would call blasphemy against the truth. Paul speaks of persecutions, and afflictions that he personally has suffered for the cause of Christ, and declares with no uncertain terms, “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” You may not suffer everything Paul suffered; but if you stand for truth in this hour, you are a misfit and a spiritual outcast, and you are forced to recognize that this world is not your home. Hallelujah! We are just passing by. So Paul says this, “But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them.” Now don’t you ever think he was talking about the Mafia, when he spoke of evil men and seducers; he was talking about those tares and what they would do; once they got a foot hold in the realm of the Church. Brother you can see some of them on television

every week, doing exactly what Paul said, deceiving, and being deceived. They fight against apostolic doctrine; but they really love to preach on healing, and the baptism of the Holy Spirit; for this is two things that the flesh can enjoy. The reason their flesh enjoys what they refer to as the baptism of the Holy Spirit, is because the Spirit they receive never leads them into all truth. It requires nothing more of them than to enjoy the manifestations whereby the flesh is blessed. Furthermore a lot of them are always telling people how to get rich quick. It usually requires you to send an offering, and let them pray for you; that god will increase your substance. The methods they use are just plain deceptive. You never read where any of the apostles ever used methods like that. But of course only a tare would, for the true children of God know better than that. They know God did not call them to be beggars for Him; nor to promote deceptive programs to raise money. Nevertheless we know the tares are among us; and that they will go straight through to the end. It is only at the end of the age that the Lord sends forth

His angels to bundle them up and get them ready to be burned. Oh yes, the bundling process is already in effect, but the true children of God will not be completely free of them until the very end of the age.

### **WHO ARE VAIN TALKERS?**

Let us just look right on over in the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter of Titus, while we are here, Titus was a young fellow like Timothy, who was also a fellow worker with Paul in the gospel; so Paul wrote to him, concerning a condition among the Cretian Christians that needed to be straightened out; and the church set in order. He first reminded him of the qualifications of bishops in the Church, and tells him that by sound doctrine, one ought to be able to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. Then he wrote this, "For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, especially they of the circumcision: Whose mouths must be stopped." Now he

specifically pointed out that these vain talkers were primarily of the circumcision. This means that they were law-keeping Jews, that supposedly had been converted to the Christian faith, but Paul knew they had not been genuinely converted. That is why he referred to them as vain talkers and deceivers whose mouths must be stopped. He was discerned that they did not have the Holy Ghost in them; but how were their mouths to be stopped? Did Paul want Titus to run in among them and tell those self appointed preachers and prophets to shut up? They no doubt had gotten in among the Jewish Christians and pretended to be saved, but Paul knew that if they had been converted by that same Spirit that was in these other Christians; they would not act like this. They would not speak against Moses nor the law, but neither would they try to convince others that a person must be circumcised and keep the law, in order to be saved. Paul knew what spirit was in them; and what they were trying to do among the Christians; and he knew that their influence had to be stopped, at any cost, but it had to be done by teaching sound

doctrine to the Christians; so that they would not pay any attention to any other kind of preaching. This was not a strange occurrence to Paul; he had run into the same situation years before that, in the Galatian assembly. But at least in that apostolic age, that spirit of Antichrist was identified and dealt with; and the Church was kept clean. We have been co-existing with the tares for so many generations now, these scriptures have just been lying dormant with no one knowing how to apply them. This is the day when everyone is a Christian, no matter what they believe. How many times have you heard someone say, We may not see eye to eye on the scriptures, but we are all headed to the same place? What a deception! Yet if you tell them the truth, they accuse you of belonging to a cult. The world accepts this tare element of religion to be representative of the Church of the living God, and therefore anyone that differs with it is a heretic. But of these tare preachers, Paul said this, (verse 11) "Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's

sake.” Do we have any of that sort of thing going on today? Yes, it is just like the brother said last night, Some of these preachers will preach for ten or fifteen minutes, and take a half hour to beg and plead for money. You will hear them say, God has given me a revelation, or a vision of how to reach the world for Jesus; but I need you to stand with me. It all sounds heart rending, but the Holy Ghost is not in it. They are just teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre’s sake. Well this next verse lets us know that Paul himself has heard what one of these prophets in that category has said about the Cretian Christians. “One of themselves, (one of these tare preachers) even a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies.” This is language hard for us to understand in our day, but it is a picture of how that preacher, whoever he was, belittled those Cretian Christians. His accusations were based on the background of the Cretian people, and Paul knew what their background was, the lifestyle they came from, and all of that. But he also knew that the Spirit of God in

them, would make them into new creatures, so he said to Titus, “This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, (the Christians; not the tare preacher) that they may be sound in the faith; Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth.” In other words, Titus: Tell those people to forget all those old traditions of their past, and ignore these tare preachers that try to fill their heads with junk, and be renewed in the spirit of their minds, to reflect the Lord Jesus Christ; that they now have in them by the new birth. Then he summed it up like this, “Unto the pure (That is the believer that is filled with the Holy Ghost.) All things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled. They profess that they know God; (Sure, They all do.) But in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.” No matter what they preached, and regardless of the fact that they were Jews, Paul knew that the Spirit in them would never point anyone to Jesus Christ. A tare will

never be a child of God; they are make believers and do not have within them, anything that can present a true Christian image. Oh they can put on a good act, as long as everything is going well, but when you cross them with something that rubs them the wrong way, look out: for their true nature reacts.

## **BABY CHRISTIANS**

Alright let us go into the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> chapters of the epistle to the Hebrews, and see how Paul dealt with their situation. This epistle was also written in 64 A.D., while Paul was a prisoner in Rome, and it was written to Jewish Christians who were in dispersion. That is why it is called, the epistle to the Hebrews; the word Hebrew, means foreigner. There were Gentile Christians among them, of course, but it was addressed primarily to the Jewish element, because he deals much with the law, and what those types and shadows pointed to. But what we want to look at now, is what Paul said to those who had failed to

grow beyond the baby stage in their Christian experience, so we will start with verse 11, in chapter 5. He is speaking to them of the high priest Christ Jesus, in terms that they are familiar with, and in verse 11 says, “Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. (In other words, This lets us know that Paul has come to realize that these Christians are not ready to receive deep teaching in the things of God. Why? Verse 12 begins to state why.) For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; (What he is saying in no uncertain terms is this, You have been saved long enough, that you ought to be able to teach someone else by now; but you are still baby Christians yourselves, that cannot even digest the real meat of the scriptures) and are become such as have need of milk (Milk is the very elementary truths pertaining to the salvation experience, as you will see here) and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.” The picture Paul sees, is that they



have not progressed much beyond repentance, baptism, the laying on of hands for the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and believing in the second resurrection, and so forth; therefore he gets pretty plain with them in his remarks. Notice, “But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.” In other words, Milk is for babies; because babies are not born with teeth. But as they take that milk and begin to grow on it, God has ordained that nature itself would cause teeth to start growing in those little gums, and when they get enough teeth to chew solid food, Nature itself demands that they be weaned from the milk, and that they start taking solid food. No, it is not done in a day’s time, but little by little, the transition is made, and spiritually it is supposed to work the same way; but in this case, it has not, and that causes Paul to say, “therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, (Now that does not mean that we do away with those basic doctrines; we are supposed to build upon them) let us go into perfection; not laying again the

foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God.” These basic doctrines are comparable to what children learn in their first year of school, regardless of what their first year is called. When I went to school, they called it the Primer grade. That is where we started to learn the primary things that pertained to our total education. But when we passed from the Primer grade to the next grade, we did not discard what we had already learned; we just built upon it. Once you learned these basic things, you no longer need to constantly rehearse them, and dwell upon them, but neither do you forget them; they are the foundation upon which your total education is built. Therefore spiritually, it is the same way; when you leave these basic truths, to move on in the stream of perfection, you do not discard them; you just build upon them. So what Paul is saying is, Once this foundation is laid, there is no need to keep laying it; you leave it right there and built upon it, and he mentions those basic truths that some people never get beyond. In verse 2 we see the rest of those basic things he

mentioned. “Of the doctrine of baptisms, (of water and of Spirit) and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. (Leave those things, and go into perfection.) And this we will do, if God permit.” If the spirit of conviction causes us to realize that we have done something that was not pleasing to the Lord: we do not need to hear a sermon on repentance, and get baptized again, and start all over, we should just get down on our knees in the bedroom, or the corn crib, or somewhere, and just tell the Lord all about it. Learning to do that is a part of our spiritual growth. In other words, We should get these basic truths settled and know where we stand spiritually, so we do not continually have doubts and misgivings about it. You will never grow very much spiritually, as long as you continue to have doubts about your salvation experience, so get that part settled once and for all, and then you can leave those first principles of the oracles of God, (as Paul referred to them) and go on into the deeper things that bring statural growth to your inner man.

## **WHAT ABOUT FALLING AWAY?**

Before we read verse 4, let me say this, People who fight against election and predestination, always like to use this particular scripture, because without a revelation of the truth of God’s word, they think this scripture says that a person who has been born again by the Spirit of God, can actually fall from grace, and be lost again. Brothers and Sisters: That is as far from the truth as they could possibly get; for it proves that they do not have confidence in the fact of God’s faithfulness concerning the sure promises made to the true believer. “For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put

Him to an open shame.” Paul was not even talking about true believers here; this pertains to the reaction of tares, as they sit among true saints, and partake of those heavenly blessings the Holy Ghost showers down upon them. A tare does not come staggering into the church and take the pulpit. No. He is an individual that from all external appearances, has given his heart to God, and is looking for the same things the children of God are looking for. Satan has to robe his children to appear the same as God’s children, if he is to accomplish his purpose of deception. Remember what we read in 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 11:13-15, where Paul warned them about the appearance and purpose of those tares that would come among them. “For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.” You will never find one of these instruments of Satan

telling anyone that there is no God; they work just like the old serpent did with Eve: Now you know God did not mean for you to be different than other Christians. Oh, Yes, He did; for that which you get compared to, is not representing apostolic teaching. Well God may have said so and so, but He did not mean for us to take it literally. Oh Yes, He did; Those apostles did not concoct those instructions for Christian conduct out of their own thoughts, and from selfish motives; they were inspired of God, just like Paul said to Timothy, in his 2<sup>nd</sup> epistle 3:16-17. “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable (in what way) for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” Brothers and Sisters: I want to assure you of one thing: Paul knew what spirit these individuals were of, who fell into the category of what he was talking about. To taste of something is one thing; but to make it your daily diet, is something else altogether. When I tasted of the Holy Ghost for the first time; my spiritual taste buds

were activated; and I have never been able to get enough yet. Whatever he serves up; I love it; but that is not true with a tare who loves Holy Ghost demonstrations, but detests Holy Ghost correction. When they come in; and sit among you, they feel that same convicting power of God that you feel; and it will make them feel remorseful and such like. But you must understand, that deep within the spirit of that individual is another spirit embedded; that has him locked up. He can feel the Spirit of God moving, and he loves the sensations it brings, but it cannot ever get deep enough within him, to cause him to have an appetite for all of the revealed word of God. Therefore it only affects their emotional makeup, and leaves them void of the true nature of Jesus Christ: that the Spirit of God is cultivating in the lives of true believers. They come into Faith Assembly here, and if people are not running the aisles, jumping benches, and tearing up something; they go away and say, That is the deadest place I have ever been in. What you preach does not concern them; unless they are trying to build something for themselves. If they are trying

to get a following of their own, they will find fault with the preaching, in an underhanded way, always to call attention to themselves. Naturally there are always some who will jump in the boat with them; but true saints that have been fed properly will measure them up by the scriptures, and discern the spirit that is motivating them. According to the words of Jesus in Matthew 24, it is not possible for the very elect of God to be deceived completely, but these false apostles (tares) will present themselves in such a way, that only by genuine Holy Ghost discernment will their evil hearts be revealed. God has allowed it to be like that though, that is a test His true children are faced with, and must overcome; but they will overcome because their names are already written in the book of life from before the foundation of the world.

## **THESE HAVE CAIN'S SPIRIT**

I will not say where it came from, nor who wrote it, but I received a letter one time from a man in a certain church, (and I always recognize this spirit) which said, Bro. Jackson: We appreciate the Contender and the truth you bring out, But when are you going to preach on the woman's head covering? He said, You do not see much of that any more, women coming to church with her head covering on. By this time, I already knew that this thing called a head covering was nothing more than mockery anyhow, for the only head covering God ever put on a woman, is hair. Man has added these other things, because of his lack of revelation of the scriptures. Furthermore there are a lot of tongue speaking Pentecostal women going to their organized churches, wearing their little hats that are supposed to mean they are in subjection. Yet you can go into their homes between church services, and you will find that they have yanked that thing off, and they are the boss. When she comes to church with that thing on, you would think she is really a saint of God. She can preach you a sermon, shout louder than anyone else,

and dance up and down the aisle; but the rest of the time she is meaner than a snake. Now please understand: I am not belittling the saint that can shout like that from a pure heart; but for everyone that can, there are probably 4 or 5 that cannot. You may think this sounds awfully negative, but the reason it does is because I am presenting the negative side. The scripture that got us on this subject requires this kind of an explanation, lest people fail to catch the truth of it, and allow the devil to torment their mind. I am going to read that scripture again, and then we will go to a scripture that will allow us to see what this is all about. Many, through the ages of time, have tasted of this heavenly gift; but not in the same way the true saints taste it. Their lives have not been changed by what they tasted, no more than Cain's life was, when God spoke to him by an audible voice. Do not tell me Cain never had a chance to do right; for the Bible tells me that he did. We have already read it, but just to paraphrase the event, God said, Cain: Why are you angry? Do you not know that if you do well, you will be accepted? You will have to agree:

