

WISDOM OF THE WORLD VERSUS THE WISDOM OF GOD

A few years ago, I saw a documentary program about the Dead Sea Scrolls that left me completely uninterested in the subject. The main speaker, a female theologian, made a strong case that the Qumran community, which produced those documents, was a Gnostic congregation that believed in salvation through knowledge – and secret knowledge at that.

Now for those of us who believe that salvation is a matter of faith and grace from God, it placed that program outside our area of interest. For no one who believes in salvation through knowledge can be taken seriously as far as the Gospel of Jesus Christ is concerned.

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast” (Eph. 2:8-9).

Gaining salvation through knowledge would shift the focus from God to the individual, and from grace to works. The more knowledgeable one would become, the more merit he would acquire, and the surer he would be of salvation. Thus, the wise of this world, the wealthy, the high fliers, the inheritors of titles and positions, would be in a good position to ensure for themselves a nice place in the Kingdom of Heaven. The Bible, however, is telling us a different story.

1Co 1:26 For you see your calling, brethren, that **not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called.**

1Co 1:27 But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty;

1Co 1:28 and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are,

1Co 1:29 that no flesh should glory in His presence.

Act 3:17 "Yet now, brethren, I know that you did *it* in ignorance, **as *did* also your rulers.**

Act 3:18 But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled.

Act 3:19 Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,

Act 3:20 and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before,

Act 3:21 whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.

Luk 24:19 And He said to them, "What things?" So they said to Him, "The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people,

Luk 24:20 and how the chief priests and **our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him.**

Joh 7:46 The officers answered, "No man ever spoke like this Man!"

Joh 7:47 Then the Pharisees answered them, "Are you also deceived?"

Joh 7:48 **Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed in Him?**

Joh 7:49 But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed."

Joh 12:42 Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess *Him*, lest they should be put out of the synagogue;

Joh 12:43 **for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.**

So, when it came to the most important decision of their life, the wise of this world, the rulers, the Pharisees, the priests, failed abysmally. They claimed that they knew the law, yet they killed the Prince of life contrary to the law. Even those who believed in Him refused to confess Him before the people, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: “for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God”. If you think that this was a problem peculiar to the Pharisees of Jesus’ time, you do not know what has been happening in the world ever since. How many wise, how many academics, how many rulers, confess Jesus Christ before the people today? We know of none. That is, we know of none who

confess the Christ of the Gospels, for there are some who confess a christ which is foreign to the Scriptures.

If an academic were to confess Jesus Christ in one of their forums today, and said that he believed in God and in His word, the Bible, he would be ostracized from their midst and never asked to speak before them again. He would most likely lose his job too, for universities have no room for those who confess God in their midst.

Tertiary institutions – universities, colleges, seminars, institutes of higher studies – are supposed to be the repositories of knowledge in our time, yet they treat with derision and contempt the very source that would grant them the wisdom of God, the one and only wisdom worth striving for. Jesus Christ, the disciples, the prophets, gained that wisdom by obeying God and by meditating on His law. Such is the nature of God's law, that it imparts wisdom to those who meditate on it and seek to understand it.

Psa 119:97 Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day.

Psa 119:98 You, through Your commandments, make me wiser than my enemies; For they *are* ever with me.

Psa 119:99 I have more understanding than all my teachers, For Your testimonies *are* my

Psa 119:100 meditation. I understand more than the ancients, Because I keep Your precepts.

Psa 119:101 I have restrained my feet from every evil way, That I may keep Your word.

Psa 119:102 I have not departed from Your judgments, For You Yourself have taught me.

Yes, God personally teaches those who keep His commandments and are receptive to His wisdom. He makes them wiser than their enemies, and wiser than their teachers. The Pharisees of Jesus time wondered how He acquired such wisdom and authority when He had not been one of their pupils and never attended any of their rabbinical colleges.

Mat 7:28 And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching,

Mat 7:29 for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

Mat 21:23 Now when He came into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people confronted Him as He was teaching, and said, "By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority?"

Instead of inquiring how they too might acquire that kind of wisdom and authority, they were angry that they had been bypassed in the process. Later, they had a similar problem with the Apostles.

Act 4:13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with

Act 4:14 Jesus. And seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it.

Act 4:15 But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves,

Act 4:16 saying, "What shall we do to these men? For, indeed, that a notable miracle has been done through them *is* evident to all who dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny *it*."

Act 4:17 But so that it spreads no further among the people, let us severely threaten them, that from now on they speak to no man in this name."

Act 4:18 So they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of

Act 4:19 Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge.

Act 4:20 For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."

Now how did these "uneducated and untrained men" gain such power and wisdom? They gained it through the Holy Spirit. And why is no one receiving this power and wisdom today? Because they don't seek it the right way, don't believe in the Holy Spirit, and don't meditate on God's law anymore.

Jesus Christ said: "I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work" (John 9:4). This is that night. This is the darkest spiritual hour in all of human history. Yet judging by the number of religious books and programs that are available today, one could easily think that we live in the greatest spiritual age ever. A spiritual age it is indeed, but by the wrong spirit.

JUSTICE FOR ALL, EQUITY FOR NONE

Seven years ago we wrote:

“Human beings have an uncanny ability to discuss things when they get to a crisis point, then leave the problems to others to resolve. This time, however, the problems will not be resolved by others. The world is no longer facing temporary local problems, but intractable worldwide problems. It is no longer a question of survival, but one of salvation. But science cannot save; only God can.

Human beings, however, have decided that there is no room for God in their deliberations. Even when the world is crumbling around them, when it is becoming obvious that life itself is in danger of extinction, they will not turn to the only source that can save them. They seek immortality through "scientific" methods such as cryogenics (deep-freezing of the corpse in the hope that one day scientists will discover the secret of immortality, cure their diseased bodies and revive them to eternal life), and perpetual replacement of body parts with robotic devices or genetically cloned body parts. That is the kind of immortality science offers humanity.

That educated people can come up with such absurdities is a witness to the bankruptcy of our educational system. That is the effect of compartmentalizing our tertiary studies in rigid disciplines without any relation to each other. It should be obligatory for all university students to study humanity subjects. As it is, we get medical graduates without ethics, lawyers without morals, and scientists with distorted visions of the future. They need to study not just any humanity subjects, but the good old fashion classics, philosophy, and religion.

During my University studies, the head of the Religious Studies Department once said that "time was when in philosophical studies people talked about God and the meaning of life, about ethics and values, but no more." These days they have a "Theory" that if people understand what they study, it is not worth studying. Searching for truth, God, and a moral purpose in life does not go well with evolutionary thinking. In the struggle for survival there is no room for compassion, altruistic feelings and transcendental goals. Hedonistic materialism and the pursuit of mindless pleasures are the things that count in our "enlightened" society. That is why humanity finds itself on the brink of catastrophe." (*The Christian Herald* No 3, p. 4)

Have things changed since then? Surprisingly, the one institution that we thought would be immune to such suggestions, given its history and pedigree, the University of Sydney, has indeed taken this path. A prerequisite for their medical students now is a degree in humanity subjects. Now they need to do the same with their law students. But that may be easier said than done, for lawyers and humanity may prove to be a contradiction in terms.

Three years ago, my wife of fourteen years said that she could no longer cope with the demands of this work and wanted a divorce. The Jewish side of her family, who never quite came to terms with the fact that I was preaching Christ, prevailed over her in the end. So I was asked to go to court one day to settle the question of our property.

About a month earlier, I received a court subpoena from her solicitors, demanding all documents, receipts, and writings, associated with this work, from the very beginning up to that time. I did not understand why they needed everything, instead of just the documents pertaining to our finances, but I had no choice, I had to comply with their request for you cannot disobey a court order. So I handed over to her lawyers five boxes of documents.

I always assumed that the courts would settle the question of property on the basis of each one's contribution, benefits from marriage, and future earnings potential.

I had never been in a court before, and I did not know that in the adversarial system, which operates in this country, and much of the English speaking world, justice is not the main aim of the game, but determining winners and losers. Once you begin a case, lawyers take over, and you become a pawn in their hands. The problem is, their aims seem to be

completely different from yours. They have no notion of fairness or respect for the other person's dignity. Their only concern is to win at all costs. That's how they get a reputation for themselves.

I went to court alone, believing that the judge would be able to deliver a fair verdict based on the facts before him. Instead, he ignored much of what I said, and paid much attention to what my wife's high powered legal team said. For my wife, who herself was a lawyer, brought along another solicitor and a barrister. Obviously she knew something about the justice system which I didn't. For two whole days they grilled me on just about everything they could think of. They wanted to know what were my beliefs, what I wanted to achieve, what was the purpose of this work, why I wrote what I wrote, and dozens of similar questions. When they finally got to our finances, they could not believe that in seven years our donations amounted to less than a hundred dollars.

I tried to explain to them that everything we did was for free, that we never requested contributions from anyone, that we followed the Apostles of Jesus Christ who preached the Gospel for free, that this work was in fact prophesied to be done by poor people (people "clothed in sackcloth", as the Scriptures put it), but the more I tried to explain these things to them the more incredulous they became. They could not believe that after sending out thousands of letters and magazines over many years we received so little in reply. They concluded that I was not telling the truth and that I must have had secret bank accounts. And so they sent out subpoena to the local banks asking them to provide details of all accounts in my name and the name of this Foundation. When the results came in, and they found nothing, they concluded that I was mad. That suited them well, for then they could claim that I squandered money on a work of no value, and therefore my wife was entitled to much of what was left.

The judge's verdict was so outrageously skewed in her favor, it became obvious that the intent had little to do with equity and justice, and everything to do with bringing this work to an end.

About a year earlier, I was pensioned off from my work as Teacher/Librarian after injuries received in a car accident six years earlier caught up with me and I was no longer able to stand up for hours in front of students.

With the money received as compensation from that accident, I immediately paid off the mortgage on our house. Yet my wife, who was due to inherit a property worth in excess of a million dollars, whose salary was ten times the size of my pension, who could have purchased a bigger and better house in less than three years, was given the lion share of our house too. During our marriage, I supported her while she obtained three university degrees. Yet none of that had any bearing on the judge's final verdict.

That decision forced me out of Sydney, for with the little that I received, and my meager pension, I could no longer live in that expensive city. Then, unbelievably, about a month later, I was asked to go back to court. Her legal team had decided that I had lost the case, and therefore I had to pay her expenses and legal fees too. The judge, of course, agreed.

Like Pilate, at the time of Jesus Christ, he knew that he was delivering an unjust verdict, but did not have the moral strength to stand up to his peers and say: "look, this is not right, what we are doing here is wrong, this is not justice but a mockery of it, so let's do things right." Instead, he looked at me and said: "I am sorry to do this to you, Mr. Sbarcea". He understood how crooked and painful his decision would be, yet he still went ahead with it. I then replied in the hearing of all: "You are doing it to yourself, Sir".

It took me two whole years before I recovered sufficiently to produce another edition of *The Christian Herald*.

But my case is not unique. About the same time, another famous case was doing the rounds in the media. A woman had won a property settlement against her husband for the value of \$500,000. Then she received a bill from her solicitor for the amount of \$480,000. She took him to court and asked him to prove how he acquired such a bill. He couldn't. He told the judge that he kept the expenses all in his mind. You guessed it, he won the case and she had to pay additional legal costs.

Hardly a week passes by without the media highlighting more cases of gross miscarriage of justice. It is as if the judges have declared war on society and on decent citizens. A huge front page headline titled, ROUGH JUSTICE, told the case of a shop owner who apprehended a thief and held him bound until the police arrived. He was a repeated victim of this thief and his gang, yet the court charged the shop owner with assault and let the thief go free (*The Daily Telegraph*, August 8, 2000). By contrast, three days earlier, a cookware company terminated a contract with a “flamboyant celebrity” after he breached the contract by “promoting products of a rival company, failing to appear at promotional shows, offending potential customers . . . and making vulgar remarks about the audience.” The judge ordered the company to pay him \$100,000 for breach of contract. The man is a high profile homosexual.

Astonishingly, although everybody seems to know the truth about the justice system, no one can do anything about it. A cartoon in a mass circulation newspaper has a man lying on a bed in a doctor’s surgery. The doctor assesses him and says: “High IQ, no ethics, chronic liar . . . have you considered law?” (*The Sun-Herald*, July 20, 1997). Another cartoon has two women talking in a waiting room. A sign above them says, “How to recognize a psychopath in your workplace”. One of them pointing furtively to a man behind them says: “Apparently he’s a corporate lawyer in his spare time” (*SMH*, August 8, 2000).

Given such appalling reputation, you might think that universities would have a hard time filling quotas in their law faculties, when in fact the opposite is true. Law schools are bursting at the seams while education, humanities, and others, must lower their entrance marks in order to reach their numbers.

This profession is good at making money, but not so good at delivering justice. They are rich in the wisdom of the world, but extremely poor in the wisdom of God. When I looked into the Scriptures, I was really surprised at what I found there about this profession. God knew what would become of these people from the very beginning. Here are some examples.

Ecc 3:16 Moreover I saw under the sun: *In* the place of judgment, Wickedness *was* there; And *in* the place of righteousness, Iniquity *was* there.

Ecc 3:17 I said in my heart, "God shall judge the righteous and the wicked, For *there is* a time there for every purpose and for every work."

Isa 59:4 No one calls for justice, Nor does *any* plead for truth. They trust in empty words and speak lies; They conceive evil and bring forth iniquity.

Isa 59:5 They hatch vipers' eggs and weave the spider's web; He who eats of their eggs dies, And *from* that which is crushed a viper breaks out.

Luk 11:44 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like graves which are not seen, and the men who walk over *them* are not aware *of them*."

Luk 11:45 Then one of the lawyers answered and said to Him, "Teacher, by saying these things You reproach us also."

Luk 11:46 And He said, "Woe to you also, lawyers! For you load men with burdens hard to bear, and you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers.

Luk 11:47 Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets, and your fathers killed them.

1Co 6:1 Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints?

1Co 6:2 Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters?

1Co 6:3 Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life?

Jas 2:1 My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Lord* of glory, with partiality.

Jas 2:2 For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes,

Jas 2:3 and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, "You sit here in a good place," and say to the poor man, "You stand there," or, "Sit here at my footstool,"

Jas 2:4 have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?
Jas 2:5 Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world *to be* rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?
Jas 2:6 But you have dishonored the poor man. Do not the rich oppress you and drag you into the courts?
Jas 2:7 Do they not blaspheme that noble name by which you are called?
Jas 2:8 If you really fulfill *the* royal law according to the Scripture, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF," you do well;
Jas 2:9 but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors.
Jas 2:10 For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one *point*, he is guilty of all.
Jas 2:11 For He who said, "DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY," also said, "DO NOT MURDER." Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.
Jas 2:12 So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty.
Jas 2:13 For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

But in the end, righteousness, truth and justice will prevail over the whole earth.

Zep 3:5 The LORD is righteous in her midst, He will do no unrighteousness. Every morning He brings His justice to light; He never fails, But the unjust knows no shame.

Isa 60:17 "Instead of bronze I will bring gold, Instead of iron I will bring silver, Instead of wood, bronze, And instead of stones, iron. I will also make your officers peace, And your magistrates righteousness.

Isa 61:8 "For I, the LORD, love justice; I hate robbery for burnt offering; I will direct their work in truth, And will make with them an everlasting covenant.

Isa 61:11 For as the earth brings forth its bud, As the garden causes the things that are sown in it to spring forth, So the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.

If you have a concordance, look under such terms as, justice, judges, rulers, priests, and the like, and see what you can find, for there is a lot more in the Bible about them. This is what Jesus Christ thought about lawyers too.

Luk 18:2 "There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man.
Luk 18:3 Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, 'Get justice for me from my adversary.'
Luk 18:4 And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, 'Though I do not fear God nor regard man,
Luk 18:5 yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.' "
Luk 18:6 Then the Lord said, "Hear what the unjust judge said.
Luk 18:7 And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them?
Luk 18:8 I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?"

Jesus Christ knew that judges had no "fear of God, nor regard for man". That is why He warned them: "with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you" (Mat 7:2).

Our current affair programs have reported several times that many of our country towns are in the grip of an unprecedented crime wave mostly by roving youth gangs of Aboriginal descent. They terrorize the population, steal, break into houses in full daylight, even bash people in their own homes, yet when they are apprehended and brought before the courts many are let free because the level of proof required by the courts is almost impossible to achieve. No one is more frustrated at this state of affairs than the police, who often put their

life at risk to arrest these lawbreakers only to see the courts let them go free. Too many are in custody, we are told, and so the judges find all sorts of excuses for not incarcerating any more. They fear more bad publicity from that meddling institution called the United Nations.

“The Immigration Minister, Mr. Ruddock, forced to defend Australia’s record on Aborigines to a United Nations committee last month says it is ironic that the committee is headed by someone from the United States, which not only has mandatory sentencing but allows capital punishment of juveniles. . . He defended the Government’s decision not to invite CERD committee members, including American lawyer Gay McDougal, into the country last year . . . “That sort of examination might have been appropriate in countries . . . where grave human rights abuses are occurring, but in the context of our situation the committee had already demonstrated an unwillingness to listen or read all the material put before it,” Mr Ruddock said” . . . The Government announced last week after the latest critical CERD report that it would institute a “whole-of-government review” on the operation of the UN treaty committee system, as it related to Australia. The Prime Minister justified that decision yesterday by saying “UN committees have not behaved well – the [CERD] committee totally ignored what the Government put forward.” (*SMH*, April 3, 2000).

Our Government would do well to come out of that institution altogether, and stop wasting money on it for its days are numbered. Remember what they did six years ago? This is what we wrote then.

“The slide into the precipice has been accelerated by the recent decision of the United Nations to become the moral and spiritual policeman of the world. Not in upholding God’s law, but Satan’s rule.

The case of the Tasmanian homosexual who took his case to the United Nations is well known. The UN Human Rights Committee demanded that the Tasmanian Government overturn its anti-gay provisions from its Criminal Code because they violated “basic human rights”.

“I am amazed that a UN human rights committee would consider it a basic human right that people should be able to commit sodomy,” said the Tasmanian Attorney-General, Mr Ron Cornish.

[But] a Melbourne University law lecturer who has been an adviser to the Tasmanian gays, Mr Wayne Morgan, said the UN findings on sexual orientation made it likely that other cases of discrimination on similar grounds from other countries would succeed.” (*SMH*, April 12, 1994).

Of course! All that is needed is for the ground to be broken in one country and the floods of hell are opened everywhere. People may well remember that the first public demonstrations by the “gay liberation movement” took place in New York in the early 1970’s. Only two decades later this cancer is well established all over the world and upheld by many national, and now international, governing bodies. In all major world centres, the most vocal and visible demonstrators are those demanding their “liberation”: “homosexual liberation”, “feminist liberation”, “lesbian liberation”, “animal liberation”, “paedophile liberation”, “gluttony liberation” and now “transgender liberation”.

The day the UN Human Rights Committee decided for homosexuality, the Australian public broadcasting network - the ABC - presented a lengthy panel discussion on the plight of the transvestite people (“transgenders”, as they like to be called). They were complaining that the UN decision does nothing for them. Being free to do whatever they want in private is not enough. They want to be able to go out in public, tell people about their gender preferences, and be loved for it. But when they do that, they say that they usually get bashed, and they wonder why? Now, they want the United Nations to do something for them too. And, nice and obliging as those at the UN are, they will no doubt find a way to uphold the transgenders’ “basic rights” too. (*The Christian Herald* No 4, p.2).

No institution that takes as its role the imposition of Satan’s rule upon the world, can expect to survive very long. God has not recorded the example of Sodom and Gomorrah in the Bible for nothing.

Now they take issue with mandatory sentencing laws. Such laws operate in many countries of the world – the United States, Wales and Scotland, being only some of them – yet the United Nations has singled out Australia. Why? Because certain radical elements from the Aboriginal community don't like it. They can no longer get away with a slap on the wrist for repeated crimes, but are locked up behind bars as they should. These laws are not directed against Aboriginal people, but against all lawbreakers. Interestingly enough, these laws are popular even in Aboriginal communities, who more often than not, suffer more at the hands of unruly people than the white people. But these laws are not popular with United Nations. Why? Well, would Satan like to see people living safely, peacefully and in harmony with each other? He does his work through his servants, and anyone who thinks that homosexuality is good for people, and protects lawbreakers against the community of decent citizens, is his servant. It may surprise people to know this, but the mandatory sentencing laws – “three strikes and you are out” – are in fact based on Christian principles.

Mat 18:15 "Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother.

Mat 18:16 But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY WORD MAY BE ESTABLISHED.'

Mat 18:17 And if he refuses to hear them, tell *it* to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.

Tit 3:10 Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition,

Tit 3:11 knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned.

In Islamic countries, where the Sharia law is enforced, they do not have “three strikes and you are out”, but one strike and you are out. Even to the point of losing one's head. But has the UN railed against that? No! Instead it has taken Australia to task, a Christian country with a great democratic tradition. As one might have expected, anything Christian is anathema to this organization. By forcing homosexuality on the world, and taking the side of lawbreakers, the UN has revealed its true colors and the master it serves. A leading Aboriginal figure understood the true causes of his people's problems, and delivered an astonishing lecture recently. But would the UN leaders take note of this? We doubt it.

“Aboriginal leader Mr Noel Pearson has lashed out at much “progressive” thinking on Aboriginal issues, saying it is destructive and compounding misery. He attacked treating substance abuse as a symptom of disadvantage, and said high levels of Aboriginal incarceration require the restoration of social order and law enforcement rather than just legal aid. Mr Pearson said the indigenous experience of the welfare state has been “disastrous”. “A rule of thumb in relation to most of the programs and policies that pose as progressive thinking in indigenous affairs is that if we did the opposite we would have the chance of making progress,” he said.

Delivering the “Light of the Hill” Ben Chifley Lecture in Bathurst at the weekend, Mr Pearson said people who wanted to be progressive today “are in objective fact regressive in their thinking. This is especially and painfully obvious if you know the situation in the Aboriginal communities of this country.” “Petrol sniffing is in some places now so endemic that crying infants are silenced with petrol drenched rags on their faces. In one of our communities in Cape York, among the less than 1,000 people there were three murders within one month a few months ago. And we don't know what to do.

“Progressive” thinking about substance abuse, such as alcoholism, held it was “only a symptom of underlying social and psychological problems”. “But addiction is a condition in its own right, not a symptom. It must therefore be addressed as a problem in itself.” The “symptom theory” absolved people from their responsibility to deal with addiction. “Worse, it leaves communities to think that nothing can be done to confront substance abuse because of its purported causes: dispossession, racism, trauma and poverty, are beyond reach of social resolution at present.” The “progressive” response to the level of Aboriginal jailings had been to provide legal aid. “This progressive response – providing legal aid support services – has not worked . . . In fact Aboriginal legal aid is part of the criminal justice industry . . . It is like a sausage machine, and human lives are processed through it with no real belief that the statistics will ever be

overcome. The truth is . . . the real need is for the restoration of social order and the enforcement of law." On welfare, he advocated its reform, not its abolition. A new consensus was needed about welfare built on the principles of personal and family empowerment and investment and the use of resources to achieve change. Our motivation to reform welfare must be based on the principle that dependency and passivity are a scourge and must be avoided at all costs. Dependency and passivity kills people and is surest road to social decline. Australians do not have an inalienable right to dependency; they have an inalienable right to a fair place in the real economy"(SMH, Aug.16, 2000).

This lecture is almost like the sermon of a good Christian. His forthrightness and courage in delivering such a speech in the current environment can only be applauded. Mr. Pearson understood that the current situation in which justice is being administered with regard to "underlying social and psychological problems" does not lead to harmonious relationships between Aborigines and white people. Decent and honest citizens, whites and Aborigines alike, have little incentive to obey the law when they see that lawbreakers go free and justice is being delivered with partiality. Communities suffer when criminals go unpunished. As Mr. Pearson noticed, the justice system is now part of the problem rather than offering solutions to it. Yes, the justice system and the United Nations are now two good bedfellows. Few people realize that the current social problems in Australia and around the world are a reflection of the prophecies spoken by Jesus Christ for our time.

Mat 24:12 And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.

Mat 24:13 But he who endures to the end shall be saved.

Yes, because lawlessness abounds most people have become insensitive to what is happening around them. But that is something Christians cannot afford to indulge in. They cannot despair, cannot allow their love to grow cold, and cannot lose faith in God's ultimate judgment. We must endure to the end if we want to be saved. For God does take note of what is happening in the world at present, as He has always done.

Mal 3:13 "Your words have been harsh against Me," Says the LORD, Yet you say, 'What have we spoken against You?'

Mal 3:14 You have said, 'It is useless to serve God; What profit *is it* that we have kept His ordinance, And that we have walked as mourners Before the LORD of hosts?'

Mal 3:15 So now we call the proud blessed, For those who do wickedness are raised up; They even tempt God and go free.' "

Mal 3:16 Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, And the LORD listened and heard *them*; So a book of remembrance was written before Him For those who fear the LORD And who meditate on His name.

Mal 3:17 "They shall be Mine," says the LORD of hosts, "On the day that I make them My jewels. And I will spare them As a man spares his own son who serves him."

Mal 3:18 Then you shall again discern Between the righteous and the wicked, Between one who serves God And one who does not serve Him.

Mal 4:1 "For behold, the day is coming, Burning like an oven, And all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble. And the day which is coming shall burn them up," Says the LORD of hosts, "That will leave them neither root nor branch.

Mal 4:2 But to you who fear My name The Sun of Righteousness shall arise With healing in His wings; And you shall go out And grow fat like stall-fed calves.

Mal 4:3 You shall trample the wicked, For they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet On the day that I do *this*," Says the LORD of hosts.

HYPOCRISY IN HIGH PLACES

At the end of my court case, I went before the Almighty, as I often do, in supplication and worship, asking Him whether I should appeal to the High Court, believing that I had a good case of getting a better result there. But the Almighty answered that I should get back to the Scriptures and not even think of going before their courts again. So I went back to the Scriptures and, as usual, I received yet more revelations. The day they sent me their court subpoena, was exactly seven years since I mailed out the first edition of *The Christian Herald* to the world (that is, three and a half years by two). The prophecies of Daniel 12, follow those of Revelation 11, and that is why the prophecies of Matthew 24 did not quite follow the pattern we expected.

If you do not know which prophecies we are talking about, or how to look at them, wait for our next edition when we will write about them in detail. What is important to know now is that the world has been granted a few more years in which it could mend its ways and draw closer to God or be plunged into the greatest tribulation ever. It cannot afford to waste this opportunity for there will be no other chance.

Humanity has simply not learned the lessons of the past. Two of the most important lessons recorded in the Bible for posterity were in relation to the abominable practice of homosexuality. The case of Sodom and Gomorrah is well known to the world, but what is not so well known is the case of the Israelite tribe of Benjamin. It is a fairly long story, but very instructive for the time in which we live.

- Jdg 19:11 They *were* near Jebus, and the day was far spent; and the servant said to his master, "Come, please, and let us turn aside into this city of the Jebusites and lodge in it."
- Jdg 19:12 But his master said to him, "We will not turn aside here into a city of foreigners, who *are* not of the children of Israel; we will go on to Gibeah."
- Jdg 19:13 So he said to his servant, "Come, let us draw near to one of these places, and spend the night in Gibeah or in Ramah."
- Jdg 19:14 And they passed by and went their way; and the sun went down on them near Gibeah, which belongs to Benjamin.
- Jdg 19:15 They turned aside there to go in to lodge in Gibeah. And when he went in, he sat down in the open square of the city, for no one would take them into *his* house to spend the night.
- Jdg 19:16 Just then an old man came in from his work in the field at evening, who *also was* from the mountains of Ephraim; he was staying in Gibeah, whereas the men of the place *were* Benjamites.
- Jdg 19:17 And when he raised his eyes, he saw the traveler in the open square of the city; and the old man said, "Where are you going, and where do you come from?"
- Jdg 19:18 So he said to him, "We *are* passing from Bethlehem in Judah toward the remote mountains of Ephraim; I *am* from there. I went to Bethlehem in Judah; *now* I am going to the house of the LORD. But there *is* no one who will take me into his house,
- Jdg 19:19 although we have both straw and fodder for our donkeys, and bread and wine for myself, for your female servant, and for the young man *who is* with your servant; *there is* no lack of anything."
- Jdg 19:20 And the old man said, "Peace *be* with you! However, *let* all your needs *be* my responsibility; only do not spend the night in the open square."
- Jdg 19:21 So he brought him into his house, and gave fodder to the donkeys. And they washed their feet, and ate and drank.
- Jdg 19:22 As they were enjoying themselves, suddenly certain men of the city, perverted men, surrounded the house *and* beat on the door. They spoke to the master of the house, the old man, saying, "Bring out the man who came to your house, that we may know him *carnally!*"
- Jdg 19:23 But the man, the master of the house, went out to them and said to them, "No, my brethren! I beg you, do not act *so* wickedly! Seeing this man has come into my house, do not commit this outrage.
- Jdg 19:24 Look, *here is* my virgin daughter and *the man's* concubine; let me bring them out now. Humble them, and do with them as you please; but to this man do not do such a vile thing!"
- Jdg 19:25 But the men would not heed him. So the man took his concubine and brought *her* out to them. And they knew her and abused her all night until morning; and when the day began to break, they let her go.
- Jdg 19:26 Then the woman came as the day was dawning, and fell down at the door of the man's house where her master *was*, till it was light.
- Jdg 19:27 When her master arose in the morning, and opened the doors of the house and went out to go his way, there was his concubine, fallen *at* the door of the house with her hands on the threshold.

Jdg 19:28 And he said to her, "Get up and let us be going." But there was no answer. So the man lifted her onto the donkey; and the man got up and went to his place.

Jdg 19:29 When he entered his house he took a knife, laid hold of his concubine, and divided her into twelve pieces, limb by limb, and sent her throughout all the territory of Israel.

Jdg 19:30 And so it was that all who saw it said, "No such deed has been done or seen from the day that the children of Israel came up from the land of Egypt until this day. Consider it, confer, and speak up!"

Jdg 20:1 So all the children of Israel came out, from Dan to Beersheba, as well as from the land of Gilead, and the congregation gathered together as one man before the LORD at Mizpah.

Jdg 20:2 And the leaders of all the people, all the tribes of Israel, presented themselves in the assembly of the people of God, four hundred thousand foot soldiers who drew the sword.

Jdg 20:12 Then the tribes of Israel sent men through all the tribe of Benjamin, saying, "What is this wickedness that has occurred among you?"

Jdg 20:13 Now therefore, deliver up the men, the perverted men who *are* in Gibeah, that we may put them to death and remove the evil from Israel!" But the children of Benjamin would not listen to the voice of their brethren, the children of Israel.

Jdg 20:14 Instead, the children of Benjamin gathered together from their cities to Gibeah, to go to battle against the children of Israel.

Jdg 20:34 And ten thousand select men from all Israel came against Gibeah, and the battle was fierce. But *the Benjamites* did not know that disaster *was* upon them.

Jdg 20:35 The LORD defeated Benjamin before Israel. And the children of Israel destroyed that day twenty-five thousand one hundred Benjamites; all these drew the sword.

Jdg 20:48 And the men of Israel turned back against the children of Benjamin, and struck them down with the edge of the sword—from *every* city, men and beasts, all who were found. They also set fire to all the cities they came to.

The Benjamites did not know that that disaster was upon them, and the whole tribe was punished, both men and beasts, because they would not give over to be punished those who engaged in that unspeakable practice. There is no compromise with God against this sin. It has to be eradicated from the face of the earth, or the whole world will face the consequences. The United Nations, the upholder and enforcer of this sin, is heading humanity towards catastrophe.

Earlier this year, Australians wake up to read with incredulity the following headline in one of their major newspapers:

"It's okay to be gay, judge tells boys". "Homosexuals deserve acceptance, are no better or worse than any other people, and it is "totally unrealistic" to expect them to remain celibate, Justice Michael Kirby said yesterday.

The High Court judge – who has "outed" himself as a homosexual – was addressing students at St Ignatius College, Riverview, the prestigious Catholic private school" (*Sydney Morning Herald*, February 25, 2000).

Two months later, this High Court judge wrote in the same newspaper:

"Let us here resolve together, those who are psychiatrists and psychologists, that the new millennium will see an end to the giggling. And to the alienation of, and patronizing indifference to, "those people". Instead, what is needed is the adoption of a proper scientific, analytic approach to the issue of human sexuality. . ." When any of us, psychologists, psychiatrists or lawyers, confront the ugly face of homophobia, it is surely our duty in the new millennium to reject it." (*SMH*, April 28, 2000).

It is his duty, the duty of psychologists, psychiatrists, and lawyers, to confront "homophobia", and reject it. And what do they regard as "homophobia"? Anyone who speaks against this unspeakable practice is "homophobic". Since I have continuously spoken against this sin, as against all sins, you can imagine what would have happened if I ended up facing this High Court judge. That is why the Almighty did not allow me to go any further with that appeal. He knew that it would have been like jumping from the frying pan into the fire. I may well have ended up behind psychiatric bars, for how else do lawyers and psychiatrists deal with the people who refuse to reconstruct themselves according to their wish? The question is, would the medical profession respond to the call of this judge to confront what he calls the "ugly face of homophobia"?

Two years ago, the president of the Australian Medical Association, Dr Kerryn Phelps, went to New York in order to get "married" to her lesbian partner. In Australia we now have a homosexual High

Court judge, a lesbian president of the Australian Medical Association, homosexual Members of Parliament, church leaders who call for homosexuals to be ordained to the priesthood and, of course, the largest homosexual festival in the world – the Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras. It is not a mere coincidence that the Almighty raised this work in this land? He wanted us to be close to the action, to see with our own eyes the morass into which humanity has fallen, and to cry aloud the sins of these people. Living in this country has become a great vexation of the spirit for us.

Last year, this High Court judge, “outed” himself after keeping his homosexuality secret for 30 years.

“Top judge reveals gay life” “High Court judge Michael Kirby has outed himself by providing details of a 30-year homosexual relationship to society bible *Who’s Who In Australia*. Justice Kirby, 60, has listed retirement newsagent Johan van Vloten as his partner in the 1999 edition of *Who’s Who* and revealed their relationship began in 1969. The statement shows their union predates by 15 years, changes to the NSW law decriminalizing homosexuality in NSW.” (*The Sun-Herald*, April 18, 1999).

He was appointed to the High Court position on the premise of an unblemished record and lifestyle, yet, at the time of his appointment, he was engaging in what was then a criminal activity. And what did our leaders, political and religious, do when they read about that? They congratulated him.

“While the judge was congratulated for his courage – and even morals campaigner Fred Nile MLC said he was glad Kirby had come out – the collective response was rather more of a yawn. All hell would break loose if a Supreme Court judge in the US declared himself a homosexual. In this country, no one even admitted to be surprised by anything anymore.” (Elizabeth Wynhausen, *The Australian*, April 26, 1999).

In America they don’t have homosexual Supreme Court judges. What they do have instead is homosexual “marriages”, and “Christians” who demonstrate vociferously demanding the right to carry arms. It makes you wonder what Christ they serve, for it is not our Christ. This is what Jesus Christ told His followers:

Mat 26:51 And suddenly, one of those *who were* with Jesus stretched out *his* hand and drew his sword, struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.

Mat 26:52 But Jesus said to him, "Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword.

Mat 5:39 But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.

If you think that these problems are peculiar to the English-speaking world, think again.

MUNICH: Two lawyers have asked German family Minister Christine Bergmann to classify the Bible among the books considered dangerous for children because of its violent content. The Bible contains passages of “a gruesomeness difficult to exceed”, glorified as the will of God, lawyers Christian Sailer and Gert-Joachim Hetzel told the minister on behalf of parents.

“It preaches genocide, racism, enmity towards Jews, gruesome executions for adulterers and homosexuals, the murder of one’s own children and many other perversions,” they said. The book should be banned for children unless the “bloodthirsty and human rights-violating passages” were removed.” (*The Australian*, August 3, 2000).

The German lawyers want the “human rights-violating passages” removed from the Bible. Now who determines what “rights” human beings have, lawyers or their Creator? They never speak of human duties or obligations, only of human rights, the very opposite of what God has been telling us in the Bible. There are no inherent rights for human beings, only obligations: the obligation to be decent, civil, loving, charitable, helpful, respectful to parents, obedient to God, etc.

Jesus Christ, His Apostles and the prophets never talked about human rights. Only Satan insisted that Adam and Eve had the right to experiment and decide for themselves what is good and what is evil, in order that they may be like God. Now the United Nations is peddling a similar doctrine. Man has become his own god and the measure of all things, and that is why humanity is on the brink of catastrophe. Jesus Christ said:

Mat 22:37 Jesus said to him, 'YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.'

Mat 22:38 This is *the* first and great commandment.

Mat 22:39 And *the* second is like it: 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.'

Mat 22:40 On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

If people observed these golden rules there would be no need to talk about human rights, for everyone's "right" to a decent untroubled undisturbed life would be guaranteed.

The Almighty placed human beings on this earth and allowed them to follow their own way for a while so that they may learn that without obedience to His laws life becomes unbearable. He promised a better and more fulfilled life in a different world for those who love Him and obey His laws. You will not find a single place in the Bible which says that human beings have the right to do one thing or another. The word 'rights' is found only once in the Bible. Here it is: "If he takes another wife, he shall not diminish her food, her clothing, and her marriage rights" (Exo 21:10). Other than that, any claim that human beings have inherent rights is not from God but from the Devil. The concept of human rights goes hand in hand with free moral agency, both of which are contrary to God's principles.

The United Nations reveals its own colors, and the master it serves, when it insists that homosexuality be permitted in all countries of the world. The European Union too, takes pride in enforcing this rule. One of the first conditions it placed on the countries of Eastern Europe that sought its membership was that they legalize homosexuality. And to complete the trilogy, the European Court of Human Rights decreed this: "The British Armed Forces were forced to drop their ban on homosexuals last January after a ruling against Britain at the European Court of Human Rights" (*The Sun-Herald*, September 3, 2000).

It is hard to believe that these things are happening before our very eyes, that Satan has managed to dominate the leading institutions of our time to such degree, but there they are, enforcing his rule without giving a thought what consequences this may have upon the world.

Jesus Christ foresaw these things, and that is why He spoke of a Great Tribulation that would bring this world to a crushing end, and usher in a wonderful new world. But only for those who have not known the depths of Satan.

Rev 2:24 "Now to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, I will put on you no other burden.

Rev 2:25 But hold fast what you have till I come.

Rev 2:26 And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power

Rev 2:27 over the nations — 'HE SHALL RULE THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON; THEY SHALL BE DASHED TO PIECES LIKE THE POTTER'S VESSELS'— as I also have received from My Father;

Many leaders are angry with me for suggesting that they have no place in the Kingdom of God, but isn't this what the Scriptures say? "He who overcomes. . . shall rule the nations with a rod of iron". Not those who acquiesce in enforcing Satan's rule upon their own people, but those who stand up to him, who refuse to bend their knees to this pagan god and have anything to do with him.

One day before the High Court judge addressed the students of that elite Catholic school, telling them that it is all right to be gay, the Catholic and Anglican Archbishops of Sydney released the following common statement.

"Sydney's Anglican and Catholic archbishops have joined together to attack the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Grass. It is believed to be the first time the leaders of the two biggest Christian churches have spoken out against the Mardi Gras. After saying very little during the event's 22-year history, they have advised the people of Sydney to avoid the March 4 parade, saying it is little more than a highly erotic and gross way of promoting a homosexual lifestyle."

"Both church leaders had been mainly silent on the Mardi Gras over the years . . . The Archbishop of the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney, Cardinal Edward Clancy, has spoken out against Mardi Gras in the Catholic Weekly newspaper that will be circulated in churches on Sunday. He says the churches teach that homosexual practices are contrary to the moral law. Homosexual people are required to exercise self-discipline and to avoid such conduct . . . The Anglican Archbishop of Sydney, the Most Rev Harry Goodhew, has issued a statement indicating his support and agreement with Cardinal Clancy's statement. It is being mailed to Anglican rectors

in Sydney today and will be published in the church's Southern Cross newspaper next month" (*SMH*, February 24, 2000).

When we began our work a decade ago, people found it hard to believe that we did it because we saw a void which was not being filled by the custodians of our moral and spiritual standards. Well, here is the proof of it. It took 22 years for the Catholic and Anglican Church leaders to speak against the Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras.

We are an awfully small organization by comparison, but we made sure that our voice was heard in every corner of the world, and continues to be heard. We are weak and small in the world, but we are strong in the Lord, and if the Lord be for us, who can be against us? It is to be noticed that Cardinal Clancy and Archbishop Goodhew did not speak against homosexuality as such, but against the Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras for being "a highly erotic and gross way of promoting a homosexual lifestyle". Presumably if it weren't promoting a homosexual life style in such an erotic and gross way, it would be all right. They went on to say that "homosexual practices are contrary to the moral law." Pardon? Men of God speak of the moral law, instead of the law of God? In all of their statement, they never mentioned God or His divine law against homosexuality. Moral laws are usually devised by human beings. They change with time and vary from society to society. But God's spiritual laws are universal and immutable. The moral laws of some primitive societies involved cannibalism, bestiality, and prostitution. That was their moral law, they approved of it, and they loved it. In New South Wales homosexuality is now legal. So which moral law were they talking about?

It is God's spiritual law that says homosexuality is evil and contrary to nature. You can't break that law for it breaks you instead. Don't be surprised to find that the Catholic and Anglican Church leaders are trying to shift the ground towards a more flexible attitude towards homosexuality, even though on the surface they appear to condemn it. Now do you think that these leaders knew that the very next day, a High Court judge would deliver that kind of speech at a top Catholic school and countermand everything they said a day earlier? For if they knew, their hypocrisy would stink to high heaven and bypass even that of the Pharisees of Jesus' day. Having worked in education for many years, I can tell you that schools do not invite guest speakers on an adhoc basis. Such visits interfere with the normal school calendar, and require advance planning. Nor do they invite people unless they have a pretty good idea of what they are going to talk about.

It is inconceivable that the headmaster of an elite Catholic school would embroil his school in that kind of controversy without the knowledge and approval of his superior. Why then did Cardinal Clancy approve of such a speech? If he was against homosexuality, why did he not wait another day until the judge made his speech, and then condemn that together with the Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras festival? That would have made more sense, wouldn't it?

The point is, if he had spoken a day later, it would have appeared that he was in opposition to the High Court judge. He would not have wanted to do that for we all know how many scandals the Catholic Church is embroiled in on behalf of its errant homosexual priests. By speaking ahead of the judge, it served several purposes. It barred any queries from parents who pay upwards of ten thousand dollars per year to have their children educated in a school which tells them that it is all right to be gay; it answered the parishioners who may have wondered why their leader had never spoken against this sin before; it advanced the interest of the High Court judge who sanctioned homosexuality on the hallowed grounds of a top Catholic school; and it sent a message to those who might consider seeking compensation against the Catholic and Anglican Churches for homosexual abuse at the hands of their priests. Who in their right mind would now go before the High Court to seek redress against homosexual abuse, when a High Court judge says that those who think that homosexuality is evil need psychiatric treatment? This judge had attended an Anglican, not a Catholic school in his youth, so any claim that he might have revisited an old boys school does not apply. Clearly he was specifically invited to this Catholic high school in order to advance the cause of homosexuality, and to send the message to those who still think that this practice is wrong and evil that a new rule applies now.

Strange things are happening in this world indeed!

INTO THE SHIPFOLD THROUGH THE BACK DOOR

We all know that the Catholic Church is faced with a mountain of claims for compensation all over the world from people who were abused as children while in its care, but what about the Anglican Church, why are its leaders aligning themselves now with their Catholic counterparts? Surely they could not be in a similar situation, could they? Well, we don't have the latest developments within the Anglican Church of Australia, but it could not be all that different from what is happening with its sister church in Canada.

“Abuse sinks church. The Anglican Church in Canada is braced for bankruptcy, submerged by claims for damages for the alleged sexual abuse of native Canadians in its children's homes amounting to \$C2 billion. Legal fees are rapidly eating into its reserves and attempts to persuade the Government to bail it out have so far been unsuccessful. The church's 26 homes, some operating since 1820's were closed in 1969.” (*The Sun-Herald*, June 4, 2000).

Can you see why these churches are desperate to change people's attitude toward homosexuality? It is their only salvation, otherwise they would all go bankrupt. The largest “Christian” churches are fighting for survival unless they ‘normalize’ homosexuality. The claims against them are unlikely to subside even after the current spate of court cases are settled, for they are reeking with homosexual priests. And if they are not now, they will soon. For while Archbishop Goodhew was condemning the Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras parade, the new Primate of the Anglican Church in Australia, was calling for homosexual ordination to the priesthood.

“Gays and females on primate's ‘to do’ list” “The Anglican Diocese of Sydney was moving towards female ordination but more slowly than the rest of the church, the new Primate of Australia, the Most Rev Dr Peter Carnley, said yesterday. He also said that he would address the issue of the ordination of homosexuals. There has been criticism of his appointment from conservative elements within the diocese. Dr Carnley, who will be installed at St Andrew's Cathedral on Sunday, said of women's ordination: “there are women deacons, women are in positions they were not in 10 years ago. I think Sydney is moving.”

He said the church should strive towards organizational unity. Suggestions that Sydney diocese, which had held out against female ordination, would split from the rest of the church were not new. “But I think there is a Gospel imperative to be one,” he said. “That is in John 17, that we should be one, that others would believe in the unity of God.”

Dr Carnley said his views on theology had been “around for 20 years at least “. They had been expressed in his book, *The Structure of Resurrection Belief*, published in 1987. He believed in the Christian salvation, which was not a place, not a state of happiness, but a relationship with God that is entered into through Jesus Christ.” (*SMH*, April 28, 2000).

The bishop who ordained the first women to the priesthood when he was head of the Anglican Church in Western Australia, now wants to ordain homosexuals to the priesthood. He is in a better position now, for he is Primate of the Anglican Church over all of Australia. Now take another look at his definition of salvation, for it is a classic example of what happens to people who depart from the ways of God. They simply become blinded to the truth of God. How else can one explain Dr Carnley's statement that salvation is not a place, not even a state of happiness, but a “relationship”? If he is right, then salvation is all about this world and nothing else.

Has he never heard of the term, Kingdom of God, never heard of Jesus' promise that He would go away and prepare a place for His followers, never heard of a new heaven and a new earth, never heard of a marriage between Christ and His bride, the Church, never heard of a new Jerusalem coming down from heaven to a new earth, never heard of Jesus' promise to His Apostles that they would sit on twelve thrones over the tribes of Israel, never heard that those who follow Jesus Christ now would become kings and priests in His Kingdom? There are a lot of things Dr Carnley has never heard of. Seven years ago, this is what I wrote in *The Christian Herald* No 3.

“My lecturers in the Religious Studies Department were not some unknown entities or insignificant personalities. Most of them held important positions in Christian denominations.

One of them is now head of the Anglican Church in one of the Australian states. He was the worst offender as far as the Bible was concerned. During the week they were "demythologizing" the Bible to us (taking out the supernatural), and in the weekend they were preaching from it to their followers. Great sermons, no doubt! My strength came from the fact that I was studying both religions and ancient history. Surprisingly, I found that the lecturers in the Ancient History Department had more confidence in the Bible than those from the Religious Studies Department. The historians had little doubt about the authenticity of the New Testament writings, but the theologians were still searching for the "historical Jesus". Interestingly, those who lectured us on Hinduism, Buddhism, other eastern religions, and Islam, never thought of "demythologizing" their sacred books. They always spoke with reverence about their faiths. Not so the Jewish and Christian theologians" (*TCH* No 3, p.38).

The man of whom I said then that was the worst offender as far as the Bible was concerned, was none other than Dr Carnley. I did not name him in 1993 out of respect for the fact that he was my lecturer (though not for what he taught me), but now that he has embroiled himself in such controversy and raised the stakes so high, I don't think it matters anymore. I believe that it is better if we bring our opinions into the open so that we discuss our differences. It may be that he who is wrong may take the opportunity to repent and change. After all, what do the Scriptures say?