Cain did have an opportunity to do right; so what more could God have done for him? He could see his brother, over there under the glory of God; just rejoicing in the Spirit: and he had the same opportunity offered to him, but chose otherwise. So the point is, There are things we can learn by watching how God deals with others. Do not ever get too proud to examine yourself, and what you are doing. I am not saying that we should be copy-cats, but we can certainly learn what God will accept, by watching others. We do not have to ask questions, if we will just observe. Cain could see how Abel's sacrifice was offered; and he could have done likewise. But, no, his mind was already made up, and he was not going to change it; even if God did speak to him in an audible voice, and offer him the opportunity. He no doubt thought, My melons and tomatoes are just as good as that bloody old sheep; and furthermore, that is inhumane. Well, that is the same spirit that is on these modernists of our day; but the important thing is, What will God accept? If God was only interested in something beautiful, then what was wrong

with Cain's fruit and vegetable basket? I doubt if you could have found anything more beautiful that it was, but God wanted something that was offered by a revelation of the worshiper. Therefore Cain forfeited his opportunity, because he had no revelation of why God required a blood sacrifice. That same spirit caused Esau to sell his birthright for a little bowl of soup, when he felt like he was starving to death. Do you think God will just overlook a thing like that? No. Never. That is why the scripture says, Though he sought it with tears, he found no place of repentance for what he had done. In other words, He knew he had done wrong, and he knew that he could not undo what he had done; therefore he could never find any justified thought of expression that he felt would merit forgiveness from God. What he did was not done in ignorance; he knew perfectly well what he was doing, but considered it unimportant at the time. That is how the spirit works; it always causes those that it controls to miss the mark, no matter what kind of opportunity they have in life. Many people, though they do

not have the Holy Ghost themselves, they have been in places where they have been partakers of Holy Ghost blessings, and they have heard the truth and received a basic knowledge of the primary things of Christ, and been offered every opportunity to go all the way with God; but something always draws them away, before total commitment. Alright, now that we know who it applies to, let us read that scripture again. "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good work of God, and the powers of the world to come, (the Millennium) If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame." I can assure you, on the authority of the word of God, that no person who ever truly received the baptism of the Holy Ghost in the new birth experience, has ever been guilty of doing that. But God knows exactly how to deal with tares that sit among the saints. His word does not even tell us how to deal with them; for He

Himself takes care of them in due time.

### **SAME RAIN - BUT DIFFERENT RESULTS**

Well Paul goes ahead in verses 7-8, and gives an illustration of what he is talking about. "For the earth (the part which has been tilled and prepared, and seed sown in it) which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: But that which beareth thorns and briars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing: whose end is to be burned." The point here, in the first example, shows that the earth which has been properly prepared, receives blessing from God, and it brings forth fruit fit for the one that prepared it. But the old unprepared earth receives the same rain and sunshine, and all it produces is weeds, and thorns, and such like. That is Paul's way of saying, The Spirit of God can fall on a large gathering of people, and they will all feel the effects of

it, but they will not all come forth unto righteousness. Some will come forth as what God wants, and the rest will come forth as what the devil wants. In other words, Those individuals whose lives have not been cultivated and dressed, to receive the ingrafted word of God which is able to save their souls, can have the Holy Ghost rain fall on them, along with everyone else, but they will still be a briar or a thorn by nature. They may shout, jump and speak in tongues all over the place, but they will never allow the word of God to take root in them. Well the Bible does not say that we shall live by every shout that comes out of our mouth, but rather, by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. A tare will not live by every word like a true believer will endeavor to do; therefore their end is already determined; they will be burned. Not one of them goes unnoticed by the God who has given them their chance. He has them all marked. Alright Paul turns his attention back to the believer, in verse 9, and says, "But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. For God is not

unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have shewed toward His name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister." We have lived in an hour when people will not face up to the fact that there are tares sitting among them. But let me tell you, If you had lived in that first age when they were trying their best to inject their influence in among the assemblies of saints: you would not have found anyone being so nice to them; and afraid to hurt their feelings. Brother, it was just the opposite; they kept them in their place. The Spirit of God in those founding fathers identified them; and they were treated as tares.

## **WHO WENT OUT FROM US?**

Let us go back into the little epistle of 1<sup>st</sup> John, chapter 2, for a closer look at what we are endeavoring to point out about the tares that the devil has sowed in God's field. John did not have a revelation of the seven Church



Ages, and how the tare spirit would eventually be allowed to come among the saints, and remain so until the end of the grace age; so when he began to see the thing come into the picture, he naturally felt that the end was close, so notice as we go to verses 18 and 19. "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that Antichrist shall come, even now are there many Antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time." No saint was ever asked to pray for any of these vessels of Satan. They were identified, and treated as enemies of the cross of Christ; for there was not one thing that anyone could do to change them. A child of the devil is always a child of the devil; he could never be a child of God, nor a true friend to the children of God, because the two spirits clash. This little epistle was written about 26 years after the writing of the epistle to the Hebrews. Paul had been dead for many years, and John had seen a lot of things come on the scene that Paul constantly warned the saints about, and he remains faithful to the task of guarding the true revelation that the church was founded upon, so notice what he

says about those of that hour that had manifested their true nature. Verse 19. "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us." Let me dwell for a moment on that statement, "They went out from us, but they were not of us." This church is 30 years old; (I am talking about Faith Assembly) and those of us who have been in it all of those years have seen a lot of people come and go; for one reason or another. Natural circumstances have caused some to move away from the area, and many of them are not to be included in what I am going to say. But those who have left us and turned against the revelation of truth that we stand for, are of the same sort that John was writing about here. I do not mean to sound bigoted, but I am fully persuaded that we stand for a true revelation of the word of God; so what else could we believe about those who walk with us for a few years, and then turn on us, and actually hate us for what we teach? They have come here, shouted, danced, spoke in

tongues, and testified about how God sent them here, and what a wonderful revelation they have received from sitting here, and then: by and by they become offended, and turn completely against us, and try their level best to destroy any influence we might have upon anyone else. Therefore I ask you; Based upon what you know from the word of God, do true children of God conduct themselves like that? You know they do not. The Holy Ghost does not teach you something for a few years, and then all of a sudden, tell you that it is wrong. Only a devil will act like that. "They went out from us, but they were not of us, for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us, but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us." As you diagnose this thing, using the word of God to measure it by: if those people had the Holy Ghost leading them, and they had the same revelation that you had, during the time they were here, they would still be sitting right here. At least they would still be in fellowship with us, for distance does not change that. We just have to face the fact that there

comes a time when certain things have to be allowed to happen, or develop, to prove who has the Spirit of God, and who does not. For we are living in an hour when God is separating the tares from the wheat; getting ready to gather the wheat into the garner, and the tares are being bundled up for burning, according to the very words of Jesus, in Matthew 13. The Church has come through many phases, coming out of the Dark Ages, and to the place where she stands today. That is why there had to be a message that would put it all together, and bring the true revelation out of it. Fragments of the apostolic truth were scattered all around, but they had to be collected together, to present a true picture of the plan and purpose of God; and I am persuaded that we (the true church) now have the message that God will require every person alive at His coming, to give an account of. It is in the hands (so to speak) of the Holy Ghost, and He is knocking on heart's doors, and presenting it, and it is separating the tares from among the true children of God; because it requires something that a tare cannot tolerate: true fidelity to the

entire word of God. If the Holy Ghost is in you, it will lead you into all truth. That is what the Bible says. There is a deceiving, compromising spirit in the world church that says, We do not all have to believe everything exactly alike; just as long as we believe in Jesus. Brothers and Sisters: That is a lie of the devil, from the very pit of hell; for it is completely contrary to what the apostles of Christ taught in that first age. I sometimes wonder what some of these people use for a Bible, for it is obvious that they do not get their teaching from the Bible that we believe to be the authoritative word of God. The truth is, Satan has his own translators. They call Mary the mother of Jesus, a young woman, instead of a virgin, like it is correctly translated; and they change the reference to God, from HIM, to HER, and all such as that. Anything to try and pervert a true revelation, but, Hallelujah! The predestined of the Father get a true revelation anyhow, for they have something in them that makes the difference. We see that in verse 20, as we continue reading here. I like this part, "But ye have an unction (understanding, inspiration,