Jas 5:19 Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back,
Jas 5:20 let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.

Dr Carnley quoted John 17, "a Gospel imperative to be one", in order to maintain unity in the church. I think a more appropriate explanation would be that he did so in order to silence his critics. His use of John 17 for this purpose is a total misquotation of the Scriptures. Could Jesus Christ have called for unity behind a doctrine of homosexuality? This is what He said:

Joh 17:20 "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word;
Joh 17:21 that they all may be one, as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.
Joh 17:22 And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one:
Joh 17:23 I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.

Being one with Jesus Christ and the Father means being one in Spirit, truth, faith, and holiness, not in perversions that are an abomination to God and His children. One cannot be one with God, if he does not obey His commandments.

Mat 19:16 Now behold, one came and said to Him, "Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?"
Mat 19:17 So He said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one *is* good but One, *that is*, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments."

Here is proof that Dr Carnley's assertion that salvation is "not a place, not a state of happiness, but a relationship with God" is false, for Jesus Christ pointed the way by which we may "enter into life", not into a "relationship".

That salvation is about another world is also proved by the Apostles' writings.

1Co 15:12 Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?
1Co 15:13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen.
1Co 15:14 And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching *is* empty and your faith *is* also empty.
1Co 15:15 Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up—if in fact the dead do not rise.
1Co 15:16 For if *the* dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen.
1Co 15:17 And if Christ is not risen, your faith *is* futile; you are still in your sins!

1Co 15:18 Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.
 1Co 15:19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.
 1Co 15:20 But now Christ is risen from the dead, *and* has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.
 1Co 15:21 For since by man *came* death, by Man also *came* the resurrection of the dead.
 1Co 15:22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.
 1Co 15:23 But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those *who are* Christ's at His coming.
 1Co 15:24 Then *comes* the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power.
 1Co 15:25 For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet.
 1Co 15:26 The last enemy *that* will be destroyed is death.

Down through the centuries, thousands of people have sacrificed their life in order to attain immortality, yet now the wise of this world are telling us that their sacrifice was in vain, that Jesus' sacrifice was in vain, that the Scriptures are false, that the Gospel preached by John the Baptist, Jesus Christ and the Apostles, is not true.

Is it a mere coincidence that with the appointment of Dr Carnley to the position of Primate of Australia, the High Court judge Michael Kirby came out strongly in condemnation of those who think homosexuality is evil, and a lesbian lobbied heavily to become the Federal President of the Australian Medical Association? They work in tandem, knowing exactly what they want, what they are doing, and where they are aiming.

When he addressed the students of St Ignatius, Michael Kirby said: "I for one deny that I am 'intrinsically evil'. Well, he may deny it, but if he engages in practices that are described in the Scriptures as evil, he must be prepared to wear the tag assigned to him by God. Does he want to send people who disapprove of homosexuality to psychiatric treatment out of the goodness of his heart or out of an evil intention? This is what the Scriptures say of such people, not what we say.

Rom 1:18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,
 Rom 1:19 because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown *it* to them.
 Rom 1:20 For since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse,
 Rom 1:21 because, although they knew God, they did not glorify *Him* as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.
 Rom 1:22 Professing to be wise, they became fools,
 Rom 1:23 and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.
 Rom 1:24 Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves,
 Rom 1:25 who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.
 Rom 1:26 For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature.
 Rom 1:27 Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.
 Rom 1:28 And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting;
 Rom 1:29 being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; *they are* whisperers,
 Rom 1:30 backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,
 Rom 1:31 undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful;
 Rom 1:32 who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.

Rom 2:1 Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things.

Rom 2:2 But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things.

Should such people be judges and priests over us when the Scriptures say that “those who practice such things are deserving of death”? They have done their best to frighten and silence their critics, and that is why it was necessary for God to raise a work at this time not associated with any of the existing churches or religions. For if other churches refuse to do their job, we shall never stop crying aloud the sins of the world, and never pull back from our mission. As we said, we may be small and weak in the world, but we are strong in the Lord. And if God be for us, who can be against us.

Rom 8:33 Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? *It is* God who justifies.

Rom 8:34 Who *is* he who condemns? *It is* Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.

Rom 8:35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *Shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

Rom 8:36 As it is written: "FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE KILLED ALL DAY LONG; WE ARE ACCOUNTED AS SHEEP FOR THE SLAUGHTER."

Rom 8:37 Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

Rom 8:38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come,

Rom 8:39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

During my university days, I used to be deeply grieved by the kind of publications I had to study for my theses, but I could never tell them about it. It was my luck that I went to university in my thirties, by which time I had already acquired a strong belief in God and in the authenticity of the Bible. But I used to feel sorry for my younger colleagues who had no such experience, whom I could see that were being negatively affected.

As far as I could ascertain, Dr Carnley did not believe in the virgin birth, in a bodily resurrection, in the Holy Spirit, in the end time judgment, in a transcendental purpose for human life, nor indeed whether Jesus Christ was a historical figure. His favored author was a certain Lutheran theologian called Bultman who specialized in “demithologizing” the Bible (taking out the supernatural, miracles, etc.), and in questioning the historicity of Jesus Christ. As a good Christian, Dr Carnley sought to enrich us with Bultman’s theology too.

A few years later, I was astonished when I saw him being enthroned as head of the Anglican Church in Western Australia. I was astonished because as an academic he might have had an excuse in exploring all kinds of un-Christian and unsavory ideas, but not as a man of the pulpit. Sure enough, not long afterwards he became the first Anglican Bishop in the world to appoint women to the priesthood. One of his new “priests” said in a television interview soon afterwards that she was almost late for the ordination because she took time to feed her two young twins. Does that tell you anything? Imagine how inspired her congregation would feel if she had to run from feeding her children to conduct their religious service. As it happened, I had the chance to observe her perform a Sunday service too. Everything followed a prescribed routine. Even a stranger from the street could perform such service after a few hours of training, except perhaps for the final address to the congregation. But these days you can buy entire books or CD Roms full of nothing but sermons. Is it any wonder that the strength of people’s beliefs resemble the quality of their religious services? People are not fools; in time they could see whether their religious leaders are genuine servants of God or mere impostors. That is why they are leaving these churches in droves.

After he became Primate of the Anglican Church in Australia, Dr Carnley started talking about ordaining “non-practicing” homosexuals to the priesthood. “Non-practicing” homosexuals? Does he not know that as far as God is concerned there is no such a thing as “non-practicing” homosexual? You are either a homosexual, or you are not. Just like you are an adulterer, or you are not. For when you repent, your slate is being wiped clean. You do not become a “non-practicing” homosexual, just as you do not become a “non-practicing” adulterer, a “non-practicing” fornicator, or a “non-practicing” whatever. You are a Christian, or you are not, otherwise we are all “non-practicing” one thing or another.

SIN MAY NOT BE WHAT YOU THINK

There are many definitions of sin in the Bible, but generally speaking, any departure from the laws of God is considered sin. "Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness" (1 John 3:4). Here then are God's straightforward laws to humanity. Breaking these laws gives us the first definition of sin.

Exo 20:1 And God spoke all these words, saying:

Exo 20:2 "I *am* the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

Exo 20:3 "You shall have no other gods before Me.

Exo 20:4 "You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness *of anything* that is in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth;

Exo 20:5 you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth *generations* of those who hate Me,

Exo 20:6 but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

Exo 20:7 "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold *him* guiltless who takes His name in vain.

Exo 20:8 "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

Exo 20:9 Six days you shall labor and do all your work,

Exo 20:10 but the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of the LORD your God. *In it* you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who *is* within your gates.

Exo 20:11 For *in* six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that *is* in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

Exo 20:12 "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you.

Exo 20:13 "You shall not murder.

Exo 20:14 "You shall not commit adultery.

Exo 20:15 "You shall not steal.

Exo 20:16 "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

Exo 20:17 "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that *is* your neighbor's."

Jesus Christ linked the Ten Commandments with eternal life in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Mat 19:16 Now behold, one came and said to Him, "Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?"

Mat 19:17 So He said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, *that is*, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments."

Mat 19:18 He said to Him, "Which ones?" Jesus said, " 'YOU SHALL NOT MURDER,' 'YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY,' 'YOU SHALL NOT STEAL,' 'YOU SHALL NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS,'

Mat 19:19 'HONOR YOUR FATHER AND YOUR MOTHER,' and, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' "

Mat 19:20 The young man said to Him, "All these things I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?"

Mat 19:21 Jesus said to him, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."

Mat 19:22 But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

Mat 19:23 Then Jesus said to His disciples, "Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.

Mat 19:24 And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

Mat 19:25 When His disciples heard *it*, they were greatly astonished, saying, "Who then can be saved?"

Mat 19:26 But Jesus looked at *them* and said to them, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

Notice how Jesus Christ listed all six commandments that regulate man's relationship with man, but none of the first four that regulate his relationship with God. There are several reasons for that. The first one has to do with the fact that by that time the Jews were making a great deal of observing the first four commandments. So much so that they almost forgot about the rest. This is what Jesus told them in regard to the fifth commandment.

Mar 7:7 AND IN VAIN THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE
COMMANDMENTS OF MEN.'

Mar 7:8 For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men— the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do."

Mar 7:9 He said to them, "*All too* well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition.

Mar 7:10 For Moses said, 'HONOR YOUR FATHER AND YOUR MOTHER'; and, 'HE WHO CURSES FATHER OR MOTHER, LET HIM BE PUT TO DEATH.'

Mar 7:11 But you say, 'If a man says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me *is* Corban"—' (that is, a gift *to God*),

Mar 7:12 then you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother,

Mar 7:13 making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do."

The Jews were more concerned with their tradition and with ritual purity than with honoring their parents. It is for this reason that God told them that they worship Him in vain, "Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'

The question of tradition always comes into the discussion when I talk about religion with my Orthodox countrymen. They assure me that they would never depart from the tradition of our parents because that would be a sin. The implication being that I have already committed an unpardonable sin by doing so.

Quoting the Scriptures to them is of little consequence. The priests know better; they would never preach anything that is not Scriptural they assure me. Besides, the church has received additional revelations since the New Testament was completed. Quoting Revelation 22:18-19 to them, which forbids any addition to the Scriptures, is also of little consequence to them. When Jesus Christ told His disciples that, "it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God", they immediately replied, "Who then can be saved?" Jesus looked at them and said, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible" (Mat. 19:24-26). In other words, the process of salvation is all in the hands of God. That is why the sooner you abandon yourself to Him, and let Him mould you as He wishes, the sooner you achieve your goal in this life and the easier it is for you in the end. The final outcome is nothing less than implanting the mind of God in you as He implanted it in Jesus Christ.

Php 2:5 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,

Php 2:6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God,

Php 2:7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, *and* coming in the likeness of men.

Php 2:8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to *the point of* death, even the death of the cross.

Now let us get back to the definitions of sin. Another reason Jesus Christ did not quote the first four commandments is that He knew that some Samaritans, who supposedly worshiped a different God, were more righteous than the Jews.

Luk 10:29 But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"
 Luk 10:30 Then Jesus answered and said: "A certain *man* went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded *him*, and departed, leaving *him* half dead.
 Luk 10:31 Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.
 Luk 10:32 Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side.
 Luk 10:33 But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion.
 Luk 10:34 So he went to *him* and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him.
 Luk 10:35 On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave *them* to the innkeeper, and said to him, "Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you."
 Luk 10:36 So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?"
 Luk 10:37 And he said, "He who showed mercy on him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

Later, the Apostles said a similar thing about the Gentiles.

Rom 3:9 What then? Are we better *than they*? Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin.

Gal 3:22 But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

Rom 2:12 For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law, and as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law
 Rom 2:13 (for not the hearers of the law *are* just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified;
 Rom 2:14 for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves,
 Rom 2:15 who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves *their* thoughts accusing or else excusing *them*)
 Rom 2:16 in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.

This proves that all human beings will be judged on the basis of the life they led in this world, irrespective of their religion or nationality. Now we shall look at other definitions of sin.

Pro 21:3 To do righteousness and justice *Is* more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.
 Pro 21:4 A haughty look, a proud heart, *And* the plowing of the wicked *are* sin.

First a reminder to the Jews that their sacrifices without righteousness and justice are useless, a point confirmed in both the Old and New Testaments.

Heb 10:3 But in those *sacrifices there is* a reminder of sins every year.
 Heb 10:4 For *it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.
 Heb 10:5 Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: "SACRIFICE AND OFFERING YOU DID NOT DESIRE, BUT A BODY YOU HAVE PREPARED FOR ME.
 Heb 10:6 IN BURNT OFFERINGS AND SACRIFICES FOR SIN YOU HAD NO PLEASURE.
 Heb 10:7 THEN I SAID, 'BEHOLD, I HAVE COME— IN THE VOLUME OF THE BOOK IT IS WRITTEN OF ME— TO DO YOUR WILL, O GOD.'" (Quoted from Psalm 40:6-8).

Then we are told that a haughty look and a proud heart, or in more common parlance, arrogance and conceit, the marks of self-centeredness, are also sins.

Pro 24:8 He who plots to do evil Will be called a schemer.
 Pro 24:9 The devising of foolishness *is* sin, And the scoffer *is* an abomination to men.

Scheming against people, making them the object of mocking, scorn and derision, are sins too.

Isa 31:7 For in that day every man shall throw away his idols of silver and his idols of gold—sin, which your own hands have made for yourselves.

This is in conformity with the second commandment, which prohibits the making and worshipping of images. Have you seen how faithfully the Catholic and Orthodox Churches observe this commandment? Or how dedicated to this commandment were the people who built those gigantic medieval Cathedrals? Some of the statues, images and gargoyles, which they placed on those buildings, are so grotesque they give you nightmares, let alone engender a feeling of tranquility and contemplation.

Jer 16:10 "And it shall be, when you show this people all these words, and they say to you, 'Why has the LORD pronounced all this great disaster against us? Or what is our iniquity? Or what is our sin that we have committed against the LORD our God?'

Jer 16:11 then you shall say to them, 'Because your fathers have forsaken Me,' says the LORD; 'they have walked after other gods and have served them and worshiped them, and have forsaken Me and not kept My law.

Departing from the God of the Bible and worshipping other gods is a great sin.

Lam 4:6 The punishment of the iniquity of the daughter of my people Is greater than the punishment of the sin of Sodom, Which was overthrown in a moment, With no hand to help her!

Because prohibition against homosexuality is not listed among the Ten Commandments, some may have thought that this is not a sin. Well here is its direct association with the word sin. But departing from the true God and going after pagan gods is a greater sin than homosexuality. That is because from the first sin it is impossible to recover, whereas from the second one can always turn back and repent.

Eze 33:14 Again, when I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die,' if he turns from his sin and does what is lawful and right,

Eze 33:15 if the wicked restores the pledge, gives back what he has stolen, and walks in the statutes of life without committing iniquity, he shall surely live; he shall not die.

Taking pledges, stealing, and robbing, are sins deserving of death. But restoring them puts one in good terms with God. I often think of what happened to me some three decades ago when I dared go to the headquarters of the Worldwide Church of God and tell them that what they were preaching was unscriptural. They promptly expelled me from their church and locked me out of my own flat. That's what their god teaches them to do.

You have no idea what lengths they go to find out what I am doing and preaching these days, and the things they do to make me sin. I feel sorry for them, for it must be awful having to live with that kind of conscience for so long. But their case is typical of those who depart from God, who then desperately try to justify themselves in their own eyes. Recently, I received the following letter from one of their ministers in Africa:

"Dear father Grigore", "Greetings in the wonderful name of Jesus full of grace and truth.

- I went through *TCH* No 8 and decided to ask your forgiveness. Knowing full well that I lost my salvation and went astray after joining hands with those who persecute the Church of God, and the Word of Truth.

- Really I denied that you are not Christ, but according to what I have read about you in *TCH* No 8, and what happened for you, the judge's action against you which fulfill 1260 days, I feel sorry and burdened in my soul as a prodigal son, to come back and ask you to forgive me and accept me back into this Light of Truth, for I know now for ever that there's no favor [?] than this!

- Please consider our souls, and our people, so that you may come one day to prove us, and see if we are worthy to become part of God's Kingdom.

- I know, no one brings me in the COG and no one can put me away of it unless I have sins against God, which is exactly what I did in 1997. I really repent for Dishonest tongue (underlining in the original) and for the lies, and hypocrisy. I'm sorrowful that Devil used me to steal God's money sometime back; May God have mercy for me . . . I hope you forgive me and accept me back, since I open my heart for the Lord and tell & repent from my sins!

Please forgive me. Let God forgive me also. This is all for now. Hopping your reply if the Lord willing. Your Prodigal Son ! EDS

On the surface, this may appear to be a genuine act of repentance and heartfelt request for forgiveness. He knows that as a Christian I am under obligation to forgive. This is what Jesus Christ told His disciples.

Mat 18:21 Then Peter came to Him and said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?"

Mat 18:22 Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.

But did you notice the reason for his "road to Damascus" conversion? "Really I denied that you are not Christ," said he. Turning the two negatives into a positive, what he meant is that he denied that I am Christ. But I have never said that I am Christ. I am not Christ now, I was never Christ in the past, and never will be Christ in the future! Anyone can read *TCH* No 8 and see that I said no such a thing in that edition, or in any of my previous editions. What I have maintained from the very beginning is that I am merely one of God's children, and therefore Jesus' brother, only of a lesser worth and lower rank. By accepting his supposed act of contrition and repentance, I would acknowledge that I am Christ, and therefore I would be committing blasphemy. Can you see how devious they are and how unashamedly they do the work of the evil one?

He mentioned that in 1997 he had a dishonest tongue, told lies, was a hypocrite, and allowed the Devil to use him to steal money from us. What he did then was that he sent us a letter, telling us in desperation that he, his family, and a few other people, who had supposedly turned to God recently, were starving to death because major floods destroyed their means of living. That year much of Africa suffered devastation as a result of floods, so we believed him, especially since he sent us newspaper clippings and pictures to prove that what he was telling us was true.

We wondered why he had chosen us and how he had heard of us, but you don't ask such questions of starving people. We decided to help them first and ask questions later.

From our little resources, we put together about \$2,000 and sent it to them urgently. Immediately afterwards we were flooded with similar requests from other people. But when we did some inquiries, we discovered that he was in fact a minister in the Worldwide Church of God, and was doing their work of deception and trying to send us broke.

Now he is coming back to us telling us that he repented of what he did then, but did not think that repentance requires a restoration of what, by his own admission, he stole and acquired by dishonest means.

The leaders of that church seem to think that by making me sin, they would be justified in the sight of God for what they did to me back then in the early seventies. Obviously, they have never read this?

Mat 18:6 "Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

Does anyone doubt that the following words of Jesus Christ refer to the "Pharisees" of our time?

Mat 23:15 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.

Or that these words of Apostle Paul refer to the same people?

2Co 11:13 For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ.

2Co 11:14 And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.

The battle between the children of light and the children of darkness continues unabated. But through Jesus Christ we shall overcome it for He said: "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Heb 13:5).

Eph 6:12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.

Now back to the definition of sin.

Mat 12:31 "Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy *against* the Spirit will not be forgiven men.

Here we come across the first case of an unpardonable sin: blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. Now what exactly were the Pharisaic Jews doing that constituted blasphemy? They accused Jesus of being possessed by a wicked spirit and that He performed miracles by the power of the Devil.

Mar 3:28 "Assuredly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they may utter;

Mar 3:29 but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is subject to eternal condemnation"—

Mar 3:30 because they said, "He has an unclean spirit."

Clearly, if the Holy Spirit guides someone who preaches the Gospel of Jesus Christ in conformity with the Scriptures, and he is accused of being a false preacher, the accuser commits blasphemy.

Joh 9:41 Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, 'We see.' Therefore your sin remains.

Joh 15:22 If I had not come and spoken to them, they would have no sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin.

Joh 15:23 He who hates Me hates My Father also.

Joh 15:24 If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would have no sin; but now they have seen and also hated both Me and My Father.

Denying the work of God, whether this is manifest in the form of miracles as was the case of Jesus Christ, or in the form of plagues and disasters as is the case with the end-time prophets of God (Rev. 11), or even denying and rejecting the Gospel of the Kingdom of God when you hear this being preached, is a major sin.

1Jn 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

Ecc 7:20 For *there is* not a just man on earth who does good And does not sin.

Here is the first step on the road to repentance: acknowledging that one is a sinful person. For contrary to the general belief, everyone is born with a sinful nature, even though he had not yet committed any sin.

Psa 51:5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me.

Rom 7:14 For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin.

Rom 5:13 For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

We were conceived in iniquity, and born with a carnal nature. This means that even if we have never sinned, which would be impossible, we would still not qualify for the Kingdom of God. Why? Because we are carnal, and carnal people are enmity with God.

Rom 8:6 For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

Rom 8:7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.

Rom 8:8 So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

Rom 8:9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you.

Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.

Rom 8:10 And if Christ *is* in you, the body *is* dead because of sin, but the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness.

Here is the Scriptural definition of a Christian: "if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His." In other words the presence of the Holy Spirit makes one a Christian, not membership into a particular church or adherence to a particular creed.

When human beings repent and are baptized, God implants His seed, the Holy Spirit, in them, and a new person begins to grow inside them, a spiritual person. That is what Jesus Christ meant by being "born again".

Joh 3:3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

One has to be born first, and make good progress towards attaining a godly character, before he can see the Kingdom of God. We are merely the clay in God's hands, a fertile ground for the Holy Spirit. When that work is finished, and we reach spiritual maturity, God simply takes us out of this world: "Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of His saints" (Ps. 116:15). That way we are being spared any further temptations, and can no longer sin and lose our salvation.

Rom 7:16 If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that *it is* good.

Rom 7:17 But now, *it is* no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.

Rom 7:23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

Rom 7:24 O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?

Rom 7:25 I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.

Here Apostle Paul tells us that he too struggled with his own carnal nature. A reflection of the internal battle that takes place inside everyone who turns to God in repentance. Along the way, we are all tried and tested until we reach the required strength of character. As Apostle Peter wrote:

1Pe 4:12 Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you;

1Pe 4:13 but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.

1Pe 4:14 If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed *are you*, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified.

1Pe 4:15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters.

1Pe 4:16 Yet if *anyone suffers* as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.

1Pe 4:17 For the time *has come* for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if *it begins* with us first, what will *be* the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?

1Pe 4:18 Now "IF THE RIGHTEOUS ONE IS SCARCELY SAVED, WHERE WILL THE UNGODLY AND THE SINNER APPEAR?"

1Pe 4:19 Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls *to Him* in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.

It is the strength of our character that determines our position in the Kingdom of God. That position is for eternity, therefore it is worth making any effort to overcome human nature and develop godly character while still in this world. Nowhere is the saying 'mind over matter' more applicable and appropriate than in this case.

Rom 2:12 For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law, and as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law

Rom 2:13 (for not the hearers of the law *are* just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified;

Rom 2:14 for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, . . .”

Here the Gentiles are placed in the same category as the good Samaritans. By instinct, they observe the law of God, and that makes them worthy candidates for salvation, alongside the pious and faithful of Jews.

Jas 2:8 If you really fulfill *the* royal law according to the Scripture, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF," you do well;

Jas 2:9 but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors.

Jas 4:17 Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do *it*, to him it is sin.

If you know how to do good and refuse to do it, is a sin. This is a very broad category, but one which indicates that you cannot sit on your laurels and say, I have done my duty, I have overcome the world, I have achieved control over my own human nature, now I can take it easy, enjoy myself, and wait for the salvation of the Lord.

There is so much good that needs to be done in this world, one hardly knows where to start. As a suggestion, you can start by supporting this work, for we can do with helpful hands in every country of the world. There is no other work more worthy of your support than this one. For if we do not succeed in our mission, this world has had it.

Mal 4:5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.

Mal 4:6 And he will turn The hearts of the fathers to the children, And the hearts of the children to their fathers, Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.

THINKING IS NOT SINNING

Many people are in a terrible dilemma about recurring thoughts, which they think will lead them to hell. They do not realize that mere thoughts are not a sin unless they are fulfilled. Take a careful look at the following Scriptures:

Job 31:1 "I have made a covenant with my eyes; Why then should I look upon a young woman?

Job 31:2 For what *is* the allotment of God from above, And the inheritance of the Almighty from on high?

Job 31:3 *Is* it not destruction for the wicked, And disaster for the workers of iniquity?

Job 31:7 If my step has turned from the way, Or my heart walked after my eyes, Or if any spot adheres to my hands,

Job 31:8 *Then* let me sow, and another eat; Yes, let my harvest be rooted out.

Job 31:9 "If my heart has been enticed by a woman, Or *if* I have lurked at my neighbor's door,

Job 31:10 *Then* let my wife grind for another, And let others bow down over her.

Job 31:11 For that *would be* wickedness; Yes, it *would be* iniquity *deserving of* judgment.

Here we have four statements of intent which are not sins unless carried to fruition: "If I made a covenant with my eyes", "if my heart walked after my eyes", "If my heart has been enticed by a woman", and "if I have lurked at my neighbor's door" (presumably to entice his wife). A similar sentiment is expressed in the epistle of James:

Jas 1:14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.

Jas 1:15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.

Only when the desire has conceived does it give birth to sin. Only then have you fallen from grace, not when fleeting thoughts pass through your mind. This is how we must view the following statement of Jesus Christ too.

Mat 5:28 But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

If you look at a woman and think that she is beautiful, it is not a sin, but if you look at her and begin to lust after her, it becomes a sin. All this is a reflection of the tenth commandment. Do you know which one that is?

Exo 20:17 "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's."

People tend to think that the sixth and seventh commandments (against killing and adultery) are the most difficult, when in fact they are the easiest. The most difficult commandment is the tenth, for it deals with intent rather than acts. There is a long way from intent to act. You can always turn back before committing an act, but it is not so with your thoughts. You must control and sift them before they become enshrined in your mind, and you become obsessed by them and become their slave. It is a struggle which only you and God know about, but one which you can only win with the help of the Holy Spirit.

Joh 14:15 "If you love Me, keep My commandments.

Joh 14:16 And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—

Joh 14:17 the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.

If you keep the commandments, you receive the "spirit of truth", the Helper, who will abide with you forever. But after you receive Him, you must feed Him a steady stream of spiritual food, otherwise you quench Him.

1Th 5:16 Rejoice always,

1Th 5:17 pray without ceasing,

1Th 5:18 in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

1Th 5:19 Do not quench the Spirit.

1Th 5:20 Do not despise prophecies.

1Th 5:21 Test all things; hold fast what is good.

1Th 5:22 Abstain from every form of evil.

1Th 5:23 Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Notice carefully how Apostle Paul spoke of "spirit, soul, and body". Some fundamentalist churches deny that human beings have independent souls. They say that their bodies are their "living souls". Which means that after death when the body disappears there is nothing left which can be resurrected. But what did Jesus Christ say?

Mat 10:28 And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

So body and soul are different entities. And while human beings can kill the body, only God can destroy both body and soul. What does that tell you about the notion, popularized by virtually all religions, that human souls are immortal? That is the difference between true Christianity and other religions. Here is more proof of it:

Ezek 18:4 . . . "The soul who sins shall die.

Ezek 18:20 "The soul who sins shall die" . . .

The souls that sin shall die – be wiped out forever – in a great lake of fire, not be tormented forever in hell, or in a never ending chain of incarnations in various forms of life. Other churches say that the Holy Spirit is a non-entity, an object, a nebulous power by which God directs and creates things. In so

doing, they deny the personality of the Holy Spirit and deny the Trinity, a doctrine clearly enunciated by Jesus Christ.

Mat 28:18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

Mat 28:19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

Mat 28:20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age." Amen.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit – could anything be clearer? Aren't the words of Jesus Christ enough to convince anyone of the truthfulness of this doctrine? If you do not understand something, why make it worse by denying it altogether? Because by denying the personality of the Holy Spirit, you deny your own salvation (For a comprehensive discussion on this topic, see *The Christian Herald No 5*). It is for this reason that people are no longer able to discern truth from falsehood, or to "test all things" and "test the spirits".

1 Th 5:19 Do not quench the Spirit.

1 Th 5:20 Do not despise prophecies.

1 Th 5:21 Test all things; hold fast what is good.

1Jn 4:1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

1Jn 4:2 By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God,

1Jn 4:3 and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the *spirit* of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.

In this passage we come across another puzzling statement: "Jesus Christ has come in the flesh . . . every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God . . . is the spirit of the Antichrist".

Few people understand how Jesus Christ "has come in the flesh". He does so through the Holy Spirit. For just as the Father lived in Him through the Holy Spirit when He was in the flesh, Jesus lives in us through the Holy Spirit while we are in the flesh. The presence of the Holy Spirit makes us temples of the living God.

2Co 6:16 And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM. I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE."

This is what sets aside those who are tuned in to the wisdom of God from those who wallow in the wisdom of this world; those who are guided by the Spirit of truth, from those who are guided by a spirit of error.

1Jn 4:4 You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

1Jn 4:5 They are of the world. Therefore they speak *as* of the world, and the world hears them.

1Jn 4:6 We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

1Jn 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

1Jn 4:8 He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

1Jn 5:1 Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves Him who begot also loves him who is begotten of Him.

1Jn 5:2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments.

1Jn 5:3 For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.

1Jn 5:4 For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.

1Jn 5:5 Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

Other people preach that one is born of God not while living in this world but after being resurrected into the Kingdom of God. But take another look at 1 John 5:1. "Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God". If you believe in your heart that Jesus is the Christ, you are already born of God now at this present time. For you cannot say that Jesus is the Christ unless God has revealed this to you. And He would not reveal this to you if you are still in the flesh and not in the spirit.

Mat 16:13 When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?"

Mat 16:14 So they said, "Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

Mat 16:15 He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"

Mat 16:16 Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Mat 16:17 Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven.

One cannot achieve a qualitative salt from the wisdom of the world to the wisdom of God unless he repents and reconciles himself with God first. But repentance is a mature conscious act, not something for children. While children can be blessed and confirmed in one's faith, as Jesus Christ did with those who were brought to Him, that does not represent an act of repentance and of receiving of the Holy Spirit.

I am often asked in this context, what about the children who have died in infancy having never sinned, where are they going if not to heaven? Aren't they entitled to a life like the rest of us? The answer to the first question is, they are going nowhere, and to the second, no one is entitled to anything. One has no automatic right to eternal life any more than he has the right to this life. We are God's clay, and He does with us as He pleases.

Rom 9:19 You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?"

Rom 9:20 But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed it, "Why have you made me like this?"

Rom 9:21 Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor?

Young children have never sinned, but they are still made of carnal nature and therefore not automatically qualified for the Kingdom of God. But neither are they candidates for the hell fire. We do not know much about God's judgment, but what we do know is that it is not going to be a rushed affair. God has eternity before Him, and can take as long as He needs to determine whether one deserves a place in His Kingdom or not. He could see the nature of human beings from the very beginning, and thus can determine who should be granted the Holy Spirit and transformed into a new person and who should not. The Holy Spirit can transform one into a new person in a fraction of a second. Children who have never sinned stand an infinitely better chance of immortality than those who have grown to maturity and wasted their life.

A Jewish rabbi once made the following witty remark. "When my baby was little I held him up in arms and could not see how God would ask Abraham to kill his son. But now that he has grown into a teenager I can see it."

This may be light hearted, but it proves the point that children are made of carnal nature too, and that predisposes them to sin as soon as they are capable of it. Human nature needs to come under the control of spirit nature if human beings are to be saved. They need to be "born again" as Jesus Christ clearly stated it.

He also said: "The last will be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few chosen" (Mat 20:16). This seems to indicate that not all are called, and of those who are only a few are chosen for eternal life. Some are probably so evil that God doesn't bother to call them to repentance anymore. But of those who are called, only those who "overcome to the end" will be granted a place into His Kingdom.

Rev 3:21 "To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

Mat 10:22 "And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved.

Not all human beings are destined to become priests and kings in the Kingdom of God, but only those who are called to repentance at this time. The task of overcoming in this world full of temptations is commensurate with the position that will be granted them in the Kingdom of God if they succeed.

Rev 5:9 And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,

Rev 5:10 And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth."

The rest of humanity will be judged at the end of time and granted a place in the Kingdom of Heaven according to their deeds. Apostle Paul made an analogy here with the stars of heaven.

1Co 15:41 There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for *one* star differs from *another* star in glory.

1Co 15:42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. *The body* is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption.

1Co 15:43 It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power.

1Co 15:44 It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

People of all nations and religions know the difference between right and wrong even without the Holy Spirit. They can all aspire to do good, and even if they do not attain perfection in this world, they stand a good chance of being granted a place in the Kingdom of God on the basis of their present life.

When God grants repentance to someone, it has important implications for his salvation. One cannot come in and out of repentance at will. One cannot repent, and not repent, and then repent again. The prize for those who are called to repentance at this time is great, but so is the punishment for those who turn back.

Rev 1:5 Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood,

Rev 1:6 and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him *be* glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Heb 6:4 For *it is* impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit,

Heb 6:5 and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come,

Heb 6:6 if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put *Him* to an open shame.

Those who refuse to turn to God when their call for repentance comes, and refuse to grow in grace and knowledge, become God's enemies and lose their salvation. That is why Luke's parable about the talents ends with: "bring here those enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, and slay them before me" (Luke 19:27).

This does not mean that after repentance you will never sin again, because most certainly you will. But if you remain faithful and in a repentant mood you will rise up and keep going and overcoming to the end. As the Scriptures say:

1Jn 5:4 For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.

1Jn 5:5 Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

Mat 10:22 And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved.

Rev 2:7 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God." '

Mat 28:19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

Mat 28:20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age." Amen.

When you give in to temptation, remember, not all sins are terminal. You can recover from some, but not from others. You cannot recover from blasphemy for example. That is why when you speak about God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, you better be careful what you say for you could be digging your own grave.

1Jn 5:16 If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin *which does not lead* to death, he will ask, and He will give him life for those who commit sin not *leading* to death. There is sin *leading* to death. I do not say that he should pray about that.

1Jn 5:17 All unrighteousness is sin, and there is sin not *leading* to death.

Studying the Scriptures, praying and worshiping God, gives you the strength to overcome sin, and renders you approved in His sight.

2 Tim 2:15 "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

By "word of truth" he did not mean just the New Testament, but the entire Bible. In his first epistle to the Corinthians, Apostle Paul wrote:

1Co 10:1 Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea,

1Co 10:2 all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea,

1Co 10:3 all ate the same spiritual food,

1Co 10:4 and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.

1Co 10:11 Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

Did you notice who guided the people of Israel when they came out of Egypt? Jesus Christ! Indeed, He was the God of the Old Testament, as we have comprehensibly proven in *The Christian Herald No 5*. Send for your free copy now.

"All these things happened to them as examples", said Apostle Paul. Examples for whom? For the Jews? He was writing to the Corinthians. They were examples not only for the Jews, but also for the Corinthians, the Gentiles, and the whole world.

Zec 2:10 "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion! For behold, I am coming and I will dwell in your midst," says the LORD.

Zec 2:11 "Many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and they shall become My people. And I will dwell in your midst. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you.

Many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day and shall become His people and that is why they need to be familiar with His Gospel. Apostle Paul knew these things, not the least because Jesus Christ taught him.

Gal 1:11 But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man.

Gal 1:12 For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught *it*, but *it came* through the revelation of Jesus Christ.

1Co 15:9 For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

1Co 15:10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God *which was* with me.

Yes, by the grace of God we all are what we are. But His grace cannot be taken for granted. We must do our part to deserve it, and complement the work that God is doing in us.

THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS REVEAL THEIR SECRET AT LAST

One of the best-documented periods of the ancient world comes from the time of the Roman occupation of the Holy Land during the ministry of Jesus Christ. Great literary, historical, and religious works from that period have survived to our time. They give us a pretty clear picture of what that world was like. We know their form of government, their justice system, military organization, social structure, customs, religious beliefs, mode of transport, clothes, food, etc. Yet in spite of this wealth of information, the Dead Sea Scrolls, which come from that period, continue to baffle scholars from around the world.

It is as if the Qumran people, who produced these documents, lived in void, leaving us no trace of their true identity, or why they chose to move away from Jerusalem and live near the Dead Sea.

They seem to have gone out of their way to hide from the world their true identity and that of their leaders. They spoke of a Teacher of Righteousness and a wicked priest, but without telling us who they were, or giving their real names.

Astonishingly, this very secrecy gives us the best clue about their true identity. But in order to understand that, we need to look at a few important historical developments within the earliest Churches of God.

Many people may be surprised to discover that the Scriptures speak of three kinds of Christianities for that period, quite different from each other: the Christianity of Apostle Peter, of Apostle Paul, and of James. We will look at each one separately, beginning with the first.

THE CHRISTIANITY OF APOSTLE PETER

The very first Church of God was established on the day of Pentecost in the year of Jesus' crucifixion and ascension to heaven. It is not entirely clear what year that was: the date varies between the years 27 to 33 AD. Fundamentalist Christians think it was earlier, traditional Christians think it was later. From our point of view it doesn't really matter, the difference is not all that great to make much of a difference. What matters though is what kind of Christianity it was, what were their beliefs, their practices, their form of organization, and what transpired of them in the end.

In the book of Acts, we have the description of a unique event which would change the lives of those involved, and affect the history of the entire world from then on. We refer, of course, to the arrival of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost.

Act 2:1 When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

Act 2:2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.

Act 2:3 Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and *one* sat upon each of them.

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

Act 2:5 And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven.

Act 2:6 And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language.

Act 2:7 Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, "Look, are not all these who speak Galileans?"

Act 2:8 And how *is it that* we hear, each in our own language in which we were born?

Act 2:9 Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,

Act 2:10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes,

Act 2:11 Cretans and Arabs—we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God."

Act 2:12 So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "Whatever could this mean?"

Act 2:13 Others mocking said, "They are full of new wine."

Act 2:14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words.

Act 2:15 For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is *only* the third hour of the day.

Act 2:16 But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

Act 2:17 'AND IT SHALL COME TO PASS IN THE LAST DAYS, SAYS GOD, THAT I WILL POUR OUT OF MY SPIRIT ON ALL FLESH; YOUR SONS AND YOUR DAUGHTERS SHALL PROPHECY, YOUR YOUNG MEN SHALL SEE VISIONS, YOUR OLD MEN SHALL DREAM DREAMS.

Act 2:18 AND ON MY MENSERVANTS AND ON MY MAIDSERVANTS I WILL POUR OUT MY SPIRIT IN THOSE DAYS; AND THEY SHALL PROPHECY.

Act 2:19 I WILL SHOW WONDERS IN HEAVEN ABOVE AND SIGNS IN THE EARTH BENEATH: BLOOD AND FIRE AND VAPOR OF SMOKE.

Act 2:20 THE SUN SHALL BE TURNED INTO DARKNESS, AND THE MOON INTO BLOOD, BEFORE THE COMING OF THE GREAT AND AWESOME DAY OF THE LORD.

Act 2:21 AND IT SHALL COME TO PASS THAT WHOEVER CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD SHALL BE SAVED.'

Act 2:22 "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know—

Act 2:23 Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death;

Act 2:24 whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.

Act 2:25 For David says concerning Him: 'I FORESAW THE LORD ALWAYS BEFORE MY FACE, FOR HE IS AT MY RIGHT HAND, THAT I MAY NOT BE SHAKEN.

Act 2:26 THEREFORE MY HEART REJOICED, AND MY TONGUE WAS GLAD; MOREOVER MY FLESH ALSO WILL REST IN HOPE.

Act 2:27 FOR YOU WILL NOT LEAVE MY SOUL IN HADES, NOR WILL YOU ALLOW YOUR HOLY ONE TO SEE CORRUPTION.

Act 2:28 YOU HAVE MADE KNOWN TO ME THE WAYS OF LIFE; YOU WILL MAKE ME FULL OF JOY IN YOUR PRESENCE.'

Act 2:29 "Men *and* brethren, let *me* speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.

Act 2:30 Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne,

Act 2:31 he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption.

Act 2:32 This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses.

Act 2:33 Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear.

Act 2:34 "For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: "THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD, "SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND,

Act 2:35 TILL I MAKE YOUR ENEMIES YOUR FOOTSTOOL." '

Act 2:36 "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

Act 2:37 Now when they heard *this*, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?"

Act 2:38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Act 2:39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

Act 2:40 And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation."

Act 2:41 Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added *to them*.

Act 2:42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

Act 2:43 Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.

Here now are the main characteristics of this congregation:

- 1) It was established by Apostle Peter, the Apostle to the "circumcision";
- 2) They were all Jews. The Gentiles' time would not come until more than a decade later;
- 3) They believed in prophetic fulfillment and determinism: things happened according to the will and foreknowledge of God;
- 4) They did not believe in life after death. David, the famous king of Israel, "did not ascend into the heavens". If a man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22) did not ascend into the heavens, you can be sure that no one else did. This is confirmed by John 3:13. "No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven".
- 5) They believed in resurrection from the dead. Although this is not specifically spoken of in this passage, the fact that they were yet to receive their promised inheritance meant that they would have to be resurrected at a future time. Later writers spoke in detail about future resurrections.
- 6) The expression, "as many as the Lord our God will call" implied a certain kind of exclusiveness. Not all people would be called, and not all would become part of God's elect.
- 7) From the Gospel of John, we know that Apostle Peter believed that Jesus Christ would return soon.

Joh 21:20 Then Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also had leaned on His breast at the supper, and said, "Lord, who is the one who betrays You?"

Joh 21:21 Peter, seeing him, said to Jesus, "But Lord, what *about* this man?"

Joh 21:22 Jesus said to him, "If I will that he remain till I come, what *is that* to you? You follow Me."

Joh 21:23 Then this saying went out among the brethren that this disciple would not die. Yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but, "If I will that he remain till I come, what *is that* to you?"

Joh 21:24 This is the disciple who testifies of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his testimony is true.

Clearly, Jesus wanted His followers to be prepared all the time, believing that His return would be imminent. That way they would remain on guard and eschew the danger of becoming complacent and lukewarm, and thus easy prey to temptations (See Rev 3:14-19).

- 8) This congregation was organized on the principle of communality.

Act 4:32 Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common.

Act 4:33 And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all.

Act 4:34 Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold,

Act 4:35 and laid *them* at the apostles' feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need.

- 9) Apostle Peter's congregation retained many of the Jewish customs and practices – circumcision, dietary laws, washings, etc. Some of them were justified, as they had become ingrained in the Jewish tradition and culture, but others became a source of confusion and contention between the Apostles when the Gentiles were converted.

Gal 2:11 Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed;

Gal 2:12 for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision.

Gal 2:13 And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy.

Paul withstood Peter "to his face" when he did not behave towards the Gentiles in an appropriate manner, and treated them as second-class citizens rather than as brothers in the faith. Now notice

carefully, Apostle Peter behaved that way only after certain Jews came from James. James was conducting a different kind of Christianity than that of both Peter and Paul. James was the Lord's brother, but he was not one of the original Apostles. He was not privy to the teachings of Jesus Christ, and was more deeply rooted in the Jewish traditions than were the other Apostles. When he took it upon himself to tell the Apostles how they ought to organize their congregations, they did not like it. Notice what happened when they convened a council in Jerusalem to determine the question of circumcision for the Gentiles.

Act 15:6 Now the apostles and elders came together to consider this matter.

Act 15:7 And when there had been much dispute, Peter rose up and said to them: "Men and brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe.

Act 15:8 So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as *He did* to us,

Act 15:9 and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.

Act 15:10 Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?

Act 15:11 But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they."

Act 15:12 Then all the multitude kept silent and listened to Barnabas and Paul declaring how many miracles and wonders God had worked through them among the Gentiles.

Act 15:13 And after they had become silent, James answered, saying, "Men *and* brethren, listen to me:

Act 15:14 Simon has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name.

Act 15:15 And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written:

Act 15:16 'AFTER THIS I WILL RETURN AND WILL REBUILD THE TABERNACLE OF DAVID, WHICH HAS FALLEN DOWN; I WILL REBUILD ITS RUINS, AND I WILL SET IT UP;

Act 15:17 SO THAT THE REST OF MANKIND MAY SEEK THE LORD, EVEN ALL THE GENTILES WHO ARE CALLED BY MY NAME, SAYS THE LORD WHO DOES ALL THESE THINGS.'

Act 15:18 "Known to God from eternity are all His works.

Act 15:19 Therefore I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God,

Act 15:20 but that we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, *from* sexual immorality, *from* things strangled, and *from* blood.

Apostle Peter would have been happy to let things stand the way Apostle Paul organized them, but then James stood up and added his bit. He said that the Gentiles should "abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from things strangled, and from blood." And what did Apostle Paul do with that advise?

1Co 10:25 Eat whatever is sold in the meat market, asking no questions for conscience' sake;

1Co 10:26 for "THE EARTH IS THE LORD'S, AND ALL ITS FULLNESS."

1Co 10:27 If any of those who do not believe invites you *to dinner*, and you desire to go, eat whatever is set before you, asking no question for conscience' sake.

Not exactly what James had suggested, is it? Apostle Paul clearly felt that he knew better, and rightly so, for he was the most educated of them all, and the best qualified to determine the correct standards for the Gentile Churches of God. After all, he was the Apostle for the uncircumcised, not James.

Gal 2:7 But on the contrary, when they saw that the gospel for the uncircumcised had been committed to me, as *the gospel* for the circumcised *was* to Peter

This brings us to the Gentile Churches of Apostle Paul.

THE CHRISTIANITY OF APOSTLE PAUL

Apostle Paul took great responsibility upon himself when he set up the Gentile Churches of God on principles which differed from those on which the Jewish Churches were established. The fact that his Christianity survived to our time, tells us that he was rightly inspired by the Holy Spirit.

He had to do battle on two fronts: on the one hand he had to overcome the Gentiles' hostility towards a new religion and a new God, and on the other he had to withstand the opposition from his own people for going over to the Gentiles and preaching that those who believe in Jesus Christ had become the new chosen people.

- Gal 1:6 I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel,
Gal 1:7 which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.
Gal 1:8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.
Gal 1:9 As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.
Gal 1:10 For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.
Gal 1:11 But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man.
Gal 1:12 For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught *it*, but *it came* through the revelation of Jesus Christ.

- Col 2:16 So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths,
Col 2:17 which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.
Col 2:18 Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in *false* humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,
Col 2:19 and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase *that is* from God.
Col 2:20 Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as *though* living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations—
Col 2:21 "Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle,"
Col 2:22 which all concern things which perish with the using—according to the commandments and doctrines of men?
Col 2:23 These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, *false* humility, and neglect of the body, *but are* of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.
Col 3:1 If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.
Col 3:2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.
Col 3:3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

Apostle Paul enhanced his authority by emphasizing the fact that he was taught directly by Jesus Christ.

- Gal 1:13 For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and *tried to* destroy it.
Gal 1:14 And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers.
Gal 1:15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called *me* through His grace,
Gal 1:16 to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood,

Gal 1:17 nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those *who were* apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.
Gal 1:18 Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and remained with him fifteen days.
Gal 1:19 But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother.
Gal 1:20 (Now *concerning* the things which I write to you, indeed, before God, I do not lie.)
Gal 1:21 Afterward I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia.
Gal 1:22 And I was unknown by face to the churches of Judea which *were* in Christ.
Gal 1:23 But they were hearing only, "He who formerly persecuted us now preaches the faith which he once *tried to destroy*."
Gal 1:24 And they glorified God in me.

He performed a complete turnaround from his opposition to Christianity when Jesus Christ entered his life. It was only then that he understood the meaning of the new religion and the need for a New Testament

Gal 2:1 Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and also took Titus with *me*.
Gal 2:2 And I went up by revelation, and communicated to them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to those who were of reputation, lest by any means I might run, or had run, in vain.
Gal 2:3 Yet not even Titus who *was* with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised.
Gal 2:4 And *this occurred* because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage),
Gal 2:5 to whom we did not yield submission even for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.