anointing) from the Holy One, (You not only tasted, and found that it was good, but you said, I want more.) And ye know all things." Praise God! What a privilege. God's truth is not hidden from His true children. It is only hidden from those who try to understand it through the reasoning of the mind, without the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost, which the children of God have in them: is the revealer of the whole word of God. That is why John went ahead and said, "I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth: but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth." If you are following the train of thought here, you will see that John is actually saying, Those that went out, held to a little something that was not right, always hoping of course, that sooner or later the church would open up and receive the new revelation they desired to give to it. John continues, "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is Antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son." It takes a revelation of the Godhead, in order to understand exactly what John was saying there. Those who believe that God is

three persons miss the whole picture, and so does anyone else that believes God is anything other than a sovereign Spirit, that rules the universe. An Antichrist spirit is not a Communist, nor a Nazi, nor a political spirit; it is a religious spirit that teaches contrary to what the Spirit of God teaches. "Whosoever denieth the Son, (the one person of the Godhead) the same hath not the Father: (the Spirit which is holy) but he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also." It should be understood that this applies only to those who have a true revelation of the Godhead, and not just anyone who claims to be born again. If John were writing this in our day: knowing what we know about this bunch of make believers, he would go into much more detail to clarify what he meant. But he, being a Jew, and knowing the mind and background of the Jewish people, knew that for them to acknowledge Jesus to be the son of God and their Messiah, they would have to have the Spirit which is the Father, in them. On the other hand, Gentiles have a head belief about Jesus being the Son of God; and they profess to

believe that he is the savior of lost mankind, but multitudes of those who believe like that, are void of the Spirit of God, and without revelation. They can go to church and do what true Christians do: including singing, praying, testifying, and all the rest, but they do not have the reality of that sovereign Spirit living within them, and actually directing the affairs of their lives. Therefore to the believers, John said, verse 24, "Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning, (meaning the original gospel which the apostles taught, for it was a true revelation of the Father and of the Son, and what the Son is to lost mankind, and how it was the Father IN THE SON, that actually did the works that are attributed to Jesus.) If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father." In other words, in the true revelation and understanding of how it all unfolds. "And this is the promise that He hath promised us, even eternal life." To have eternal life is to have that combined Spirit of both the Father and the Son abiding in you. That is what God

revealed to those Jews from various nations, on the day of Pentecost, when He anointed the apostle Peter to stand in the midst of them, and declare it. Alright, “These things have I written unto you concerning THEM THAT SEDUCE YOU. (The tares) but the anointing (the anointing is the Holy Ghost) which ye have received of Him abideth in you. (He is not just with you, but in you) and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him.” Brothers and Sisters: that word anointing, which pertains to the Holy Ghost, which is the combined Spirits of both the Father and the Son, is the sum of it all. If you have that Spirit in you, you are a son of God, and if you do not have, you are not a son of God, nor a daughter of God, which ever the case may be.

### **GOD’S PURPOSE**

The point I really want to emphasize, is that the Spirit of God is not a spirit that saves people just to make good Lutherans, good Baptists, and so forth, and teach them all different doctrines to fight each other with. He will save you while you are in those systems; but in this age and hour, if He does, His purpose is to get you free from that denominational bondage, and lead you into the truth of God’s word. Without the Spirit of truth (the Holy Ghost) to lead them, those people will sit right there in those denominational churches, saying, I have always been a Lutheran, and I will die a Lutheran, or what ever. It is a well established fact that you can be a good church member in one of these systems, without even knowing God. But I am so thankful that God saved my soul, even while I was in that Methodist system, and led me to a true revelation of Himself, and what He has done for me. No, He did not save me because I was a Methodist, but rather because I needed Him, and He knew that when He dealt with me; I would be willing to leave that system of religion, and follow Him.

Hallelujah! I love Him; and I just want my life to please Him. That is at the center of my purpose in life. I love this word of God, and it thrills my soul to see others brought into that same love relationship with their Creator, where they desire more than anything else, for God to lead their lives. People of the world think the Christian life is a dull one; but let me tell you something; There is no greater thrill in life than to have the Spirit of God deal with you personally, and reveal His word, and His purpose to you. Brother you can drink of the wine He serves, all night long, without having a headache, and your nerves torn all to pieces the next day.

### **WHO THE EPISTLES WERE WRITTEN TO**

One thing you should notice as you read the various epistles written by these apostles of Christ, is the introduction. They are written to the faithful in Christ, to them that are sanctified in Christ, to all the saints in Christ

Jesus, or to the church which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ, and so forth. But never will you find where they addressed their epistle to any tare, nor where any saint was ever admonished to pray for a tare. They were written in an hour when tares were beginning to appear on the scene, trying to gain an entrance within the structure of the Church. But the Holy Ghost, through these men, was always able to ward off their influence, and keep them out of the Church, and at the same time, mark them, for true saints to avoid. Instead of trying to win them to the Lord, as we see so much of today, those early Christians were taught to avoid them, and we know why: they were already children of the devil. Because of the way that Antichrist spirit worked, and because there were varied degrees in which that element of mankind possessed by that spirit, tried to influence the Church of the living God: it is hard to make one statement that covers the whole thing. Therefore let it be sufficient to say, Regardless of how some of these scriptures are worded, not one of those that ever departed from the faith were ever truly

saved. You can lay any of this right alongside of what Paul wrote in the 6<sup>th</sup> chapter of Hebrews, and you will find that Paul was not referring to anyone that had ever been born of the Spirit of God: crucifying to themselves the Son of God afresh. It was pointed to those who had had every potential offered to them, like Cain and Esau did, and yet went their own way. Instead of praying for them, the admonition was, Do not even allow them to come into your house, nor say God bless you. Of course there came a time, as those first age saints died off, and the Church had begun to enter into a downward trend, that it seemed like the image of the believer and the image of the tare started to blend together. That is when the second parable of Matthew 13 went into effect; for in that parable Jesus said, Let them grow together until harvest time. Therefore as the Church moved into that 2<sup>nd</sup> age, and that wisdom that was used to keep the Church clean, was no longer present to separate the two, many of those scriptures that had been used to deal with that contrary element, had to be left lying dormant, and it has remained so, right on

through the ages. They could not even be used in the Reformation years, because the Church still had not been restored back to the original truth, where those scriptures would be applicable. Can you just imagine the Baptist Church taking 2<sup>nd</sup> John 10 and 11, which says, "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds," and using it to refuse a Methodist person entry among them? Oh some have tried it; but can you not see how ridiculous a thing like that would be when neither one has the doctrine John was talking about? This little epistle was written just six years prior to the time when the book of Revelation was included in the scope of recorded scripture, and at that time John was still standing flatfooted against that tare spirit, and being as plain about it as anyone could possibly be. But afterward, if the two elements were to grow together, no one was going to know how to apply those scriptures, until the end time, when the apostolic doctrine has once again been restored to the

true believers, and the purpose of God requires it to be so. As I have said, I still remember the time when people from one denomination would say, concerning those of another, Do you think they are really saved? Well we know there is no salvation outside the baptism of the Holy Ghost, no matter what others may feel, nor what they say about what they feel. But those Paul referred to in Hebrews 6, had somewhere been affected by the Holy Ghost rain, and they had been given an opportunity to go all the way with God, and failed to do so. In other words, they were given accessibility to God's great plan of salvation, but that spirit of the devil which controls their inner being would not release them. People such as these, will fellowship the saints for a season, maybe even for years, but there always comes a time when they will get a different understanding of something, and the end result is, they go a different way. "They went out from us, because they were not of us." Their conviction and anointing stops when they get a different idea and go a separate way. Yes the Holy Ghost is that anointing that John was speaking

of, and His objective is not just to convict you of sin, and show you that you need a Savior, but also to lead your life and bring you to a place where your life lines up with the word of God. Therefore whatever spirit is ruling your life, will eventually manifest itself, the one for your total salvation, or the other for your eventual destruction.