Remember the term “false brethren” when we discuss the Christianity of James, for these Jews clearly believed that they were Christians. They felt that they were empowered to preach their brand of Christianity to the Gentiles, and since they came from Jerusalem that authority could only have been from James. But more on this later.

Gal 2:6 But from those who seemed to be something—whatever they were, it makes no difference to me; God shows personal favoritism to no man—for those who seemed *to be something* added nothing to me.
Gal 2:7 But on the contrary, when they saw that the gospel for the uncircumcised had been committed to me, as *the gospel* for the circumcised *was* to Peter
Gal 2:8 (for He who worked effectively in Peter for the apostleship to the circumcised also worked effectively in me toward the Gentiles),
Gal 2:9 and when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we *should go* to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.
Gal 2:10 They desired only that we should remember the poor, the very thing which I also was eager to do.

Notice how in describing his trip to Jerusalem, Apostle Paul mentions the circumcision, but says nothing about the restrictions on food suggested by James. Knowing that he had done the very opposite, He tried to be diplomatic by mentioning James first alongside Cephas and John.

Gal 2:11 Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed;
Gal 2:12 for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision.

After placing James in a positive light at first, he is now being mentioned in connection with those “false brethren” who were introducing wrong ideas among the Gentiles. Peter knew that restrictions on food were unnecessary (He had visions from heaven about that. See

Acts 10), but was not in the mood to fight James over this issue. But for Apostle Paul this was an important matter. He was the Apostle to the Gentiles and treated them as worthy companions in the faith. He did not like Peter's attitude towards them, nor did he think that they needed to be circumcised or to observe the dietary laws of the Jews.

Gal 2:13 And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy.

Gal 2:14 But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before *them* all, "If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews?"

Gal 2:15 We *who are* Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles,

Gal 2:16 knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.

Here he stressed the fact that people are not "justified by the works of the law but by faith", a point he also emphasized in his epistle to the Romans: "Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law" (Rom 3:27-28).

James however, took issue with this concept and wrote, "faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works" (James 2:17-18). The truth is, they were both right, and that is why the Holy Spirit preserved both their writings. For the grace of God comes without regard for any works, but once you are called to repentance, you are expected to produce works as proof your faith.

Gal 2:17 "But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is Christ therefore a minister of sin? Certainly not!

Gal 2:18 For if I build again those things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.

Gal 2:19 For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God.

Gal 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

Gal 2:21 I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness *comes* through the law, then Christ died in vain."

Gal 3:1 O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified?

Gal 3:2 This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?—

Gal 3:3 Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?

Gal 3:4 Have you suffered so many things in vain—if indeed *it was* in vain?

Gal 3:5 Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, *does He do it* by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

Gal 3:6 just as Abraham "BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS ACCOUNTED TO HIM FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS."

Gal 3:7 Therefore know that *only* those who are of faith are sons of Abraham.

Gal 3:8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, *saying, "In you all the nations shall be blessed."*

Gal 3:9 So then those who *are* of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.

Gal 3:10 For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO DOES NOT CONTINUE IN ALL THINGS WHICH ARE WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE LAW, TO DO THEM."

Gal 3:11 But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for "THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH."

Gal 3:12 Yet the law is not of faith, but "THE MAN WHO DOES THEM SHALL LIVE BY THEM."

Gal 3:13 Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE"),
Gal 3:14 that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

By telling the Gentiles that works could not save them, Apostle Paul came in conflict with James who, as we saw, believed that works do have an important role to play in the process of salvation. Now although it may appear that they were miles apart on a number of issues, their writings fit very well together into the general Christian framework. For although they had differences, they were not conducted in a spirit of hatred, but in a civilized and friendly manner. James may appear to have had the weaker case, but in fact he merely complemented what Paul said. His epistle represents an important contribution to the New Testament.

Jas 2:14 What *does it* profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?
Jas 2:15 If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food,
Jas 2:16 and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what *does it* profit?
Jas 2:17 Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.
Jas 2:18 But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.
Jas 2:19 You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!
Jas 2:20 But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?
Jas 2:21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar?
Jas 2:22 Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect?
Jas 2:23 And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS ACCOUNTED TO HIM FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS." And he was called the friend of God.
Jas 2:24 You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.

Their writings harmonize and complement each other wonderfully when seen in their proper context. This was the time when the Holy Spirit was putting together the New Testament. The people who wrote those epistles, had no idea that they would end up forming the bone of the New Testament, and become part of the universal Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Gal 3:15 Brethren, I speak in the manner of men: Though *it is* only a man's covenant, yet *if it is* confirmed, no one annuls or adds to it.
Gal 3:16 Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "AND TO YOUR SEED," who is Christ.
Gal 3:17 And this I say, *that* the law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect.
Gal 3:18 For if the inheritance *is* of the law, *it is* no longer of promise; but God gave *it* to Abraham by promise.
Gal 3:19 What purpose then *does* the law *serve*? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; *and it was* appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator.
Gal 3:20 Now a mediator does not *mediate* for one *only*, but God is one.
Gal 3:21 Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law.

Now which law was Apostle Paul referring to here? Which law had been nailed to the cross? (Col. 2:14). Not the Ten Commandments for sure, for Jesus Christ said: "If you love Me, keep My Commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever; the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you" (John 14:15-17).

If you do not keep the Commandments you cannot receive the “Helper, the Spirit of truth”, and without Him, you cannot make any sense of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. It is for this reason that traditional Christianity’s understanding of the Scriptures is so abysmally low. Remember how when a young man asked Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life He told him to keep the Commandments (Mat. 19:16-19). Therefore, if you want to receive the Holy Spirit and attain eternal life, you must begin by keeping the Ten Commandments, including the fourth one, which refers to the Sabbath. Traditional Christians say that the Ten Commandments have been done away with, and shifted the day of worship from the Sabbath to the day of the sun. Can you see now why their understanding of the Scriptures is so abysmally low?

If you do not keep the Commandments, you cannot receive the Holy Spirit, and without the Holy Spirit you cannot be a Christian. If you are not a Christian you cannot attain eternal life, “for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

It was the law of animal sacrifices that had been nailed by Jesus Christ to the cross. The blood of animals could not wipe out the sins of human beings. It was His blood that atoned for our sins. (See Hebrews chapters 9 and 10).

Proof of this is the fact that this law was given “four hundred and thirty years” after the Israelites went to Egypt. The Ten Commandments have been in force since the beginning of the world. Both Abraham and the Gentiles of his day kept them. “And Abimelech called Abraham and said to him, “What have you done to us? How have I offended you that you have brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? You have done deeds to me that ought not to be done”. Read the entire story in Genesis 20, for it is wonderful, and see how strictly the Gentiles observed the law of God.

It was the law of sacrifices that was introduced for the first time at the time of the Exodus, “till the Seed should come”. In other words, it was introduced to lead us to Christ, and make us understand the meaning of His sacrifice. This is the law that was nailed to the cross, not the Ten Commandments.

Gal 3:22 But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

Gal 3:23 But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed.

Gal 3:24 Therefore the law was our tutor *to bring us* to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

Gal 3:25 But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.

Yes, it was the law of sacrifices that was “our tutor” till Christ, for if the Ten Commandments had been annulled we could commit blasphemy, murder, adultery, etc., and still be saved.

Gal 3:26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

Gal 3:27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

Gal 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Gal 3:29 And if you *are* Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

The Jews were very upset when some of their contemporaries took the Gospel to the Gentiles. They couldn’t bring themselves to think that the Gentiles could be as good as them, and were willing to commit murder in order to maintain their exclusivity. “Then He said to me, ‘Depart, for I will send you far from here to the Gentiles. And they listened to him until this word, and then they raised their voices and said, “Away with such a fellow from the earth, for he is not fit to live!” (Acts 22:21-22).

Gal 5:1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.

Gal 5:2 Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing.

Gal 5:3 And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law.

Gal 5:4 You have become estranged from Christ, you who *attempt to* be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.

Gal 5:5 For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.

Gal 5:6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.

Gal 5:12 I could wish that those who trouble you would even cut themselves off!

Gal 5:13 For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not *use* liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

Gal 5:14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this: "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF."

Gal 5:15 But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!

Gal 5:16 I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

Gal 5:17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.

Gal 5:18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

Gal 5:19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, Gal 5:20 lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies,

Gal 5:21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told *you* in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Gal 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

Gal 5:23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

Gal 5:24 And those *who are* Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

Gal 5:25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

Gal 5:26 Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

So then, there are three major differences between the Christianity of Apostle Peter and that of Apostle Paul. Paul's Christians were not required to circumcise themselves, to observe the dietary laws, and were not pooling their possessions to live communally. Now let us look at their common points.

1) They both believed in the imminent return of Jesus Christ. Apostle Paul wrote:

1Th 4:16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

1Th 4:17 Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

2) Neither believed in immortality of the soul, or in going to heaven after death. Instead, they both believed in resurrection from the dead and in an end-time judgment of God.

3) They were both deterministic in nature. They believed in prophetic fulfillment, and in predestination.

4) They both observed the same Holy Days. These were the Holy Days given by God to Moses. (We have discussed this subject in detail in *The Christian Herald No 4*. Please send for your free copy). It is to be noticed that none of the Holy Days observed by present day Christianity was observed by the Apostles and the early Christians, and none is mentioned in the New Testament. What the Christians observe now are Roman holy days imposed on Christianity about three hundred years later when the Roman Empire supposedly became Christian.

Now while Apostle Paul resisted any attempt to impose Jewish customs on to the Gentiles, he unhesitatingly adopted the Jewish Holy Days for his Christians. He even made the point that it is to them that the Gentiles must look to if they want to know which are the "oracles" of God.

Act 7:38 "This is he who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the Angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and *with* our fathers, the one who received the living oracles to give to us.
Rom 3:1 What advantage then has the Jew, or what *is* the profit of circumcision?
Rom 3:2 Much in every way! Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God.

He knew that the Sabbaths were signs between God and His people, the signs that identify the people of God.

Exo 31:13 "Speak also to the children of Israel, saying: 'Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that *you* may know that I *am* the LORD who sanctifies you.
Exo 31:16 Therefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations *as* a perpetual covenant.
Exo 31:17 It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for *in* six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed.' "

The term "Sabbaths" refers to all of God's Holy Days – the Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, Pentecost, Feast of Trumpets, Day of Atonement, Feast of Tabernacles and, of course, the weekly Sabbath.

You may have heard the term, "the lost Ten Tribes of Israel". They became lost, or better said, lost their identity, when they separated from Judah, and their king set up a new religion and adopted new holy days for them.

1Ki 12:26 And Jeroboam said in his heart, "Now the kingdom may return to the house of David:
1Ki 12:27 If these people go up to offer sacrifices in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then the heart of this people will turn back to their lord, Rehoboam king of Judah, and they will kill me and go back to Rehoboam king of Judah."
1Ki 12:28 Therefore the king asked advice, made two calves of gold, and said to the people, "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up from the land of Egypt!"
1Ki 12:29 And he set up one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan. Now this thing became a sin,
1Ki 12:30 for the people went *to worship* before the one as far as Dan.
1Ki 12:31 He made shrines on the high places, and made priests from every class of people, who were not of the sons of Levi.
1Ki 12:32 Jeroboam ordained a feast on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, like the feast that *was* in Judah, and offered sacrifices on the altar. So he did at Bethel, sacrificing to the calves that he had made. And at Bethel he installed the priests of the high places which he had made.
1Ki 12:33 So he made offerings on the altar which he had made at Bethel on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, in the month which he had devised in his own heart. And he ordained a feast for the children of Israel, and offered sacrifices on the altar and burned incense.
1Ki 13:33 After this event Jeroboam did not turn from his evil way, but again he made priests from every class of people for the high places; whoever wished, he consecrated him, and he became *one* of the priests of the high places.

The religion of Egypt still held a powerful attraction for them. Egypt was a powerful and dazzling empire at that time, proof to them that its gods were benevolent and beneficial. So when Jeroboam reintroduced the people of Israel to that religion, they accepted it unhesitatingly. In so doing, they lost the sign of their identity, and became lost to history.

The Apostles were not going to make the same mistake and deny their followers the signs that identified them as the new people of God. The New Testament believers are the true Jews. That is why both the Christianity of Apostle Peter and that of Apostle Paul observed God's true Holy Days.

THE CHRISTIANITY OF JAMES

When Apostle Paul made his last journey to Jerusalem, he found a congregation of people there, whom James called “believers”, who did not fit into either of the two Christianities discussed so far.

- Act 21:18 On the following *day* Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present.
Act 21:19 When he had greeted them, he told in detail those things which God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry.
Act 21:20 And when they heard *it*, they glorified the Lord. And they said to him, "You see, brother, how many myriads of Jews there are who have believed, and they are all zealous for the law;
Act 21:21 but they have been informed about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise *their* children nor to walk according to the customs.
Act 21:22 What then? The assembly must certainly meet, for they will hear that you have come.
Act 21:23 Therefore do what we tell you: We have four men who have taken a vow.
Act 21:24 Take them and be purified with them, and pay their expenses so that they may shave *their* heads, and that all may know that those things of which they were informed concerning you are nothing, but *that* you yourself also walk orderly and keep the law.
Act 21:25 But concerning the Gentiles who believe, we have written *and* decided that they should observe no such thing, except that they should keep themselves from *things* offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality."
Act 21:26 Then Paul took the men, and the next day, having been purified with them, entered the temple to announce the expiration of the days of purification, at which time an offering should be made for each one of them.
Act 21:27 Now when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews from Asia, seeing him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd and laid hands on him,
Act 21:28 crying out, "Men of Israel, help! This is the man who teaches all *men* everywhere against the people, the law, and this place; and furthermore he also brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place."
Act 21:29 (For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian with him in the city, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.)
Act 21:30 And all the city was disturbed; and the people ran together, seized Paul, and dragged him out of the temple; and immediately the doors were shut.
Act 21:31 Now as they were seeking to kill him, news came to the commander of the garrison that all Jerusalem was in an uproar.

So zealous for the law were these “believers”, that they were ready to kill Paul, contrary to the law. And what law was that? What law were they zealous for? The law of circumcision, the Law of Moses, said James, forgetting that circumcision was not given to Moses but to Abraham.

Apostle Paul was not teaching the Gentiles to disobey the Law of Moses, which had been in the world since creation and shall remain universally valid for eternity; he was teaching them not to observe the law of circumcision (in the flesh), which was designed to bring us to Christ, just like the law of sacrifices, both of which were abolished with the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. We placed “in the flesh” in brackets, because in the New Testament there is still a need for circumcision, not of the flesh, but spiritually of the heart.

- Rom 2:23 You who make your boast in the law, do you dishonor God through breaking the law?
Rom 2:24 For "THE NAME OF GOD IS BLASPHEMED AMONG THE GENTILES BECAUSE OF YOU," as it is written.
Rom 2:25 For circumcision is indeed profitable if you keep the law; but if you are a breaker of the law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision.
Rom 2:26 Therefore, if an uncircumcised man keeps the righteous requirements of the law, will not his uncircumcision be counted as circumcision?
Rom 2:27 And will not the physically uncircumcised, if he fulfills the law, judge you who, *even* with *your* written *code* and circumcision, *are* a transgressor of the law?

Rom 2:28 **For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh;**

Rom 2:29 **but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.**

That Apostle Paul was not teaching against the Law of Moses is proven by his epistle to the Romans, in which he wrote:

Rom 7:7 What shall we say then? *Is the law sin?* Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, "YOU SHALL NOT COVET."

Rom 7:8 But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all *manner of evil* desire. For apart from the law sin *was* dead.

Rom 7:9 I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died.

Rom 7:10 And the commandment, which *was* to *bring* life, I found to *bring* death.

Rom 7:11 For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed *me*.

Rom 7:12 Therefore the law *is* holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.

"YOU SHALL NOT COVET", is the tenth Commandment, therefore he was speaking of the Ten Commandments here, and not of the law of sacrifices.

He could not have spoken against the Ten Commandments because he was taught directly by Jesus Christ.

1Co 9:1 Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord?

1Co 15:1 Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand,

1Co 15:2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.

1Co 15:3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

1Co 15:4 and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures,

1Co 15:5 and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve.

1Co 15:6 After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep.

1Co 15:7 After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles.

1Co 15:8 Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.

Jesus Christ upheld the Ten Commandments both during His ministry on earth and after he was glorified to heaven.

Mat 19:16 Now behold, one came and said to Him, "Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?"

Mat 19:17 So He said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one *is* good but One, *that is*, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments."

Joh 14:15 "If you love Me, keep My commandments.

Joh 14:16 And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—

Joh 14:17 the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.

Joh 14:18 I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.

Rev 12:17 And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

No minister of Jesus Christ would ever preach against the Ten Commandments, the Commandments of God, and the real Law of Moses. Apostle Paul certainly did not do that.

The apostasy, however, was already beginning to take place, and James inadvertently contributed to it. We say inadvertently because we know that he was not an apostate. But why was he involved with these people? And where were Apostle Peter and his congregation? Why no mention of them? This was about the year 60, almost three decades after Peter established his first Jewish Christian Church, yet there was no sign of him or of his congregation at this time. The reason is that neither Peter, nor his Christians were in Jerusalem anymore. They moved out of Jerusalem because of persecution.

James was now leader of this motley group of people who were ready to kill Paul for his work among the Gentiles. We cannot imagine why he applied the term “believers” to them when they could hardly be called Christians, except perhaps that they feigned allegiance to him after being sent packing home by Paul for preaching a false gospel among the Gentiles. They, no doubt, told James that Paul himself was teaching a false Gospel, and they had proof of it in that he was teaching the Gentiles against circumcision.

Apostle Paul ended up in jail fighting for this life, and when those “believers” did not relent, unless they killed him, he appealed to Caesar. His appeal was accepted and he ended up in Rome where he still died in the end.

James reminded Paul that “concerning the Gentiles who believe, we have written and decided that they should observe no such thing (no circumcision), except that they should keep themselves from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality”. Now do you remember who made that suggestion in the Apostolic Council? James himself of course (Acts 14:26 – 15:31). Clearly he was not happy that Paul had ignored his opinion and told the Gentiles the very opposite. That may explain why James identified himself with those “believers” at first, but when he understood that Paul was still very dedicated to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, he changed his mind and tried to save him, but it was too late.

We can think of several reasons why Apostle Paul was bold enough to preach the very opposite of what the Apostolic Council had decreed.

1) He was more educated than them all and must have felt that he had a better understanding of what the new religion entailed than they did.

Act 22:3 "I am indeed a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, taught according to the strictness of our fathers' law, and was zealous toward God as you all are today.

At one stage he too was zealous for the law of Moses, but when Jesus Christ entered his life, he converted to Christianity and became just as zealous for the new religion.

2) He used his apostleship and acquaintance with Jesus Christ as a sign of authority in dealing with the Gentiles.

1Co 9:1 Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?

1Co 9:2 Are you not my work in the Lord? If I am not an apostle to others, yet doubtless I am to you. For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

1Co 15:3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

1Co 15:4 and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures,

1Co 15:5 and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve.

1Co 15:6 After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep.

1Co 15:7 After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles.

1Co 15:8 Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.

The other Apostles did not have Paul's theological training, but spent three years in the company of Jesus. James however, though he was the Lord's brother, had none of these pedigrees. He was neither one of the original Apostles, nor did he have the theological training of Paul. In fact, during Jesus' ministry he seemed to be hostile to what his Brother was doing.

Joh 7:3 His brothers therefore said to Him, "Depart from here and go into Judea, that Your disciples also may see the works that You are doing.

Joh 7:4 For no one does anything in secret while he himself seeks to be known openly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world."

Joh 7:5 For even His brothers did not believe in Him.

Joh 7:6 Then Jesus said to them, "My time has not yet come, but your time is always ready.

But when he saw what transpired in the end, and what had become of his Brother, he too repented and became a Christian. Nevertheless he remained deeply rooted in his Jewish faith and had difficulty understanding where the old religion stopped and the new one began. He could not understand why the Gentiles should be treated differently. Paul, however, had no such compunction. His more comprehensive understanding of the Scriptures and the instructions received directly from Jesus Christ gave him that confidence.

James assumed that Paul had become an apostate until he heard his accomplishments among the Gentiles from his own mouth. By then, however, the damage had already been done and Jerusalem was up in arms against him. James sought to save him by suggesting those purification rituals, but it all proved to be of no avail.

The question is, how was it possible that those "believers" got caught up in that tumult against Paul alongside non-believers? The explanation is simple. They mixed together around the temple in Jerusalem, and in so doing they let themselves be influenced by non-believers. They ignored the warnings of the Scriptures: "Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?" (Amos 3:3). The result was unavoidable: they were "Christian believers" in name but not in deed. A lesson for true believers about whom they should fellowship with.

Another important point to remember from this development is that when Apostle Paul was forced to appeal to Caesar, his appeal was accepted on the premise that he was a Roman citizen.

Act 22:25 And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said to the centurion who stood by, "Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman, and uncondemned?"

Act 22:26 When the centurion heard *that*, he went and told the commander, saying, "Take care what you do, for this man is a Roman."

Act 22:27 Then the commander came and said to him, "Tell me, are you a Roman?" He said, "Yes."

Act 22:28 The commander answered, "With a large sum I obtained this citizenship." And Paul said, "But I was born *a citizen*."

Act 22:29 Then immediately those who were about to examine him withdrew from him; and the commander was also afraid after he found out that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him.

When he arrived in Rome, things looked good for a while. He was allowed to live in his own rented house and preach the Gospel freely for two whole years. That must have been the waiting period before he could be brought before the imperial court.

Act 28:30 Then Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came
Act 28:31 to him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him.

The Romans treated him as one of their own for a while, no doubt being ready to let him go free if the Jews had relented and stopped pursuing him. But the Jews would have none of it. Not long after that we find Paul confessing that he was ready to die.

2Ti 4:6 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand.

2Ti 4:7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

2Ti 4:8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

No one stood by him, except the Lord who delivered him out of the mouth of the lion. The question is, why is it that in the end, after preaching the Gospel freely for two whole years, he found himself on the death row? He gave us a hint in this epistle:

2Ti 4:9 Be diligent to come to me quickly;

2Ti 4:10 for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica—Crescens for Galatia, Titus for Dalmatia.

2Ti 4:11 Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry.

2Ti 4:12 And Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus.

2Ti 4:13 Bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas when you come—and the books, especially the parchments.

2Ti 4:14 Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm. May the Lord repay him according to his works.

2Ti 4:15 You also must beware of him, for he has greatly resisted our words.

2Ti 4:16 At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me. May it not be charged against them.

2Ti 4:17 But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and *that* all the Gentiles might hear. Also I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.

Who was this “Alexander the coppersmith”, and why did he do him so much harm? In most likelihood he was the same one mentioned in the book of Acts.

Act 19:23 And about that time there arose a great commotion about the Way.

Act 19:24 For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Diana, brought no small profit to the craftsmen.

Act 19:25 He called them together with the workers of similar occupation, and said: "Men, you know that we have our prosperity by this trade.

Act 19:26 Moreover you see and hear that not only at Ephesus, but throughout almost all Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away many people, saying that they are not gods which are made with hands.

Act 19:27 So not only is this trade of ours in danger of falling into disrepute, but also the temple of the great goddess Diana may be despised and her magnificence destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worship."

Act 19:28 Now when they heard *this*, they were full of wrath and cried out, saying, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!"

Act 19:29 So the whole city was filled with confusion, and rushed into the theater with one accord, having seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians, Paul's travel companions.

Act 19:30 And when Paul wanted to go in to the people, the disciples would not allow him.

Act 19:31 Then some of the officials of Asia, who were his friends, sent to him pleading that he would not venture into the theater.

Act 19:32 Some therefore cried one thing and some another, for the assembly was confused, and most of them did not know why they had come together.

Act 19:33 And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander motioned with his hand, and wanted to make his defense to the people.

Act 19:34 But when they found out that he was a Jew, all with one voice cried out for about two hours, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!"

This Alexander, though a Jew, was not on Paul's side. In most likelihood, he would have distanced himself from Paul had they given him the chance to speak, but the Ephesians treated them the same, both being Jews to them. Being a coppersmith, he must have worked with Demetrius the silversmith in making shrines and idols for the temple of Diana and other temples. His livelihood was as much in danger from Paul's preaching as was that of Demetrius. Later, the Jews must have employed him to speak against Paul before the emperor in Rome, as they employed Tertullus at the beginning to speak against Paul in Caesarea.

Act 24:1 Now after five days Ananias the high priest came down with the elders and a certain orator *named* Tertullus. These gave evidence to the governor against Paul.

Act 24:2 And when he was called upon, Tertullus began his accusation, saying: "Seeing that through you we enjoy great peace, and prosperity is being brought to this nation by your foresight,

Act 24:3 we accept *it* always and in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness.

Act 24:4 Nevertheless, not to be tedious to you any further, I beg you to hear, by your courtesy, a few words from us.

Act 24:5 For we have found this man a plague, a creator of dissension among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes.

Act 24:6 He even tried to profane the temple, and we seized him, and wanted to judge him according to our law.

Act 24:7 But the commander Lysias came by and with great violence took *him* out of our hands,

Act 24:8 commanding his accusers to come to you. By examining him yourself you may ascertain all these things of which we accuse him."

Act 24:9 And the Jews also assented, maintaining that these things were so.

Tertullus accused Paul of trying to "profane the temple". This was the temple in Jerusalem, of which the Romans probably did not care much, but Alexander the coppersmith would have been able to prove that Paul tried to do the same to the temple of Diana in Ephesus. And if he could do that to the temple in Ephesus, he could do it to any temple. Since the Romans were great idolaters, they took that accusation very seriously.

Paul was able to defend himself against the accusation regarding the temple in Jerusalem, but not against other temples. When the emperor heard it, he did not hesitate to condemn him to death. What the Jews did not realize was that by pursuing Paul to the end, they signed their own death warrant. A few years earlier, the Jews had been expelled from Rome by Claudius.

Act 18:2 And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla (because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome); and he came to them.

Nero, who judged Paul, must have known that the Jews were not supposed to be in Rome, yet now he was called upon to arbitrate on Jewish matters. At that time the Christians were seen as just another Jewish sect. Therefore, by accusing Paul of profaning the temple, the Jews, in fact, accused themselves of the same crime.

Nero knew that the Jews were a troublesome people who did not worship the Roman gods and did not pay proper homage to the emperor. Now he discovered that they were capable of profaning their temples too.

When trouble arose in Palestine between the Jews and the Romans shortly afterwards, the Romans must have said, enough is enough. They set out to destroy not only the temple in Jerusalem, but the entire nation. They brought Jerusalem to ruins, and scattered the people abroad among other nations. No more troubles from the Jews for the Romans for two thousand years.

The prophecy of Jesus Christ about the temple being destroyed had come true, and the conflict between His followers and the unbelieving Jews played an important role in that. Astonishingly, as the Jewish nation was reconstituted two thousand years later, they sought the blessing and approval from the head of the spiritual Roman Empire, Pontifex Maximus, the office responsible for its demise in the first place.

Jesus Christ could see what would transpire in the end as much from heavenly revelations, as from the ensuing conflict between His followers and the unbelieving Jews.

Palestine was like a powder keg at that time. On the one hand, the Jews were expecting the Messiah (based on the prophecies of Daniel, Jeremiah, and others), and on the other, they were in constant conflict with the Roman occupiers as a result of their religion. What better time for the Messiah to arrive than now to free them from the Roman yoke? The prophetic books and the signs of the times were clearly indicating that Messiah was due anytime, but

when someone finally arrived who filled that role, they were puzzled by the fact that He was more concerned with their hypocrisy than with the Roman occupation.

They could not understand why He did not advocate a rising against the Romans. But Jesus Christ understood what they did not. The fourth "beast" of Daniel's prophecies, which conquered the "glorious land", was destined to dominate the world until the end of time. The same prophecies told Jesus that His Kingdom was not of this world.

But the Jews did not understand that, or did not want to believe it, because they wanted a Messiah who would free them from the Roman occupation and establish the prophesied glorious Kingdom of Israel right then and there.

Isn't it remarkable that 2000 years later, just as the Messiah is about to return and free the whole world from the yoke of Satan, the Jews seek a reconciliation with Rome? They desperately sought Rome's approval for their State, and so they invited the head of the fourth "beast", Pontifex Maximus, to visit them and give them his blessing. In so doing, they created the conditions for the fulfillment of a prophecy linked with the end time, the profanation of the Holy Land by the "abomination of desolation".

Hardly anyone knows that a major prophecy was fulfilled when the Pope impersonated Jesus Christ during his open air mass on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. He attributed to Jesus these words: "blessed are those who seem to be losers, because they will be winners in the end". Jesus Christ never said that, He could never have said that. The word "loser" is not in the Bible. Christianity is about winning not losing, seeming or otherwise. Jesus Christ had just won a titanic battle with the Devil. He was a winner as are His followers:

Rom 8:36 As it is written: "FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE KILLED ALL DAY LONG; WE ARE ACCOUNTED AS SHEEP FOR THE SLAUGHTER."

Rom 8:37 Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

Rom 8:38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come,

Rom 8:39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Who was the Pontiff thinking off when he spoke of those who "seem to be losers" if not of himself and his followers? They may wish to be winners in the end, but that will remain a forlorn hope. But why should the Pontiff even begin to think about losers? The truth is, he knows more than he could reveal, or that his followers might want to hear.

He knows that he committed blasphemy at least three times: first, when he acquired for himself God's title of "Holy Father", second, when he impersonated Jesus Christ, and third, when he added something new to the Scriptures. Now is he going to win in the end out of that sure losing situation? He might want to look at these Scriptures again.

Rev 22:18 For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book;

Rev 22:19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book.

Coming back to the temple in Jerusalem, both Paul and Peter knew that that building no longer played an important role in the life of their followers, because after the arrival of the Holy Spirit, the recipient human beings became temples of the living God.

2Co 6:16 And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM. I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE."

They also knew that God does not live in temples made with hands.

Act 17:24 God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands.

Which is what Jesus Christ had told them too.

Joh 4:19 The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet.

Joh 4:20 Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you *Jews* say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship."

Joh 4:21 Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father.

Joh 4:22 You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews.

Joh 4:23 But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.

Joh 4:24 God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

"The hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth". In other words, they will worship the Father whenever and wherever they are. Knowing that the temple in Jerusalem would be destroyed, Jesus offered His followers a way out by giving them a new way of worshipping God.

Mat 24:1 Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple.

Mat 24:2 And Jesus said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not *one* stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

That no doubt was one factor in Peter's decision to move his congregation out of Jerusalem to a safer place in the country. James and his followers however, were still congregating around the temple in Jerusalem. They had not understood, nor suspected, the magnitude of the calamity that would befall their nation. When that finally happened, the Christianity of James disappeared from the scene never to be revived again. Unfortunately, the Christianity of Apostle Peter also disappeared from the scene, but unlike that of James, his would be rediscovered two thousand years later, at exactly the time that the Jewish State would be reestablished.

For fifty years, a jubilee period, the Dead Sea Scrolls remained sealed in spite of intensive scrutiny by scholars from around the world. But now the time has come for them to yield their long held secret, just in time for the Jews to rediscover a Christianity with which they are comfortable, and get ready for the Messiah whom they ignorantly rejected 2000 years ago.

We are now going to make a case that the Qumran community was none other than Apostle Peter's first Jewish Christian congregation. As you shall see, the beliefs and form of organization espoused by the Dead Sea Scrolls fit exactly those of the very first Church of God set up by Apostle Peter.

"Dead Sea Scrolls – A Common Heritage"

This is the title of a new television documentary produced by Rachael Kohn, a PHD graduate from Mac Master University, Canada, former lecturer in Religious Studies at the University of Sydney, currently working for ABC television and Radio National, Australia. The program was broadcast on ABC TV, in two parts, on July 2 & 9, 2000.

This documentary presented a completely different picture about the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Qumran community than the one I've seen years earlier. You may have seen this one too, for I am sure it was broadcast in many countries around the world. As I was watching and listening to the scholarly deliberations, I suddenly came to realize that they were talking about a community with which I was familiar. My great surprise came when at the end of the program they concluded that after fifty years of intense study and analysis, they still did not know who these people were.

It surprised me because anyone who would have been familiar with the New Testament, would have known that the community portrayed in these documents resembled the very first Christian congregation established by Apostle Peter. Yet none of the scholars who participated in the program showed any awareness of these Scriptures. Towards the end of the program, one of them made the remark that the community described in the Dead Sea Scrolls had no resemblance with later Christianity. He was right, of course, but why compare it with later Christianity and not early Christianity? The reason obviously is that that is the only Christianity he was familiar with. Later Christianity, and the Christianity of our time, would be unrecognizable to the writers of the New Testament. Jesus Christ knew that there would be a wholesale departure from His faith, and that is why He said that prior to His return someone would come to “restore all things”.

Mal 4:5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.

Mat 17:9 Now as they came down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, "Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man is risen from the dead."

Mat 17:10 And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?"

Mat 17:11 Jesus answered and said to them, "Indeed, Elijah is coming first and will restore all things.

This is one of the things that needs to be restored at this time. What follows is a transcript of that program, accompanied by our comments in bold letters whenever appropriate.

This documentary program was introduced by Geraldine Doogue, presenter of the ABC *Compass* program.

“Hello, Geraldine Doogue welcoming you tonight to Compass. In a little under a fortnight, on the 14th of July, Australians will get their first chance to see an exhibition of ancient arte facts, profoundly altering our understanding of early Christianity and Judaism, what’s increasingly being called the mother religion.

The Art Gallery of New South Wales will host the Dead Sea Scrolls. Ancient documents yes, but with strong contemporary relevance. These are not merely items of archaeology, though they are amazing primary source materials, around a thousand years older than any biblical text we had before, most of which dated to medieval times.

In the fifty years since their discovery, the scrolls have been surrounded by controversy and debate about ownership, access and interpretation. Tonight we travel with ABC reporter Rachael Kohn to North America, England and Israel, as she explores the latest research on who originally wrote and used the Dead Sea Scrolls, and why we should care about them.”

Rachael Kohn: “The old city of Jerusalem: historic center for Judaism and Christianity. Twenty five kilometers east of here, one of the most important archaeological finds ever, sheds new light on Judaism of 2,000 years ago, and on the influences that shaped early Christianity. The remarkable remains of some 800 documents, the Dead Sea Scrolls. But who wrote and owned the Dead Sea Scrolls? And what do their contents reveal about the kind of group they were?

Most scholars say the owners of the Dead Sea Scrolls were an extreme Jewish apocalyptic sect, and the present day Jewish group gives clues as to what they were like. The Temple Mount and Land of Israel faithful movement, gather near the Western Wall in old Jerusalem, the most sacred place for present day Judaism. They are marching in protest against Muslim control of the Temple Mount where the Jewish Temple once stood. But they are hopeful that it is soon to change, that the coming of the Messiah is near, and that the temple will be rebuilt.”

Gershon Salomon of Temple Mount & Land of Israel Faithful Movement: “This event of redemption, event of the rebuilding of the temple, is going to be fulfilled very soon. We came today to make the pilgrimage, but in the same time to demonstrate, to awake the people of Israel, to tell them that this is time to redeem the Temple Mount which is still unfortunately under Arab occupation.

Rachael Kohn: “Like the Dead Sea Scroll sect, this group is driven by an apocalyptic view of the world that the end times are near.”

Gershon Salomon: “We have so many enemies around Israel which want to destroy this country, but we are in the greatest moment in the history of Israel: fulfillment of prophecy, foundation of the State of Israel, 1948, re-gathering of the Jewish people from all over the world. You know this is fulfillment of prophecy, word by word.

Rachael Kohn: “Many like journalist Gershon Gorenberg, see parallels between the current political tensions in Israel and those of 2,000 years ago when Roman occupation aroused rebellion and fervent Messianic hopes. But these were dashed by the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70.

Gershon Gorenberg (Journalist and author): “Normal religion lives with the reality that the world isn’t as it should be, and tries to lead its believers to live the best and the holiest life possible in that imperfect world. The Messianic view demands to have it fixed and doesn’t want any compromise with that world, and that’s what happened among Messianic extreme groups in the period of the Roman empire, and that’s what’s happening with the most extreme of the Messianic groups today.”

Caption: **The Dead Seas Scrolls – the end of days**

Rachael Kohn: “The Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered over 50 years ago in caves on these hills on the north western edge of the Dead Sea. Most scrolls, the remains of 600 of them, were found in a cave only 50 meters from the ruins of an ancient settlement called Qumran. Most scholars say they belonged to a Jewish community that lived here.

Many of the scrolls are kept in this special museum in Jerusalem called the Shrine of the Book.

The documents include the oldest known copies of all the books of the Hebrew Bible – the Christian Old Testament – except for the book of Esther. As well as biblical commentaries, prayer, hymns, and writings which reveal rules and beliefs of an apocalyptic Jewish sect. [Yet] despite 50 years of study, the scrolls’ origins are still obscure.”

There is something to be said here about the fact that the book of Esther is missing from these documents. Here is a quote from that book. See if you can notice anything unusual about it.

Est 9:13 Then Esther said, "If it pleases the king, let it be granted to the Jews who *are* in Shushan to do again tomorrow according to today's decree, and let Haman's ten sons be hanged on the gallows."

Est 9:14 So the king commanded this to be done; the decree was issued in Shushan, and they hanged Haman's ten sons.

Est 9:15 And the Jews who *were* in Shushan gathered together again on the fourteenth day of the month of Adar and killed three hundred men at Shushan; but they did not lay a hand on the plunder.

Est 9:16 The remainder of the Jews in the king's provinces gathered together and protected their lives, had rest from their enemies, and killed seventy-five thousand of their enemies; but they did not lay a hand on the plunder.

Est 9:17 This was on the thirteenth day of the month of Adar. And on the fourteenth of *the month* they rested and made it a day of feasting and gladness.

Est 9:18 But the Jews who *were* at Shushan assembled together on the thirteenth *day*, as well as on the fourteenth; and on the fifteenth of *the month* they rested, and made it a day of feasting and gladness.

Est 9:19 Therefore the Jews of the villages who dwelt in the unwalled towns celebrated the fourteenth day of the month of Adar *with* gladness and feasting, as a holiday, and for sending presents to one another.

Est 9:20 And Mordecai wrote these things and sent letters to all the Jews, near and far, who *were* in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus,

Est 9:21 to establish among them that they should celebrate yearly the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month of Adar,

Est 9:22 as the days on which the Jews had rest from their enemies, as the month which was turned from sorrow to joy for them, and from mourning to a holiday; that they should make them days of feasting and joy, of sending presents to one another and gifts to the poor.

The Jews had turned the day of their revenge over their enemies into one of their greatest feasts – the Feast of Purim. This was a feast set up by human beings, not by God. This feast was in direct conflict with the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread given by God to them for a greater and more miraculous delivery from Egypt. You can envision the unbelievable and sudden carnage that befell real and perceived enemies of the Jews, after which they gloated over their exploits. God does not like that attitude and does not operate that way.

Pro 24:17 Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, And do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles;

Pro 24:18 Lest the LORD see it, and it displease Him, And He turn away His wrath from him.

God gives people a warning, as He did with the Egyptians, giving them the chance to change, before unleashing His punishment. Yet instead of being grateful to Him for being delivered from such a disaster, the Jews turned that into a memorable day in honor of their OWN accomplishment. God does not forget people's sins. Generations later, people pay for their father's sins.

Leaving the book of Esther out means that Apostle Peter and his Christians did not observe the Feast of Purim. We knew nothing of this fact when we wrote *The Christian Herald No 4* six years ago, in which we listed the proper Christian Holy Days. After proving from the Scriptures that the Holy Days given by God to Moses are the ones Jesus Christ would expect his followers to observe when He returns, we left out the Feast of Purim. This is what we wrote then:

“There is a book entitled, “The Comprehensive Hebrew Calendar - twentieth to twenty second century”, by Arthur Spiel (Fieldheim Publishers, Jerusalem/New York, 1986), a brilliant work of scholarship, which presents a comparative Roman and Jewish calendar with all the information needed about the Jewish Holy Days and their date of observance. In this book, you will find twice as many Holy Days as there are in the Old Testament. That is because the Jews have added memorable historical events to God's Holy Days. There is nothing wrong with that, it is not a sin for them to do so, but we are under no obligation to observe these added Holy Days. We only need to observe the Holy Days given by God to Moses” [For these alone are the signs between God and His people] (p.22).

Now while we believe that it is not a sin for the Jews to observe memorable historical events, it is certainly not right that any should overshadow God's Holy Days. The Feast of Purim appears to do just that. That may explain why Apostle Peter left out the book of Esther.

Emanuel Tov, Chief Editor, Dead Sea Scrolls, Publication Project: “In the beginning of the research in the fifties these caves were described as the Qumran Library, and the implication was that everything was written on the spot. In recent years, there have been voices that all these scrolls have been brought to Qumran from Jerusalem. In my view, they came from all kinds of places in the ancient land of Israel. In my view, when I analyze these scrolls one third or something like it was written at Qumran itself, and the other two thirds were brought from the outside. Could have been from anywhere. There is a likelihood that much has come from the spiritual center of the Jewish people from Jerusalem, but where they came from who knows?”

Rachael Kohn: “Since the discovery of the scrolls, the ruins of Qumran have been closely studied as the most likely place where their owners lived. Evidence from the scrolls suggests they were a group who originally had some connection with the temple in Jerusalem, but broke away because they believed in a more strict observance of ritual purity. In what's now called the War Scrolls, they envisioned themselves as the sons of light, and in an impending battle they would triumph over their enemies – the sons of darkness.”

They do not know who these people were, yet they were able to read their minds and know that they broke away from the temple in Jerusalem because they believed in a more strict observance of “ritual purity”. Scholars of ancient times, archaeologists, historians, biblical scholars, seem to have a fascination with “ritual purity” and

religious ceremonies. They find them everywhere, and when they don't, they can always invent them. The truth is, these people left Jerusalem because they had no choice, they were forced to do so as a result of persecutions. Here is proof of it.

- Act 4:1 Now as they spoke to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them,
Act 4:2 being greatly disturbed that they taught the people and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead.
Act 4:3 And they laid hands on them, and put *them* in custody until the next day, for it was already evening.
Act 4:4 However, many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.
Act 4:5 And it came to pass, on the next day, that their rulers, elders, and scribes,
Act 4:6 as well as Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the family of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem.
Act 4:7 And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, "By what power or by what name have you done this?"
Act 4:8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders of Israel:
Act 4:9 If we this day are judged for a good deed *done* to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well,
Act 4:10 let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole.
Act 4:11 This is the 'STONE WHICH WAS REJECTED BY YOU BUILDERS, WHICH HAS BECOME THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE.'
Act 4:12 Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."
Act 4:13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.
Act 4:14 And seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it.
Act 4:15 But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves,
Act 4:16 saying, "What shall we do to these men? For, indeed, that a notable miracle has been done through them *is* evident to all who dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny *it*.
Act 4:17 But so that it spreads no further among the people, let us severely threaten them, that from now on they speak to no man in this name."
Act 4:18 So they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.
Act 4:19 But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge.
Act 4:20 For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."
Act 4:21 So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way of punishing them, because of the people, since they all glorified God for what had been done.

This was the first encounter of Peter and John with the High Priest and his entourage after the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. This time they let them go with a mere warning that they no longer speak "in the name of Jesus". But from now on, this confrontation will take ominous tones: jail, persecution, and murder. Please note the names Annas and Caiaphas, for they are familiar names from the time of Jesus Christ.

John 18:13 "And they led Him away to Annas first, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas who was high priest

John 18:14 that year. Now it was Caiaphas who advised the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.

After crucifying Jesus, they became determined to stop His disciples from speaking in his name, or even using His name anymore. The Qumran people spoke of a wicked High Priest, and of a Teacher of Righteousness, but never mentioned them by name. They couldn't possibly name Caiaphas, the High Priest who crucified Jesus, as the wicked priest for they could have ended up being judged by him. Nor could they mention Jesus Christ after being warned not to speak in His name anymore.

- Act 5:16 Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed.
- Act 5:17 Then the high priest rose up, and all those who *were* with him (which is the sect of the Sadducees), and they were filled with indignation,
- Act 5:18 and laid their hands on the apostles and put them in the common prison.
- Act 5:19 But at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said,
- Act 5:20 "Go, stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life."
- Act 5:21 And when they heard *that*, they entered the temple early in the morning and taught. But the high priest and those with him came and called the council together, with all the elders of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought.
- Act 5:22 But when the officers came and did not find them in the prison, they returned and reported,
- Act 5:23 saying, "Indeed we found the prison shut securely, and the guards standing outside before the doors; but when we opened them, we found no one inside!"
- Act 5:24 Now when the high priest, the captain of the temple, and the chief priests heard these things, they wondered what the outcome would be.
- Act 5:25 So one came and told them, saying, "Look, the men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people!"
- Act 5:26 Then the captain went with the officers and brought them without violence, for they feared the people, lest they should be stoned.
- Act 5:27 And when they had brought them, they set *them* before the council. And the high priest asked them,
- Act 5:28 saying, "Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man's blood on us!"
- Act 5:29 But Peter and the *other* apostles answered and said: "We ought to obey God rather than men.
- Act 5:30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree.
- Act 5:31 Him God has exalted to His right hand *to be* Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.
- Act 5:32 And we are His witnesses to these things, and *so also is* the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him."
- Act 5:33 When they heard *this*, they were furious and plotted to kill them.
- Act 5:34 Then one in the council stood up, a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in respect by all the people, and commanded them to put the apostles outside for a little while.
- Act 5:35 And he said to them: "Men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what you intend to do regarding these men.
- Act 5:36 For some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody. A number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was slain, and all who obeyed him were scattered and came to nothing.
- Act 5:37 After this man, Judas of Galilee rose up in the days of the census, and drew away many people after him. He also perished, and all who obeyed him were dispersed.
- Act 5:38 And now I say to you, keep away from these men and let them alone; for if this plan or this work is of men, it will come to nothing;
- Act 5:39 but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it—lest you even be found to fight against God."
- Act 5:40 And they agreed with him, and when they had called for the apostles and beaten *them*, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.

First they warned them not to speak in the name of Jesus Christ, then they would have killed them if it were not for the timely intervention of Gamaliel. But that truce did not last long.

Act 9:1 Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest

Act 9:2 and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

The persecution became so intense and serious, they were not satisfied with just killing the believers from Jerusalem, they went after those from foreign countries too.

Acts 11:19 Now those who were scattered after the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to no one but the Jews only.

Waves after waves of persecutions came over the Jewish Christian believers from Jerusalem.

Act 12:1 Now about that time Herod the king stretched out *his* hand to harass some from the church.

Act 12:2 Then he killed James the brother of John with the sword.

Act 12:3 And because he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to seize Peter also. Now it was *during* the Days of Unleavened Bread.

Act 12:4 So when he had arrested him, he put *him* in prison, and delivered *him* to four squads of soldiers to keep him, intending to bring him before the people after Passover.

Act 12:5 Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church.

Act 12:6 And when Herod was about to bring him out, that night Peter was sleeping, bound with two chains between two soldiers; and the guards before the door were keeping the prison.

Act 12:7 Now behold, an angel of the Lord stood by *him*, and a light shone in the prison; and he struck Peter on the side and raised him up, saying, "Arise quickly!" And his chains fell off *his* hands.

Act 12:8 Then the angel said to him, "Gird yourself and tie on your sandals"; and so he did. And he said to him, "Put on your garment and follow me."

Act 12:9 So he went out and followed him, and did not know that what was done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision.

Act 12:10 When they were past the first and the second guard posts, they came to the iron gate that leads to the city, which opened to them of its own accord; and they went out and went down one street, and immediately the angel departed from him.

Act 12:11 And when Peter had come to himself, he said, "Now I know for certain that the Lord has sent His angel, and has delivered me from the hand of Herod and *from* all the expectation of the Jewish people."