### **THE EPHESIAN** **CHURCH - AND AGE**

Who would have ever thought back in the 50's and early 60's, when people came by the car loads to sit under the ministry of Bro. Branham, from just about every denomination that you could think of, that so many of them would get the wrong understanding of what he preached? They truly were partakers of the heavenly gift, that God sent among us, but the spirit that caused them to get the wrong idea and return to their denominational system, is the spirit that will lead them to destruction. Their names were



never on the book of life; no matter what they may have professed to believe. Well it was the same way with those that finally succeeded in getting in among the saints, as that first age closed out; no matter what they professed, the spirit that kept them from submitting completely to the spirit of God, was that Antichrist spirit, that spirit of destruction. Their names were never on the pages of the book of life, and never could be, because they were children of the wrong spirit. Six years after writing his third little epistle, God gave the apostle John a revelation to write and send to the churches of Asia, in which He revealed present conditions that would exist right on through the entire grace age. Those conditions exemplified in the seven churches named in the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter of the book of Revelation. I am not going to preach on the Church Ages at this time, but I do want to look at the picture that those seven churches portrayed, as that Antichrist spirit began to make its inroads. In 96 A.D., when John wrote this book of the Bible, the church at Ephesus stood out above the other six. Do you know why? They

exemplified the church in that apostolic hour, when the revelation of God's word was still pure, and they were under the direct affects of the great commission, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." Those apostles obeyed the command, but in their hearts they knew that only those ordained to eternal life would believe to the salvation of their souls, just like Acts 13:48 says. This was written concerning the hour when Paul and Barnabas turned to the Gentiles with the gospel, after the Jews had rejected it. "And when the Gentiles heard this, (that the gospel was being offered to them) they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: AND AS MANY AS WERE ORDAINED TO ETERNAL LIFE BELIEVED." Those apostles could write epistles to the saints, and bring out predestination and election according to the foreknowledge of God, because they had a revelation of the whole thing; and these epistles became the primary means through which the believers were instructed, and through which their confidence and faith was built up in the Lord.

No believer of that hour was ever told, as many have been through the ages since: Live the very best you can each day, for if you slip you will be lost again, and will have to come back and do the same thing over again. An awful lot of poor souls have lived like that, never really having any assurance of their salvation, nor any revelation of what true salvation is. Saints: Let me say it one more time, The physical birth that brought you into this world can only take place one time; you can never be unborn. Well the spiritual birth that puts us into the family of God is the same way; it can only take place one time. Therefore those who are born into the family of God by this new birth, can never be unborn. The Holy Ghost that consummates that birth is our seal, and it is good throughout all eternity. The family of God is called the body of Christ, and we are not born into that body of believers on our own terms, we come only on God's terms, and this church at Ephesus characterized the overall application of the gospel in that first age, as it was presented by the apostles. That tare element was on the road and trying their

best, but they never could get control in that first age, and Ephesus stands out as a church that put those false apostles to the test and rejected their ministry. This is where Paul labored for a period of three years, preaching the gospel. They heard it in its unadulterated form, and they remembered it well. Then when he wrote the epistle to them in 64 A.D., he used terms like the elect, predestinated, and chosen before the foundation of the world. So you would have to say, If we were chosen before the foundation of the world, then our names were written in the book of life before the foundation of the world also. But let us look now at the letter written to that church in 96 A.D., and notice what the Lord said to them. We are in Revelation 2:2. "I know thy works, and thy labor, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil." The word evil, used here, speaks of those who have tried to teach something contrary to what Paul had already taught them. Paul knew they would come; that is why he wrote to Timothy saying, in the last days, evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse. Brother the world is full of

them today. They are so convincing; they can end up with the whole life's savings of a lot of poor souls that follow their ministries. But let us go on. He says to the Ephesian church, "And thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: and hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast labored, and hast not fainted." Up to this point, the Lord commends them for their steadfastness in defending the true revelation, and His name. They have received the true servants of God that came by to build upon the foundation Paul laid, and they have rejected all those that spoke contrary to what Paul taught them, and the Lord was pleased with that. Their example exemplified the age in which the total church, universally, had to examine those that taught them, and determine whether they were of the Lord or not. In other words, The overall spirit of that apostolic age was exemplified in that Ephesian assembly. Verse 3 speaks of their fruits, and Christian characteristics and so forth. But notice verse 4, how the tone changes. "Nevertheless I have

somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love." The one thing that stands out here, is how this church, even though it was still faithful in every way, did not have the same enthusiasm and thrill in serving the Lord, that they had in the beginning. The fire that burned so brightly in their hearts at first, has died down, and a lot of what they are doing, is now done out of habit and routine. It is easy to fall into a cycle like that: where you still do the right things, but the eagerness and thrill is no longer there. That is how people eventually end up serving God with works of their flesh, instead of with their whole heart. Listen, Saints: What we do for the Lord today, ought to be just as precious to us, as it was twenty or thirty years ago, when we first came to know Him. We should be just as determined and also have the same motives, as we had then. So the point is: Each one of these seven churches the Lord had John write to, had conditions in them in 96 A.D., that would exemplify the overall condition of the universal Church, in each one of seven specific ages, or phases, that it would pass through, before the gospel goes back to the Jews

again. In other words, The universal Church, in that first age, had everything thrown at it, and the tares kept knocking at its door, but it managed to keep them at arm's length, and keep itself clean as a whole. However these other six churches had conditions in them, even in 96 A.D., that would be the universal picture of Christianity, in the particular age it exemplified. Therefore the Church at Smyrna, even in the first church age, had conditions in it that portrayed what the universal Church would be like in the second church age.

## **SMYRNA PORTRAYED** **SECOND AGE**

The second church age was marked by poverty and martyrdom, as the tares got in, and the devil tried, through them, to rid the world of all true Christian influence. True saints were put in jail, starved, abused and killed, for the faith in Jesus Christ they held. This was the age that corresponded to the 2<sup>nd</sup> parable of Jesus, in Matthew 13.