That time Peter no longer went back to the temple to preach Jesus Christ in the hearing of all, but went surreptitiously to the disciples. It was now a matter of life and death, both for him and for his congregation. They had to move out of Jerusalem in order to escape the increasing persecution. But wherever they would go, they could no longer openly worship or preach in Jesus' name. So they moved to Qumran where they became an anonymous community of believers. Unable to speak openly about Jesus Christ and the wicked High Priest who crucified Him, who was now their deadly enemy, they maintained their anonymity simply by referring to them as the Teacher of Righteousness and the wicked priest.

Since the Jews were willing to go as far as Damascus to bring back to Jerusalem those who worshiped Jesus to prosecute them, how much more would they have done it to the Qumran people if they knew that they were Christians? That is why they kept their identity under wraps so zealously. But their identity could easily be deduced from their beliefs, practices and historical circumstances.

Rachael Kohn rightly pointed out that the Qumran people "envisioned themselves as the sons of light, and in an impending battle they would triumph over their enemies – the sons of darkness." None of the scholars could explain where these beliefs came from, yet they still concluded that this was an obscure Jewish sect that had broken away from the temple leadership "because they believed in a more strict observance of ritual purity." No Jewish sect entertained such ideas at that time or any time. They couldn't

because these are purely Christian beliefs, as revealed by Jesus Christ. The New Testament is littered with such terms as “children of God”, “children of the Devil”, “sons of the resurrection”, “children of light”, rulers of the darkness of this age”, etc. Here are some examples.

1Jn 3:10 In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother.

Eph 5:8 For you were once darkness, but now *you are* light in the Lord. Walk as children of light

Eph 5:9 (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth),

Eph 5:10 finding out what is acceptable to the Lord.

Eph 5:11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose *them*.

And of course, the most famous passage of all:

Joh 8:38 I speak what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have seen with your father."

Joh 8:39 They answered and said to Him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham.

Joh 8:40 But now you seek to kill Me, a Man who has told you the truth which I heard from God. Abraham did not do this.

Joh 8:41 You do the deeds of your father." Then they said to Him, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father—God."

Joh 8:42 Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me.

Joh 8:43 Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word.

Joh 8:44 You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *resources*, for he is a liar and the father of it.

Joh 8:45 But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me.

Joh 8:46 Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me?

Joh 8:47 He who is of God hears God's words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God."

The Jews who wanted to kill Jesus were accused of being children of the devil. This is another reason why the Christians of Apostle Peter could not mix with the unbelieving Jews anymore and moved out to Qumran, not because they “believed in a more strict observance of ritual purity”. Now back to the Compass program.

Voiceover: “The rule of war on the unleashing of the attack of the sons of light against the company of the sons of darkness – the army of Satan – there shall be a battle and therefore carnage before the God of Israel, for that shall be the day appointed from the ancient times for the battle of destruction of the sons of darkness.”

Here is belief in predestination, specific to Jesus Christ, the Apostles, and the early Christians, but not to the Jews. As for the battle between the sons of darkness and the sons of light, the book of Revelation gives us details about the end time battle between Satan and his armies and Jesus Christ and His armies, another topic specific to the Christians and not to the Jews.

Rev 19:11 Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him *was* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war.

Rev 19:12 His eyes *were* like a flame of fire, and on His head *were* many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself.

Rev 19:13 He *was* clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.

Rev 19:14 And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses.

Rev 19:15 Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

Rev 19:16 And He has on *His* robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

Rev 19:17 Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, "Come and gather together for the supper of the great God,

Rev 19:18 that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all *people*, free and slave, both small and great."

Rev 19:19 And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army.

Rev 19:20 Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone.

Rev 19:21 And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.

Rev 20:1 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

Rev 20:2 He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is *the* Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years;

Rev 20:3 and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.

Rev 20:4 And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then *I saw* the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received *his* mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

Rev 20:5 But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This *is* the first resurrection.

Rev 20:6 Blessed and holy *is* he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

Rev 20:7 Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison

Rev 20:8 and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number *is* as the sand of the sea.

Rev 20:9 They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them.

Rev 20:10 The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet *are*. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

The Jews would not have known about this battle two thousand years ago just as they do not know about it now since they reject the New Testament. But Apostle Peter and his congregation would have known about it. The fact that the Qumran people had similar beliefs is one more proof that they were Christians and not just another Jewish sect.

Rachael Kohn: Dr Eileen Schuller of the McMaster University in Canada, characterizes the sect as intensely devout.

Dr Eileen Schuller: "It's not so much that they are trying to do something new and innovative, it is that they are trying to live the law of Moses, with their whole heart and their whole soul as they say, as it should be correctly interpreted. And I think part of it is that it is important to do this because we are now at the end of days, that the time of divine intervention is very near.

Eileen Schuller says that they "are trying to live the law of Moses", yet their beliefs and practices had nothing to do with Moses and everything to do with Jesus Christ. She

added with that typical scholarly sarcasm: “we are now at the end of days, that the time of divine intervention is very near”.

The law of Moses says nothing about the children of light and children of darkness, or about the end time battle between the Devil and his armies and Jesus Christ and His armies. This Doctor in Theology is as familiar with the Old Testament as she is with the New.

Rachael Kohn: “Professor John Collins of University of Chicago Divinity School is a specialist in apocalyptic literature.”

John Collins: “One of the essential apocalyptic motives is the final judgment. And then at that judgment some people will be approved and rewarded, and some people will be condemned, etcetera. Now you can fill in any values in principle as the criteria of the judgment. According to the people in the Dead Sea Scrolls the important thing is to live like angels, to live in a state of purity, to observe the law in great detail. And the people who do this will be rewarded, and the people who don’t will be punished.” [He too spoke with that sardonic smile about the beliefs of the Dead Sea Scrolls people].

Rachael Kohn: “Archaeological excavation of Qumran began soon after the first scrolls were discovered in 1947. This drawing shows what the site would have looked like. Qumran has features that support the view that a Jewish religious group lived here from the second century BCE till the destruction of the community by the Romans around the year 68. But why did they come here in the first place?”

Hanan Eshel Archaeologist Bar-Ilan University, Israel: “Well, they felt that the establishment in Jerusalem was corrupt, they felt that priests in Jerusalem were taking money from the temple treasures, they felt that the establishment in Jerusalem is not functioning the way it should have functioned. I believe that most people who came to Qumran in second temple were young, they were well educated, they came from priestly families in Jerusalem, and they felt that their parents were corrupt, and that the temple establishment was corrupt, and they were looking for a better and more moral society here in the desert.”

Rachael Kohn: “One of the key features supporting the view that a religious community lived here is the presence of an elaborate system to collect and channel water to five large ritual baths called *mikvahs* in Hebrew. Bathing was just one area of ritual purity that preoccupied the sect in every aspect of their lives.”

Whenever scholars find evidence of water being collected, they immediately assume that it was for religious purposes. Couldn’t they just collect water for personal, or other uses? That this view is wrong will become apparent shortly. Meantime remember that this was a Roman world, and the Romans went to extraordinary lengths to civilize themselves and their subjects, and bring water to their living quarters from huge distances.

Now we do not suggest for a minute that this was a Roman garrison, only that they could have been influenced by the Romans and sought to keep themselves clean in the manner of the Romans. The fact that they made provisions for collecting water does not mean that they could not have been Christians, or that they could only have collected it for purification purposes. We know that Apostle Peter and his followers did observe many Jewish customs, some of which caused conflict with Apostle Paul.

Gal 2:11 Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed;

Gal 2:12 for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision.

Gal 2:13 And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy.

Gal 2:14 But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before *them* all, "If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews?"

Gal 2:15 We *who are* Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles,

Gal 2:16 knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.

That the Qumran people may have observed some of the Jewish purification rituals, does not rule them out of being Christians. These customs were part of their culture, so we would expect them to practice at least some of them, particularly since that would have given them a better cover for their Christian beliefs.

Hanan Eshel: “If we count the number of mikvahs, of ritual baths that were found here, this would be the largest number of . . . [?] that was found in any other building from second temple period. So the number of ritual baths, and most of them near the dining room, proves that this was some kind of unique thing. Even if we could compare it with, the only place that we could compare it with is to priestly houses that were found in upper city of Jerusalem.”

See that? The large number of “ritual” baths, and their positioning near the dining room, resembled more a priestly residential building than a Jewish religious sectarian community. Their baths had little to do with ritual washings and more to do with personal cleanliness and with baptisms as shall become evident later.

Rachael Kohn: “Is this a typical mikvahs that we find at Qumran?”

Hanan Eshel: “Yes, yes and no. The mikvaot here are big, and they are big in few places that didn’t allow to change the water. In the mikvaot you need to have water that came from rain, that were not pulled up from anywhere from a spring or from a well, so you needed to use it until the next rain.”

So much for our “ritual baths”. Since they were not suitable for typical Jewish purification purposes, they could only have been used for personal hygiene and, most likely, for baptismal purposes.

Rachael Kohn: “Why are there two sets of stairs or entry points?”

Hanan Eshel: “Well, we have a mishna, a Jewish law, from around 200, but probably preserved things that came from second temple period, which speaks that if you are walking in a ritual bath in Jerusalem and you find vessels on the way down they are un pure, but on the way up they are pure, that way you don’t have to immerse them again. So there was a distinct way down and a distinct way up.”

I would rather think that they had two sets of stairways and entry points in order to separate the males from females at baptisms.

Rachael Kohn: “A figure who was influential in the early life of the Dead Sea community, is referred to in the scrolls simply as the Teacher of Righteousness. There is much speculation and debate about the identity of this leader. He probably was a priest who fell out with the temple authorities, and was persecuted by one who is called in the scrolls the wicked priest.

The eminent scroll scholar at Oxford, Geza Vermes, says the dispute erupted when the Maccabeas replaced the Zaddokite priesthood in the second century BCE.

Geza Vermes, Oxford University: “The conflict between the ne. . the scrolls people and the Jewish officialdom is certainly a a kind of priestly in fighting. To understand this one has to remember that the High Priest the, in the. . . in Israel among the, among the Jews was a dynastic family business, it was handed down from father to son, and that the Zaddokites, the descendants of the High Priest Zaddok were the High Priests over centuries.”

Rachael Kohn: “Vermes argues that the Teacher of Righteousness was a priest in the Zaddokite line. The wicked priest, on the other hand, Vermes identifies as Jonathan Maccabeus who became High Priest and ruler in 152 BCE.”

That this is not true is proven by their beliefs, which would have been alien to the Jews of the Maccabean times.

Geza Vermes: “At the beginning was good, but then when he became the ruler of Israel the love of power and wealth err seduced him and he turned away for from the, the straight and narrow path, and adopted the, the wrong way. And that created tha, the, the split between err the Jewish temple and the small Dead Sea community led by another priest referred to err by the nickname of the Teacher of Righteousness.”

Of all the scholars that spoke in that program, Geza alone held this view. The connection between Jonathan Maccabeus and the Dead Sea Scrolls people is so strenuous, no one took it seriously. There is simply no evidence, archaeological, historical, or religious, that Jonathan Maccabeus, or any of the Jews of his time, had anything to do with the Dead Sea Scrolls people.

You have to remember that that period was pretty well covered by writers such as Josephus, Philo, Pliny, etc., whose works have survived to our time, yet none of them made the connection between the Maccabees and the Essenes, the people broadly regarded as the authors of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

The Qumran people, aka the Christians of Apostle Peter, were very secretive about their beliefs and practices. But if they had been just another sect of discontented Jews, at odds with the establishment, they would have had every reason to make as much noise about their differences as possible in order to highlight their virtues and expose the moral decadence of the establishment.

Rachael Kohn: “The Dead Sea sectarians felt themselves to be heirs to the temple priesthood in Jerusalem, and they looked forward to a time when they would take up their rightful place there.”

The Dead Sea “sectarians” had no connection with the temple in Jerusalem and no intention of returning there at any time. That is because they believed in a new temple coming down from heaven after the great end time battle.

Rachael Kohn: “The temple in Jerusalem was lavishly extended under Herod after he was proclaimed king of Judea in 37 BCE. One of the Dead Sea writings known as the temple scroll, imagines a grandiose temple that would replace the existing one.”

How did the Dead Sea “sectarians” look forward “to a time when they would take up their rightful place” in the temple in Jerusalem, when they imagined that “a grandiose temple would replace the existing one?”

The problem with our scholars is that they do not understand the difference between the temple in Jerusalem, and the one the Dead Sea Scrolls people waited for. Apostle Peter and his congregation had given up on the temple in Jerusalem and were waiting for a new heavenly temple and a ‘New Jerusalem’.

Rev 21:1 Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.

Rev 21:2 Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

How is it that these scholars speak of the beliefs of the Dead Sea Scrolls people with derision, and never with deference or reverence to the New Testament writings?

Voiceover: “The widths of its chamber shall be 26 cubits from corner to corner. The gates of entrance and exit shall be fourteen cubits wide and 28 cubits high from the threshold to lintel. The height of the rafters above the lintel shall be 14 cubits. The gate shall be roofed with a pillowing of cedar wood overlaid with pure gold.”

Rachael Kohl: “Professor Lary Schiffman is scrolls expert at New York University.”

Lawrence Schiffman: “They believed that in the end of days God would create a new temple, and that temple would sort of come down from heaven and be sort of stuck on top of this one to create THE new temple at the end of days. This was a temple which it is explicitly stated in the text would be built in the here and now in order to worship God in the correct way. They thought that the temple would be gargantuan, gigantic. Basically they are talking about a temple that would be instead of 500 by 500 cubits, a cubit is a foot and a half, 750 by 750 feet, the expected one that would be 1600 cubits by 1600 cubits. Now when you place this on a map of Jerusalem in antiquity it means it would cover the entire known city of Jerusalem which would have to be leveled.”

Another “scrolls expert” who is ridiculing the idea of a temple coming down from heaven. He portrays the Qumran people as utter idiots: “and that temple would sort of come down from heaven and be sort of stuck on top of this one to create THE new temple at the end of days”.

They did not believe in a temple that would be “sort of stuck on top of this one”, Mister. They believed in a temple that would be established on a new earth, after the existing earth and temple will be destroyed together with the unworthy creatures that make fun of such revelations. You are being paid a fat salary to speak the truth, not to throw scorn of the word of God and on people’s beliefs and expectations.

Rachael Kohn: “Another area of mystery in the Dead Sea Scrolls is that the sect who owned and used them is never clearly named in the documents themselves.”

Emanuel Tov: “This is a society that lived in their writings definitely in riddles. They never mention any names, they all have God names, their leaders, their enemies, and they even had some writings in cryptic script. That is a script which had some letters from the ancient Hebrew script, and some just signs.”

Well, we know now why they had their writings in “riddles”, namely to protect themselves, but this scholar doesn’t, and yet he is the Chief Editor of the Dead Sea Scrolls, Publication Project.

Rachael Kohn: “But since the scrolls were discovered, scholars like the Dominican priest, Father Rolland Devoe searched for their owners identity in other sources. Ancient writers, Philo, Pliny and Josephus, described three Jewish sects in antiquity.”

Voice over: Josephus “Antiquity of the Jews”. The Jews had for a great while three sects of philosophy peculiar to themselves. The sect of the Essenes, and the sect of the Sadducees, and a third sort of opinions was that of those called Pharisees.”

Rachael Kohn: “Devoe identified the pious Essenes as the scrolls’ sect, a view most scholars like Professor James VanderKam still hold.”

James VanderKam, Notre Dame University: “We have ancient descriptions of the Essenes that historians like Josephus give us, very extended descriptions, and when we compare those descriptions with what is found in the scrolls, and also keep in mind that the Roman geographer Pliny the Elder, mentions that a group of Essenes were living along the shore of the Dead Sea, I think we have two kinds of evidence converging on the idea that these were the Essenes.”

Geza Vermes: “I would like to think, and I represent here the mainstream opinion, that the Dead Sea community is identical or at least extremely close to the group which we know under the title the Essenes. The identification of the Dead Sea sect with the Essenes cannot be considered as an absolutely firmly established thesis. I would speak of it rather as the best of a number of not hundred per cent sure hypothesis.”

Geza seems to have realized that his “thesis” that the Teacher of Righteousness and the wicked priest lived in Maccabean times is not sustainable by the evidence, but while he is backtracking somewhat he does not entirely abandon this idea.

Rachael Kohn: “But there are discrepancies in the sources. Josephus tells us that the Essenes only lived in towns. He doesn’t mention an isolated desert community like Qumran. But all the

sources mention that they held their property in common. In 1996, an important archaeological discovery was made at Qumran. Two ancient pieces of pottery which may connect the Essenes to the site.”

Here we have what is perhaps the most important evidence which links the Qumran people with Apostle Peter’s Christianity – their communal living.

Act 2:38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Act 2:41 Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added *to them*.

Act 2:42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

Act 2:43 Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.

Act 2:44 Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common,

Act 2:45 and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.

Act 4:32 Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common.

Act 4:33 And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all.

Act 4:34 Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold,

Act 4:35 and laid *them* at the apostles' feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need.

Now how is it possible that biblical scholars, who have spent a life time studying and analyzing these documents, never made a connection with Apostle Peter’s Jewish Christian communal congregation?

Hanan Eshel: “While they were cleaning everything up after finishing the excavation, two volunteers found exactly in this spot two pieces of pottery that were put together, and after the jar was broken it was used for writing a draft of deed. And this is a deed of gift where a guy named Hony gives everything he owns, including a house, a slave, figs, olives, other trees, to a guy named Schema son of Macmanny.”

Rachael Kohn: “And who was he?”

Hanan Eshel: “He was probably the overseer. We know from the Damascus document and from the community rule that a member of the sect was chosen to become an overseer. An overseer was responsible for the economy and for the moral statue of the group. So we might assume that he was son of Macmanny, the overseer, and Hony gave him all his property.”

Rachael Kohn: “The pieces of pottery are now on display in the shrine of the book in Jerusalem. They are unique as they are the only deed of gift that’s been found where property was transferred between people who aren’t members of one family. And the deed seems to include the word *yahad* which means community, though there is some dispute among scholars about this.”

This deed of gift gives the lie to the notion that this was a priestly class that passed its position through inheritance. What it shows instead is that this was a young community that was still receiving new members after it established itself on the shore of the Dead Sea.

Hanan Eschel: “The word *yahad* appears here as in the community rule and in the rest of the spools found in cave four and in the other caves. But even if the word *yahad* doesn’t appear here, finding a deed of gifts in Hebrew, that somebody gives somebody else which were not related everything he owns proves that we are speaking about community of some kind of Essene group of sharing property.”

Lawrence Schiffman: “But of course, we now know that Dead Sea Scrolls give us numerous prayer texts. For two daily services a day, a morning service and an afternoon service.”

Rachael Kohn: “Some scholars are cautious about making an identification of the Dead Sea community with the Essenes.”

Lawrence Schiffman: “Well, there is no question that there are many legitimate parallels between the scroll sect and the material which we have about the Essenes. No question. What you have to question though is whether the term Essene, which does not exist in the scrolls, and we don't know what it means in Hebrew, whether this term designates only one group or a sort of group of groups, what scholars sometimes jokingly call Essanoid groups. Now if we go into the latter idea then its possible to say that our group is one of a number of similar types of groups that follow certain pattern which was called Essene in the antiquity. But if you are really looking for some kind of cut and dry identification, these sectarians are THE Eseeenes, then you are going to find quite a number of little inaccuracies which make scholars to gloss over.”

Rachael Kohn: “Making the hard and fast identification of the Dead Sea sect with the Essenes may block other perspectives of the puzzle of who they are. New research points to the Sadducees, another Jewish faction connected with the temple priesthood as the founders of the sect.”

The Dead Sea Scrolls people have nothing to do with the Sadducees. They were deeply religious, believing in God, in angels, in resurrection, in judgment, in Holy Spirit, whereas the Sadducees believed in none. The Sadducees were the atheists of that time, as these Scriptures clearly point out.

Mar 12:18 Then *some* Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Him; and they asked Him, saying:

Mar 12:19 "Teacher, Moses wrote to us that if a man's brother dies, and leaves *his* wife behind, and leaves no children, his brother should take his wife and raise up offspring for his brother . . .

Act 23:6 But when Paul perceived that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, "Men *and* brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee; concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead I am being judged!"

Act 23:7 And when he had said this, a dissension arose between the Pharisees and the Sadducees; and the assembly was divided.

Act 23:8 For Sadducees say that there is no resurrection—and no angel or spirit; but the Pharisees confess both.

Act 23:9 Then there arose a loud outcry. And the scribes of the Pharisees' party arose and protested, saying, "We find no evil in this man; but if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him, let us not fight against God."

Lawrence Schiffman: “The temple scroll is loaded with legal rulings which I would say are of a Sadducean type ideologically and content wise. Now this along with a lot of other legal material does indicate that whoever the group is based themselves on Sadducean legal ruling. Now from my point of view this is because they started out as a group of pious Sadducees and they developed into whoever these people are.”

Rachael Kohn: “The academic debate continues as those who support the Eseeenes as the scrolls sect argue that there are differences in beliefs between the Sadducees and the Dead Sea sect.”

James VanderKam: “So some have concluded that its appropriate to say the community of the Dead Sea scrolls is Sadducean. But that runs into the problem that our ancient description of the Sadducees also talk about what they believed, not just what they practiced. And among their beliefs are several that are diametrically opposed to what the group at Qumran believed. For example, the group at Qumran was a determinist kind of group that, believing that God had beforehand determined exactly what was going to happen, and Josephus tells us that the Sadducees had rejected that view. The Qumran group accepted the idea that there were many, many, angels, and the Sadducees are supposed to have rejected that idea.”

Rachael Kohn: “Departing from the mainstream view are scholars like Norman Golb who say Qumran was a military fortress that had nothing to do with the sect.”

Norman Golb, University of Chicago: “Judging by the totality of the evidence, and by recent statements by a variety of archaeologists it was not a site of a sectarian use in any sense whatsoever. The military nature of the site fits in very well with the events in the first revolt against Rome, of 66 and the following years. Then there is a cemetery laid out right next to Qumran, just 30, 40 yards away, but on the same plateau, and that is distinctly, in my view, a military cemetery. Row after row of graves which all were apparently all dug at the same time. There is no stratification of the graves over two or three hundred years, such has been theorized for the Eseene settlement of that site.”

If this was the opinion of a novice, it would be forgiven, but we are dealing with an academic who ought to know better. The Jews had no military fortresses or garrisons at that time. Why? Because the Romans would not allow it! In the whole spread of the Roman Empire, there was only one kind of garrison: Roman garrison or no garrison.

The Romans did not allow a gathering of more than three people at any time without permission, except for religious purposes. For the Jews to build the Dead Sea site as a military fortress, they would have had to do it secretly. An impossibility! In addition, the presence of women and children on the site hardly fits the profile of a military garrison.

Rachael Kohn: “Norman Golb argues that the Dead Sea scrolls were brought to the desert caves from Jerusalem when the threat of the Romans ransacking the city became apparent. He says they came from various places in the city, the most important being the library at the temple.”

Norman Golb: “My view is that the temple library was one of the libraries of Jerusalem which contributed to the massive hiding of the scrolls. But because the scrolls were found in so many places, in so many different caves, eleven caves altogether, plus there were discoveries of such scrolls in the third century, and the eighth century, we have eye witness accounts of those discoveries, plus such scrolls were found in Massada as well, which most people don’t even know about, same kinds of scrolls, we have a much wider configuration of hiding that was first imagined when the first seven scrolls were found in 1947.”

Rachael Kohn: “A key piece of evidence for Norman Gold is perhaps the most mysterious of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Known as the copper scroll, it was found in 1952. Inscribed on thin copper sheets, it contains a list of hidden objects: gold, silver, temple implements, and scrolls. It’s the only scroll of its type ever found. Various searchers have failed to find any of the treasure described.”

Voice over: “At the mouth of the water exit of Kotsibah, dig three cubits towards the rock. 60 talents, 2 talents of gold. In the water conduit on the road east of Beth Asor, which is east of Azor, vessels of offerings and books, and a bar of silver. In the outside valley, at the stone, dig seventeen cubits underneath, seventeen talents of gold and silver.”