“While men slept (that was the old guards of the faith sleeping in death.) His (the Lord’s) enemy came and sowed tares (make believers) among the wheat, (The true believers) and went this way.” Economic pressure and outright persecution brought those saints of that hour face to face with reality. They had to have the genuine, or they could not hold out against these constant bombardments from Satan; and holding out (refusing to deny their faith in Christ) meant martyrdom for many of them, and great poverty for the rest, but nevertheless, Jesus said, You are rich. Now in order to get a true picture in your mind, you must see that this one assembly had these conditions in it, at a time when the universal picture of the church as a whole, still corresponded to what the Ephesus church portrayed. In 96 A.D. the Lord looked at this church in Smyrna and saw conditions there that would prevail universally in the second age, so to them He says, “I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are

the synagogue of Satan. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer, behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” Smyrna, no doubt, was a city that did not have a strategic related position to the commercial trade routes; therefore their material lifestyle was on a very low level, compared to many others. The church in that city then, was made up mostly of poor people. Their material substance was very skimpy; but they must have had a strong faith in God, for the Lord said to them, “But thou art rich.” History shows that as time passed, and the Spirit of God moved rapidly from the first age to the second, this church at Smyrna stood in the forefront of all that the second age held. It was that tare element that betrayed the true saints, and caused them to fall into the hands of their enemies. You might be interested in reading the history of some of those such as Polycarp, in that age of martyrdom. He was pastor of the church in Smyrna, and I believe history reveals that he was the 12<sup>th</sup>

martyr of that one church, in the 2<sup>nd</sup> age. But God had already prepared him for it, and showed him exactly how he was going to die. Brother those saints did not die kicking and screaming, and begging for mercy; they faced death with their head held high, knowing that there was something in them that would never die, and it would raise them up again.

## THE PERGAMOS CHURCH

Alright the church that symbolized, or characterized the third church age, was the church in Pergamos. It was also founded off of those revival fires that burned in Ephesus, when Paul preached there for three years. Yet in 96 A.D., it was obvious that Satan had somehow moved in on them, as we will see from what the Lord had John write to them. Verse 12, “And unto the angel (pastor) of the church in Pergamos write: These things saith He which hath the sharp sword with two edges: I know thy works, and where thou dwellest,

even where Satan's seat is: (According to this, the city of Pergamos must have been Satanically infested beyond most at that time. The saints there, which had been elected in Christ, came out of that environment. The Lord saved them, and lifted them up out of all of that. Yet their previous background and the fact that they still had to be subjected to that Satanic influence all around them, was probably a very trying thing, and greatly affected their faithfulness in living for God: a truly sanctified life, yet we see as we go on, that they did have something) and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth. (He commends them for that, and then speaks of what He is displeased with.) But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication." Let us look at this carefully, and try to get the picture. This church was established by the ministry of

Paul, and we know what he taught, about such things as this. When Paul and Barnabas went up to Jerusalem, to inquire of the elders of the church there: what should be required of the Gentiles who were becoming Christians, having never known anything about the law of Moses, the determination was, Teach them to stay away from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from fornication. Therefore it stands to reason, that they knew Paul's teaching, and what he stood for. Yet in 96 A.D., roughly 40 years from the very beginning of that church, they already had conditions among them, that would not prevail in the church universally, until the 3<sup>rd</sup> church age. Antichrist individuals have somehow got in among them, and been able to gain recognition enough, that they are teaching these contrary things. What they once did, when they were out in the world, is now being taught in the church, as if it were an acceptable way of life. In other words, in 96 A.D., which was still the 1<sup>st</sup> church age, tares were already in this one church, doing the very things that the Christian church universally, would be

plagued by, in the 3<sup>rd</sup> church age, when the Roman ruler Constantine would begin to exercise his authority in the affairs of the church. He is the one that called the first church council at Nicaea, where the trinity form of baptism was adopted, in an attempt to settle a growing controversy between oneness and trinity beliefs. Nevertheless the 3<sup>rd</sup> age was the age that matched the third parable in Matthew 13. The fact that those tares got into that Pergamos Church, and changed its image, does not mean that the image of the first church age itself was marred. Those churches we are dealing with, were isolated instances, and did not change the overall picture of the spirit of the first church age one bit whatsoever. It still carried its apostolic image, as was characterized in the Ephesus church. The Pergamos church was weak, and that gave those tares an opportunity to get in, and once they are in, things begin to change, for they are of another spirit. Any person that has the Holy Ghost, should know that no person with the true Spirit of God, would ever get a revelation like those tare teachers were teaching.

Reading this ought to really keep us on our toes. For when you stop to realize how quick that spirit of Satan moved on the scene: after Paul's death, it is no wonder the picture of Christianity is what it is today, after so many centuries of being bombarded with those Antichrist teachings. Verse 15, "So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. (Now comes the admonition.) Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth." These guilty parties were given a chance to repent. All a tare can ever do, is go through the motions of repentance, and so forth. Their nature is not changed one bit whatsoever, for no matter what they do, they are still tares, and their end is to be burned in the lake of fire. For once a tare, always a tare. The destiny of those tares did not affect the eternal destiny of those elected children of God at all. Their lives on earth was affected by them, and their Christian influence was hampered, but their eternal destiny was secure: in the One that had called them, the One that recorded their names in the book

of life; before the foundation of the world.

## **THE THYATIRA** **CHURCH**

The Thyatira church, by 96 A.D., had really gone to the dogs fast, but just as we said about the others, they did not affect the overall image of the first age. Only God knows how the devil was able to take over this Christian church so soon after its beginning. But by 96 A.D., its general condition portrayed the spiritual and moral conditions that would prevail in the church universally, through those long years of the Dark Ages. Roman Catholicism took over the Christian church, changed the word of God, and ruled with an iron fist for hundreds of years, before the Spirit of God started to move upon the lives of the Reformers. The way this Thyatira church went from the fervency for God, that they had in the beginning; to the place where they were in 96 A.D., shows just how fast the devil can move in and take

over, once you begin to compromise a little here and there. Notice, “And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath His eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass; I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; the last to be more than the first.” Did you notice that works is mentioned twice, and that he said their last works were more than their first? This is the only church He said that to, and I used to wonder why He said it to them. But when the revelation came, of what this local church portrayed in its particular makeup, it is easy to understand why it is said like that, to them. The first works were those things that the church did by the true leadership of the Spirit of God, and the other works were works of the flesh, without the leadership of the Spirit of God. It does not necessarily mean that what they did was evil, as man would classify things, but many of the seemingly good things that men have done through fleshly zeal, are looked upon by the Lord as evil. Nevertheless whatever their works were, it was to portray



that spirit of Catholicism, that has built hospitals, schools and sponsored social programs all over the world. The world looks upon these various individuals of the Catholic Church that have been outstanding in some field of the humanitarian efforts of their system, as being real saints of God; and yet they are as far from being saints, as a jack rabbit or a grasshopper. There is nothing wrong with building hospitals and schools, and training young doctors, nurses and teachers, but there is not one ounce of benefit in any of that, as far as the salvation of a soul is concerned. Those true works by the leadership and direction of the Holy Spirit, are the only works that God will use in reaching lost souls with the gospel. But the Catholic Church felt that there should be a faster way to get the job done; so she designed all these social programs and relief organizations in an effort to try and do, by the works of their hands, what can be done only by the Spirit of God. You just simply cannot build the Church of Jesus Christ by any such carnal means. The Lord did not condemn the church in Thyatira for those

works, and neither will He condemn you for the seemingly good things that you do; but let me say once again, There is no true spiritual benefit in any of that. But Bro. Jackson: Don't you believe many lost souls can be won through well planned programs, which show to them that someone cares? Only if the Spirit of God draws them; and if He is not drawing them, you could never treat them well enough to make saints of God out of them. You can relieve their human suffering, and you can make church members out of them; but none of your programs will ever add one extra name to the book of life.

#### CATHOLICISM IN THYATIRA AGE

When St. Thomas left the Middle East, and went to India in 53 A.D., he probably did not have enough money to buy a new pair of shoes when he got there. He could not have built one orphan's home, nor school, if his life had depended upon it. But wherever he went, he preached the gospel of Jesus

Christ to a few Hindus, and the few that received the gospel and became converted to Christianity, so antagonized their pagan, idol worshipers, in the area of Madras, that they thrust him through with a sword, and he died in a cave. Then centuries later, along comes the Catholic Church, and builds a huge shrine, there where he was supposed to have been attacked, and also an orphanage, and a Catholic Church. That was their works, and they are known the world over for it, but do you think all of that will gain them one ounce of salvation from the Lord? I guarantee you, it will not, and neither will those works of the hands, done by those saints in Thyatira, accomplish anything for the Lord. The Lord does not use such means as that; he just goes to work on the spirit of every individual He has purposed to call to salvation, when the time is right. Well the Lord did mention some things he saw going on in that church, that He did not like, and they were things that characterized the Catholic Church, as she plunged the church into the Dark Ages; and furthermore, the spirit of Catholicism is still the same

today. The spirit of Catholicism has always been Antichrist, and her acts and deeds morally, are recorded in the pages of history, and show clearly, the kind of lives her captives have lived. So to that church, the Lord says, "Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which called herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols." My, My, you talk about slipping fast: this Church really had. I am reasonably certain that in their beginning, this Church was just as fervent for the true work of the Lord, as Ephesus was. But my mind goes back to the book of Acts, where Paul, on his way back from Corinth, going to Jerusalem, stopped off and sent for the elders of Ephesus to meet with him in a certain place, and I am convinced that men from these other churches were there also. I do not believe that he was concerned only about the saints at Ephesus, when all these others stood in the same jeopardy. But what he said to them, is what I want to call to your attention. We will look at Acts 20:28-31, and

quickly read it. I just want you to catch this prophetic utterance. "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. (Notice) Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears." I just wanted you to see for yourselves that they were adequately warned of what Satan would do, yet we find that after only about 40 years, it has happened just like Paul said it would, and some of these churches were caught off guard anyhow. By the time these letters were written to these seven churches, Paul had been dead for about 30 years already, so we do not know what he actually witnessed with his own eyes, of this Antichrist spirit working, trying to undo what had been done. But we do know that he

used very plain words, in warning the saints that it was on the way. So in 96 A.D., this church at Thyatira had been taken over by the devil, for they have allowed this woman named Jezebel, who called herself a prophetess, to get in control of what was taught in the assembly. It was no secret how Paul felt about women preachers, and about women teaching the men, yet here, it is being done, and done strictly for the devil, for she is doing the teaching and seducing the servants of God, and all such like. This lets us know that there are some men in that church, who were supposed to be the leaders of the assembly, and they were taking a secondary position of authority, under the woman Jezebel. Furthermore they have allowed this woman's character to affect their own lives, for she is teaching them to commit fornication. With whom? Herself, of course, and also to eat things sacrificed unto idols, just like in Pergamos. Well here is what the Lord said about it. "And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not." You see, God even gave her a chance to repent, but she was a

devil all along, so how could she repent? Yet she somehow managed to work her way into that assembly, on the pretense that she was a true prophetess of God. Oh yes, it is scriptural for women to prophesy; but they were never meant to assume the leadership in the Church. Phillip the evangelist, had four daughters that were prophetesses, and I am sure that they did not have to go to the woods and prophesy to each other. But I am also sure that they were never allowed to assume leadership in the Church. But this woman in the Thyatira church really had them under her spell. How many can see the picture here? Those apostles in that first age wrote their various epistles, primarily to the faithful in Christ, and reminded them of the righteous principles that the Church was to uphold, as she moved on through time, and every one of them was aware of that spirit of Satan, that was trying to gain recognition in the Church. They warned the saints of what was coming, and admonished them to reject anyone that came with a strange doctrine, and nowhere do you find that they were ever told to pray for those

people and try to win them to the Lord. Yet in 1986, people have such a mediocre attitude about Christianity, and how to get people to become Christians, they will go to any extremes to get them into the Church, whether they express any interest or not. I am sometimes amazed at the carnal attitudes of some of the people who profess to be Christians. Oh Bro. Jackson: we met a fellow the other night that is a wonderful singer, and how he plays the guitar. You know, Bro. Jackson: I just believe if we would talk to him right, we could get him to come to our church, and if we could: he would be such a blessing to the church, and we might be able to win him to the Lord in that way. Listen to me saints: That is just about as carnal as you can get. When you go out here in the world and drag devils into the church, just simply because you enjoy being around them, the day will come when they will run you off, and do as they please. The Church of the living God is not something you turn over to some well talented individual of the world, hoping that he will be a blessing to you. If you are that carnal, you would

be better off going to a night club somewhere, and listen to them on their own familiar grounds, and if he is going to be a Christian, let God convict him first, and let him come God's way. When you approach these things any way except God's ordained way, and try to manipulate it by some carnal means, you open the door for the devil to walk all over you, whether as an individual, or as a body. That is why so many churches are in the mess they are in today; they have invited the devil to come in and participate in the activities of the church, and then they wonder why they are void of the Spirit of God. It is because God has a formula for operating His Church, and if you depart from that formula, you leave Him out of the picture. Alright why did this woman Jezebel not repent? Because she was not a child of God. She had no spirit of conviction in her; therefore she was not ashamed of what she was doing. You will never get a tare to truly repent; and be genuinely sorry for their ungodly ways. But a true child of God will always repent, even if God has to whip them a little first. Anyhow, God knows exactly how

to talk to His true children, but sometimes we are like a lot of children you have seen: our minds are so involved in what we are doing, He has to yell at us to get our attention. I am sure you have seen children get so involved in what they are doing, you could speak their name a dozen times, and never get their attention, even though you are real close. What do you do then? SONNY! He jumps like he has been shot. Do you know why? His mind was lost in what he was doing. That is the way we are many times, when our Father is calling our name. But the tare is not even in the picture. God does not even try to correct them by chastening; but He does give them a chance, before He rejects them completely, just like He did this woman Jezebel. "Behold I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they (those who commit adultery with her) repent of their deeds." Now this of course, was pointing to the Dark Ages, but when you bring it right on over to 1986, and give it its spiritual application, you see these Protestant church organizations getting into bed

with the Catholic Church, the mother of all harlots.

## SPIRITUAL ADULTERY

There were two men here in church this morning that asked, Have you heard what is going on down in Louisiana, in the Catholic realm? I said, No. Among the Charismatics? No. The Catholics have a big move on, down there; and they are really having a move. They are even promising the Protestant preachers who are duly recognized preachers in the denominational churches, that if they will come along with them in this great move, and if through the influence of that move, they want to join the overall Charismatic movement, they will automatically be made a priest in the Roman Catholic Church. Brother! That sounds to me like they are all getting in the bed together; and it all started way back there almost two thousand years ago. What was exemplified in that one woman, characterized the Catholic Church from her

inception, all the way through the rest of the grace age. She has always been that kind of woman, spiritually speaking, for her doctrines have always been Antichrist, and she has never attempted to repent of her evil deeds. By the same token, those servants of God, who were committing adultery with that woman, portrayed these Protestant denominations of this age, who at one time were virtuous: by the fact that they had been pulled out of that old system, but are now going back to bed and sleeping with her; and this deceived the world of religion looks upon this as a beautiful thing. Oh how wonderful; that after all these years of fighting, there is unity again. But God said, "And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works." I hope none of you here in Faith Assembly are so spiritually blind that you think God is pleased with that spiritual adultery. That is exactly what it is, and it was exemplified in this one local church, long before the Catholic

Church was ever heard of. But God knew what the end of it all would be, for when you get on over into chapter 17 of the book of Revelation, the angel says to John, "Come hither; I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters." That was pointed straight toward the Catholic Church, that has always been an adulterous woman, seducing the servants of God. The 4<sup>th</sup> parable of Jesus, in Matthew 13:33, matches the Thyatira age perfectly. We will read that one. "Another parable spake He unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman (the Catholic Church) took, and hid in three measures of meal, (speaking of her trinity concept of the Godhead) till the whole was leavened." Her leaven is her false doctrine, that she has taught throughout the entire world. So remember, the seven parables of the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter of Matthew, the seven churches of Asia, and the seven church ages, go scripturally hand in hand. The parable, the church, and the church age all correspond, or I should say, They match exactly.

## **THE SARDIS CHURCH**

Now we come to the church in Sardis; the one I really wanted to get to, because it exemplified the age of the Lutheran move, of the Reformation. "And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write: These things saith He that hath the seven spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. (Remember this was written to a local church, still in the first church age.) Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. (Here is what I wanted to be sure to get to, before we finish up.) Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments." When the Lord said that, He had to be pointing to those few among them that were

chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. These are the ones that, no matter what the environment about them is, nor how ornery, filthy, and debased others may be: there is something in them that just simply will not allow them to be like the rest. The Holy Ghost in them will always cause them to be different. He does not force them against their will; He gives them a will to be different. "And they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment." We notice that in all the churches, after 96 A.D., the promise is to the overcomers. These of course, are those that were the elect, the chosen in Christ from before the foundation of the world. This sounds like just an overall declaration, but I want to point out something to you. God can no longer speak to the church as the separate elect body, that it was in the book of Acts, because from here on out through the rest of time, the tares will be sitting right alongside the believers, and there is no way that a tare is going to inherit the things that God has prepared for His children. He will

speak to the church as a mixed element, but He does define between those who have not been defiled, and those who have, and so forth. Yet to the mixed element He admonishes this, To him that overcometh, thereby giving all the opportunity, and accessibility to what is available to every mortal human being that will come, His way. As I said, That is why the great commission was, God into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He wanted all to hear the gospel message, but He already knew who would accept it, and who would not, in every age. He will never tell me, and He will not tell you, who is predestined, and who is not, because He does not mean for man to run this thing without Him. It was the Holy Ghost in that early church that kept the body clean and pure, and gave them that keen discernment to detect anything that was not just as clean and pure. That is how the tares were identified and kept out. But once the tares got in, and they all began to blend together, the Spirit of God no longer spoke to the church as that elect, chosen body that it once was. Every doctrine remained the same, but not every

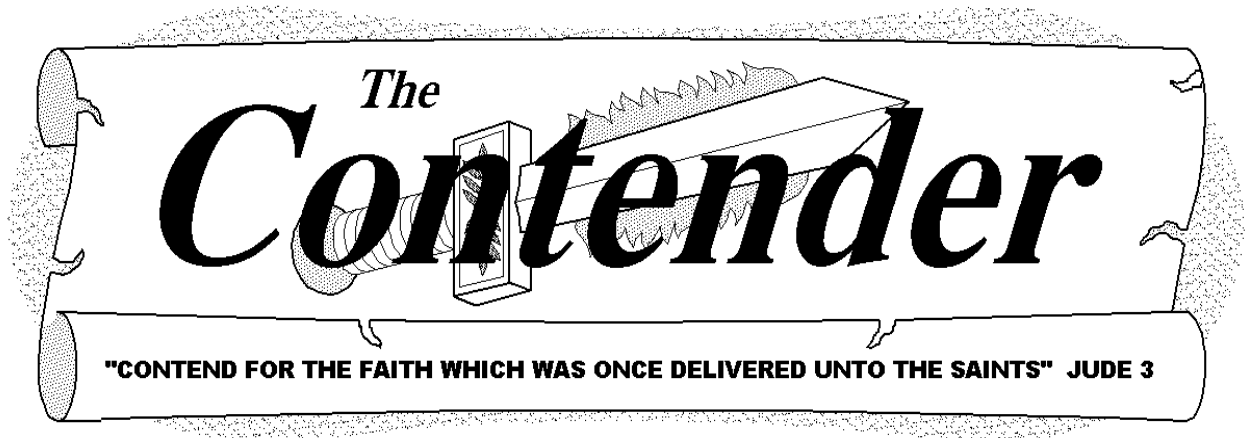


one received them the same. Therefore God speaks to the collective body, but the promises are always directed to the overcomers, because everyone that hears must live their lives as individuals, and no one will ever ride into the kingdom of God on someone else's coat tail. Through his foreknowledge, God already knows every individual that will overcome, and receive those promises, but to mortal man, He always leaves it, Whosoever will, let him come and take the water of life freely. Alright, overcomers shall be clothed in white raiment; "And I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my father, and before His angels." That is the first time that statement appears in the book of Revelation. Why would God use such terminology, if no tare ever had his name written in the book of life? Let me say this, Through the ages of time, billions of tares have lived and died, all having the same opportunity to walk with God, that anyone else had. But do you not think God knew that they would not walk with Him all the way? Do not be so foolish as to think He wrote their names in, just

in case some did decide to be true to Him. No. Their names were never in the book of life. I have never claimed to be the smartest man around, but I can see why God had to say things the way he did, even though He already knew every person that would ever be an overcomer. By making the offer to whosoever will, not one individual can stand in judgment and say, You never gave me a chance. God can point to the very hour they were given their chance, and also to the very place where they jumped ship, and deserted the cause. Therefore just as the gospel was preached to every creature, and the invitation was, whosoever will let him take the water of life freely, He can also admonish all by saying, He that overcometh will not have his name blotted out of the book of life. Remember this, Even though there are certain places in the Bible where you might think so, the Bible does not say anywhere, that God ever blotted the names of tares out of the book of life. But there are quite a few places where we see that the book of life was completed before the foundation of the world. When this life is over, and men must stand before

that great white throne to be judged, do not picture the Lord standing there with the book of life in his hand, and page after page completely blank, because of names He had to blot out. No. That book will be just like it was, before God ever created Adam.

We will not take the time to read them all, but if any of you still need more to convince you, read Revelation 13:8, 17:8, 20:12, and Matthew 25:34. If these scriptures and the illustrations we have used throughout this message are not enough to convince you, I need not say more. I will say one last thing though: The only people on the face of this earth that is ever going to understand the true message of the book of Revelation: what it is about, and who it is to, is the true bride of Jesus Christ, living in this age of Laodicea. No church system has ever understood it, and none of them ever will. It is God's love letter to the little bride, as she nears the end of the race. Amen.



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