Norman Golb: “I base myself at the Copper Scroll, very important manuscript, the most important manuscript, an autographed documentary text describing the hiding of many important artifacts which clearly came from the temple treasury. Vessels which were used in the temple service are mentioned in the Copper Scrolls, you see. And the Copper Scroll also mentions the hiding of books, now altogether we have a phenomenon described in this text of hiding the many books and manuscripts which were demonstrably from Jerusalem by the names of the different vessels.”

Obviously when they heard what the Romans were doing elsewhere in Israel, they sought to hide their most valuable possessions. This was not a poor community. By pooling their possessions and being disciplined, the Christians of Apostle Peter could have amassed a fair amount of wealth. They could have purchased many valuable objects, however the treasures of the temple in Jerusalem were far greater than what was found in those caves or mentioned in the documents.

Rachael Kohl: “Another perspective on the Qumran puzzle comes from archaeologist Yitzhar Hirschfeld. He argues that Qumran was just one of a number of big manner houses in ancient Israel.”

Yitzhar Hirschfeld, Archaeologist, Hebrew University, Israel: “I believe through the parallels with these sites all over Judaea, that the owner of Qumran was a rich landlord. Who permanently lived in Jerusalem, and came from time to time to the site of Qumran, to the estate, to his property. And what led me to the conclusion that Qumran was not a unique site is actually my work at the Materativ(?) which is a site, actually two sites, not far from Cesarea, on the northern part of Judea, where I found two complex of manner houses. The tower was very important, an essential component of these types of buildings. As you can see, in Qumran there is a lovely tower, a huge solid tower surrounded with the gracy (?) all around. And the same type of tower you can find in the other site, in Horvat Aqab. . .”

There is just one thing we could say about that idea: preposterous, and leave it at that.

Rachael Kohn: “One of the features of Qumran is that it has quite a few *mikvahs* or ritual baths. Did the sites that you explored also have them?”

Yitzhar Hirschfeld: “Some of them. Some of them has a *mikvah*. Or there is a new site of this type near Shohan, not far from Tel Aviv, from Mudein, in the area of Mudein, where there are five *mikvahs*, like in Qumran.”

Rachael Kohn: “Yitzhar Hirschfeld agrees with Norman Golb, that the Dead Sea Scrolls were brought from Jerusalem to save them from destruction by the Romans.”

Yitzhar Hirschfeld: “I think that Norman Golb is right by suggesting that the scrolls were brought to the site of Qumran from Jerusalem, from the library, perhaps from the national library, because of the huge amount of scrolls that were found near Qumran. In the time of the revolt they were brought to the site of Qumran which means that the scrolls have nothing to do with the Essenes.”

Rachael Kohn: “Those who disagree with the mainstream view, which identifies the Dead Sea Scrolls with the Essenes, say they are up against an academic orthodoxy that isn’t open to other explanations.”

Norman Golb: “This was the original theory that Father Devoe proposed, or even as early in the 1950s at the very beginning of the search of the subject. Here I find, he says, I find the place of the Eseeenes, one room is the scriptorium, another room is the, where they ate, err, err, and so on. And scholars start falling into line, accepting all this and believing like he, like he did, in the theory of the Essenes at Quran, taking it, something to take as fact, and err, many books are written in the 1950s which treats this theory as a fact.”

Rachael Kohn: “Although academics vary on the details, most of them still hold to the Eseeenes hypothesis as the best explanation so far of who lived at Qumran, and who owned and used the Dead Sea Scrolls.”

Emanuel Tov: “I would say that through the years, what we call the main view of the Eseeenes is still maintained by most of the scholars. Amongst scholars there is never a consensus. And in recent years, a few rival theories, not only about the nature of [the Scrolls?], but also about the nature of the settlement in Qumran near the Dead Sea. But the view which was voiced already in the fifties, that these are the Essenes, in spite of all the difficulties, of differences between the Essene writings and historical evidence in the writings of Josephus and Philo, I believe that that view is still the major one amongst scholars.”

Rachael Kohn: “Around the year 68, the Romans destroyed Qumran and killed or dispersed whoever it was who lived here. If we accept that it was the Eseeenes, it spelt the end of a community that may have existed for over 200 years. Was this the apocalypse the sect was expecting? And was this the final battle with the forces of darkness after which they expected to lead an exalted life in a new temple in Jerusalem?”

The answer is no, no, and no. No, they did not live at Qumran for over 200 years, but for less than three decades. From about mid or late thirties to late sixties when the

whole nation was sacked and scattered abroad. Their cemetery proves that it was a young site.

That was not the final apocalypse they were expecting, for they knew that the temple and the city would be destroyed first before a new temple and a new city would come down from heaven.

The new exalted life would take place not on this earth but on a new earth and a new heaven.

John Collins, University of Chicago: “Now the Dead Sea Scrolls give us one history of an apocalyptic movement. And it’s a salutary (?) kind of history. Now its an intriguing thought that they may have thought that the day of wrath had actually come when the Roman soldiers invaded. And that they may have then expected that the angels would come to their aid, and that this was the final showdown. And of course, it does not seem that the angels showed up on that particular occasion. And that’s unfortunately is the kind of sad history of apocalyptic groups down through the ages. They work fine in giving people hope so long as they don’t think that the end has come. And in cases where they don’t think that the end has come, then you get Heaven’s Gates or an apocalypse in that sense of the word which is nearly always tragedy.”

Why must honest, law abiding, and dedicated believers, always be compared with Heaven’s Gates and their like? Can’t normal people believe the word of God and its apocalyptic visions and revelations without such derogatory comparisons?

The sense of immediacy was purposely infused into the Scriptures to keep people tuned to their faith, to help them to continuously grow in grace and knowledge, and to prevent them from falling asleep and falling away, thus losing their salvation. But scholars would not know about it because salvation is never discussed in their forums except as a topic of derision. That is why God says that “not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called” to be saved. (1 Cor 1:26).

End of Part 1

Rachael Kohn: “. . . (Geza Vermes) was not included in the original team of authors. This room at Oxford houses photos of all the scrolls, but Vermes was not allowed to look at photos of unpublished scrolls till 1991, when he and other academics forced open access to them. He was then asked to join a much expanded editorial team.”

Geza Vermes: “These volumes all contain first and foremost the photographic reproduction of these documents. Err there is for instance, here is err the largest fragment belonging to the K4 community rule collection, err manuscript D, err very well preserved, err well preserved, and quite legible. This is one of thirty eight volumes, about thirty of them are already available, the remaining ones are expected between next year or two, so that roughly ten years after the opening up of the, the, the Qumran collection, the editorial process is going to reach a happy ending.”

Rachael Kohn: “Now you also have these scrolls on CD Rom, do you not?”

Geza Vermes: “Well the. . . since the, the, the, these opening up, the fir. . .the scrolls have first of all put on microfiche and available in that form, and a little later, tha, the ava put on two CD Roms and now anyone who has a computer with the CD Rom drive can read all the text, all the all the he can see all the images of the scrolls.” *[You may find it hard to believe it, but this is how this “eminent” scholar actually expressed himself. Anyone who cannot organize his thought better than that has either a poor grasp of the subject, or has long since past his retirement age. In this instance, both seem to be the case].*

Rachael Kohn: “As well as the CD Rom published by Bingham Young University there are other efforts to make the scrolls accessible. One of them is based here at Princeton University. The driving force behind this is Professor James Charlesworth of Princeton Theological Seminary. He oversees the Princeton Dead Seas Scrolls lab. Here they use the latest technology to unlock the meaning of the scrolls.

“How do you get from this original text to the printed one?”

James Charlesworth: “We’re working with a handwriting that is two thousand one hundred years old. And we want to move it to a form of computer produced square (?) Hebrew that even a first grader, a beginner and and and living in Jerusalem can read very very easily. It is a process that took us five or six years to develop both hardware and software to do this. And then we had to train assistants to sit there for long hours in labor intensive work to put this into a script and use that computer over there. And you can see the Hebrew right there that we are working on now for the next line which is the passage on Isaiah, that putting in character upon character, correcting it and then getting the separation, getting it lined up the way its lined up here, it’s a very, very demanding labor intensive process.”

Rachael Kohn: “How do you approach what appears to be gaps in the text? Perhaps even an eraser?”

James Charlesworth: “You’re right, right over here we have a smudge, and you are correct, we finally were able to discern that it was erased. And the next question is what was written there, and we were able with digital analysis and computer enhancement to be able to get an image. And we know exactly what it is and we put it here in the critical edition with circles over it; the circles mean I as the editor can see this with special photographic techniques. . .”

“Rachael Kohn: “James Charlesworth estimates it will take six more years to complete this process for all the scrolls. Part of his motivation is the ongoing suspicion that Christians want to suppress the contents of the scrolls.”

James Charlesworth: “The claims have been made that Christians such as myself were embarrassed by the Dead Sea Scrolls and didn’t want them to make known. Well there are two things we could do here at Princeton. We simply said, that’s not true. Well, then, what about our credibility? When I say, we are going to make them available, we’ll subsidize it, we’ll make it possible for you to buy them, and you can make your own decision. Is it anything in any of these documents that could do anything except help us better understand the origins of Jesus, His time, and then of course Christianity?”

Rachael Kohn: “Because of open access, the scrolls have been published and translated much more quickly. And most are now available to anyone who wants to study them.”

Frank Moore Cross, Harvard University: “It has speeded up publication magnificently. I have a whole wall of volumes which have been published. The curious thing is there has not been much speed up in people using them. Which I think it is somewhat ironic.”

Rachael Kohn: “From the beginning, Christian scholars have seen parallels with some contents of the scrolls and Christian writings. In particular there has been a temptation to see the enigmatic figure in the scrolls, the Teacher of Righteousness, as somehow related to Jesus because they both believed judgment was near.”

John Collins: “I think the Teacher of Righteousness and Jesus are formally similar in the sense that they are both authoritative teachers who are venerated by movements that started out from their teachings. The actual content of their teachings is very different. According to the people in the Dead Sea Scrolls, the emphasis would be on how carefully and fully you observe all the details of the law, and especially purity laws”.

Here they go again with their “purity laws”. Did not Hanan Escheel make it clear that their large number and positioning near priestly houses indicated that the most likely use of those mikvahs was for personal cleanliness rather than ritual purity? Mikvahs used for ritual purity needed to have their water changed often and quickly. These however were very large therefore they could not have been used for ritual purity. They could however be used for baptisms. One scholar says one thing, and another scholar says another. What one discards, another takes as letter of the law.

John Collins: “The early Christians equally believed that there was a divine judgment coming, but at least some of them drew the conclusion that we should not get hanged up in all the details of the law

and instead should emphasize the things that are of basic importance like faith and love, and get on with preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles.”

The early Christians emphasized no such things. That is because the first Christians were Jews who had nothing to do with preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles, and everything to do with observing the law and living communally, exactly as the Qumran people did. As for the differences between the Teacher of Righteousness and Jesus Christ, there were none. They were one and the same.

Lawrence Schiffman: “In the case of Jesus and His teachings there are things in the scrolls that are opposite to Jesus’ teachings. To take one ethical example: you have in the scrolls the idea of hating people that are not part of the group and separating from them. And Jesus’ teachings following really something very similar to the Pharisees, the forerunners to the rabbis, is to approach people to get to know these people, to try to bring them to an understanding of God rather than stay away from them. So it seems to me that they are diametrically opposed in many ways”

It may seem to you that way, but it is wrong. For while Jesus Christ taught His followers to be friendly and to turn the other cheek, He also told them to separate themselves from any misbehaving fellow.

Mat 18:15 "Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother.

Mat 18:16 But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY WORD MAY BE ESTABLISHED.'

Mat 18:17 And if he refuses to hear them, tell *it* to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.

Just the same, Jesus said that He came not to do away with the law, but to fulfill it. And what does the law say?

Psa 139:19 Oh, that You would slay the wicked, O God! Depart from me, therefore, you bloodthirsty men.

Psa 139:20 For they speak against You wickedly; Your enemies take *Your name* in vain.

Psa 139:21 Do I not hate them, O LORD, who hate You? And do I not loathe those who rise up against You?

Psa 139:22 I hate them with perfect hatred; I count them my enemies.

Gal 5:11 And I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why do I still suffer persecution? Then the offense of the cross has ceased.

Gal 5:12 I could wish that those who trouble you would even cut themselves off!

Mat 10:34 "Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword.

Mat 10:35 For I have come to 'SET A MAN AGAINST HIS FATHER, A DAUGHTER AGAINST HER MOTHER, AND A DAUGHTER-IN-LAW AGAINST HER MOTHER-IN-LAW';

Mat 10:36 and 'A MAN'S ENEMIES WILL BE THOSE OF HIS OWN HOUSEHOLD.'

Luk 22:36 Then He said to them, "But now, he who has a money bag, let him take *it*, and likewise a knapsack; and he who has no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one.

Luk 22:37 For I say to you that this which is written must still be accomplished in Me: 'AND HE WAS NUMBERED WITH THE TRANSGRESSORS.' For the things concerning Me have an end."

Rev 11:18 The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, And the time of the dead, that they should be judged, And that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints, And those who fear Your name, small and great, And should destroy those who destroy the earth."

When you are told to treat your incorrigible enemies like “heathens and tax collectors”, or wish that they would “cut themselves off”, and desire that those who

destroy the earth be likewise destroyed, you no longer “approach people to get to know them, and try to bring them to an understanding of God”, are you? As they say, little knowledge is dangerous knowledge, particularly when you talk about the Scriptures and you do not know what you are talking about.

Rachael Kohn: “The discovery of unidentified fragments among the scrolls has aroused some excitement as to their possible link to the New Testament.”

Voice over and inscription: **“Dead Sea Scrolls Beatitudes”**

“Blessed are those who seek wisdom with pure hands and do not pursue her with a treacherous heart. Blessed is the man who has obtained wisdom and walks in the law of the Most High. He directs his heart towards her ways and restrains himself by her corrections.”

James VanderKam: “One of the texts has a number of instances in which the, the formula that we know from the, the Sermon of the Mount in the Gospel of Matthew, “Blessed are the” is found, and sometimes this is called the beatitudes text, but only because that, that expression is used there. The Qumran text that has this expression in that talks a lot about knowledge and wisdom as being essential qualities of, of the blessed people, and it’s not, err the contents of the text are quite different than the Sermon on the Mount, the Beatitudes in Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount in the Gospel of Matthew.”

Where are the differences, and why compare them only with one or two of Jesus’ sayings, and not with the whole of the New Testament? Were not the Apostles inspired by Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit to write:

2Ti 2:15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

2Pe 3:17 You therefore, beloved, since you know *this* beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked;

2Pe 3:18 but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him *be* the glory both now and forever. Amen.

Co 1:19 For it is written: "I WILL DESTROY THE WISDOM OF THE WISE, AND BRING TO NOTHING THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE PRUDENT."

1Co 1:20 Where *is* the wise? Where *is* the scribe? Where *is* the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

1Co 1:21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.

1Co 1:22 For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom;

1Co 1:23 but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness,

1Co 1:24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

1Co 1:25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

1Co 1:26 For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*.

1Co 1:27 But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty;

1Co 1:28 and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are,

1Co 1:29 that no flesh should glory in His presence.

1Co 1:30 But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—

1Co 1:31 that, as it is written, "HE WHO GLORIES, LET HIM GLORY IN THE LORD."

Christians are enjoined to study the Bible, rightly dividing the word of truth, and to grow in grace and knowledge in order to be approved in the sight of God. Our

distinguished biblical scholars do not appear to have done much of any of that. But then, how many of them care about being approved in the sight of God. They would not be academics if they did that.

As for wisdom, God has not called to repentance many wise according to this world; His people are wise not in the wisdom of this world, but in the wisdom of God, and that is why they are hated and marginalized by the wise of this world. But then, what did Jesus Christ say?

Joh 15:18 "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before *it hated* you.

Joh 15:19 If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

Joh 15:20 Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also.

Joh 15:21 But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me.

Joh 15:22 If I had not come and spoken to them, they would have no sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin.

Joh 15:23 He who hates Me hates My Father also.

Joh 15:24 If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would have no sin; but now they have seen and also hated both Me and My Father.

Joh 15:25 But *this happened* that the word might be fulfilled which is written in their law, 'THEY HATED ME WITHOUT A CAUSE.'

Joh 15:26 "But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me.

Joh 15:27 And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning.

Does anyone think that God would send His Spirit of truth to those who pose as “biblical scholars” who have not even bothered reading the Bible, so that they may be approved in His sight?

Rachael Kohn: “One of the scholars best known for making direct links between the scrolls and Christianity, is Australian Barbara Thiering, now retired from the University of Sydney. She has developed a unique theory in which John the Baptist is the Teacher of Righteousness, while Jesus is his pursuer . . . She says, they lived at Qumran and were both sect leaders. By this time the community had become Jewish zealots actively fighting the Romans. But she says, Jesus turned against the militant sect.”

Barbara Thiering: “Yes, He was a pacifist and that is at the heart of the history as I see it. That having been born in this community of freedom fighters who were going to take up arms against Rome, and who hated the Romans, err. . the Romans were the sons of darkness, and there were sons of light, and according to one of the writings you had to hate all the sons of darkness, err, Jesus was born into it, but He turned things around and said let's love your enemies, love the Romans and He became friendly with the Romans err good friends with many of the Romans, and of course from the point of view of the group that He belonged to, He was a traitor to the national cause, and this is in fact why He was crucified.”

We spent much time thinking whether we should include this person's views here or not. In the end we decided to do so in the interest of objectivity and completeness. But there is one thing she said about Jesus Christ that is so blasphemously offensive, we simply could not repeat it and left it out.

Rachael Kohn: “Where Barbara Thiering departs from most scholars is first and foremost in dating. Most say the scrolls were written 50 to 150 years before the time of Jesus. But she says, a commentary on the Psalms that mentions the Teacher of Righteousness can be dated later.”

Barbara Thiering: “Well now according to this particular document, the Teacher of Righteousness is still alive in the document; it clearly taught that is something was going to happen to him in the future. And we now know from the recent carbon dating that the material on which this was written was not manufactured until the first century AD.”

Rachael Kohn: “Carbon 14 dating is not exact, and Thiering relies on tests which determine later dates than most Carbon 14 testing that has been done on the scrolls. Her conclusions are rejected by most scholars like James VanderKam, speaking here at the Dead Sea Scrolls seminar in Chicago’s Field Museum.

James VanderKam: “The Scrolls have at times been read as so closely related to early Christianity that some have claimed they are Christian compositions. These approaches have never been very popular among scholars although they have received a lot of attention from the media and from publishers. I have in mind particularly the theories of Barbara Thiering and Rober Iserman. It is fair to say that their conclusions are based on dubious identifications of characters who are not named in the scrolls such as the wicked priest or Teacher of Righteousness. And they are characterized by a rejection of the conclusions of sciences such as paleography.

More recently their approach has also involved rejecting the conclusions drawn from Carbon 14 testing.”

James Charlesworth, Princeton University: “Her position frankly, in terms of the scrolls is impossible. Why is it impossible? She claims to find in the document references to Jesus, but now scientifically, that is working with the scientific community, with the DNA, with the Carbon dating, with the paleographical dating, that is the handwriting, every scientist has come up independently with the conclusion that these are documents about 100 years earlier than Jesus, or at least 50 years earlier than Jesus. It is impossible that someone who lived 50 years before Jesus could refer to what Jesus was doing.”

It may seem strange that while we abhor her theology, we agree with Barbara Thierring on the dating of the Dead Sea Scrolls. James Charlesworth listed three methods supposedly used by the scientific community to date these documents. He put the DNA first, then Carbon dating, and finally paleographic dating. The assurance with which he spoke could have lead anyone to believe that he really knew what he was talking about. The truth is he didn’t! Rachael Kohn already pointed out that Carbon dating is an inexact method. It depends on many variables, which have given wide discrepancies on dates for samples that were known to be of the same age. This method has generated so much debate among scientists it amazes us that anyone could still take it so seriously as to pinpoint a difference of 50 years on a two thousand year old manuscript. At best this method can give you an approximation, and never an ironclad conclusion. It is absurd therefore to claim that the Dead Sea Scrolls could not speak of Jesus Christ because Carbon 14 dating placed them 50 years before Him.

Now if James Charlesworth is on shaky ground with his Carbon dating, he is in a worse position with his DNA dating, and worse still with his paleographical dating. DNA is not a dating method as such, but a forensic method. It is used to compare DNA from an unknown source with DNA from a known source to determine the provenance of the first. It is only if you know the age of the known source that you can extrapolate the age of the unknown one. Which raises the question: what did they compare the Dead Sea Scrolls with? And how did they determine the age of the known source? Here is an article that sheds some light on the reliability of these dating methods.

“Deoxyribonucleic acid, the blueprint of life, enjoys the status of truth serum and Delphic oracle, judge and jury, architect and master builder, talisman and philosopher's stone. It brooks no argument. "Evidence from archaeology and paleontology is seldom clear-cut," an editorial writer observed in the journal *New Scientist* after the Neanderthal findings were published, "whereas DNA research seems to provide unequivocal answers." Medieval mystics professed an awesome wonder at seeing the hand of God apparent in all things – in the concourse of the cosmos, a blade of grass, the evanescence of a snowflake, the breath of a gnat. The sin these mystics had to fight, commentators say, was weariness at all the reminding.

The reminders of DNA are no less constant. *Jurassic Park*. Dolly the sheep. Almost any publicized criminal trial. Exhumations to obtain telltale genetic fingerprints now seem to take place every other week. Jesse James has been dug up for this purpose, as has the possibly innocent convicted murderer Sam Sheppard. DNA analysis was employed to confirm that bones found in a shallow grave in Ekaterinburg, Russia, were those of Czar Nicholas II and his family, executed in

1918. Potential claimants have raised the prospect of exhuming DNA from the rock star Jimi Hendrix and from the Argentine dictator Juan Peron, in each case with a view to establishing paternity. Queen Victoria remains a target of investigators, because the genetic source of the hemophilia she passed on to her descendants has never been satisfactorily explained. (There is no record of hemophilia in her parents' families, and some speculate that her mother may have taken a lover. If Victoria was illegitimate, researchers say, the British monarch today should be Prince Ernst August of Hanover, the grandson of Kaiser Wilhelm II.)

... Textual archaeologists are hoping that DNA from the Dead Sea Scrolls, which were written on animal skins, can help to match up hundreds of orphaned fragments. In France and England investigators have used DNA testing of mass populations to find criminal suspects who match the evidence in hand. Genetic tests now exist to predict almost 500 medical conditions. As is well known, DNA has also been implicated in predispositions ranging from sadness and shyness to aggressiveness and novelty-seeking. (Culen Murphy, DNA Fatigue, *The Atlantic Monthly*, November 1997)

As we said, DNA is basically a forensic method used to identify unknown bodies by comparing their genes with those of a known source. To date the Dead Sea Scrolls by this method, the known source would need to have been not only of the same age, but genetically linked to them. Now how could that be achieved?

The only thing you can do with DNA in the case of the Dead Sea Scrolls, as Murphy's article rightly pointed out, is to match up orphaned fragments and determine whether they belong to the same group. That is a far cry from dating them.

Now what about paleographical dating? Paleography is a science that describes and deciphers ancient writings. How did Charlesworth use that method to date the Dead Sea Scrolls at 50 to 100 years BC? Presumably they compared the Dead Sea Scrolls with some other known writings of the same age. We'd like to know what they compared them with, and how did they determine the age of the other writings? It is an almost identical situation as in the case of the DNA. It is virtually impossible to claim such pinpoint accuracy using these methods, when they are hardly adequate as dating methods in the first place.

Rachael Kohn: "As well as the issue of scientific dating, scholars point to discrepancies between the scrolls and the Gospel accounts of Jesus and John the Baptist."

John the Baptist had nothing to do with the Dead Sea Scrolls. These scholars talk about him only because Barbara Thiering mentioned him in that context.

Lawrence Schiffman: "John the Baptist is the kind of one man hermit type. What he does is, he teaches people, specifically Jesus, and a few others one may assume, privately in a kind of non-structured environment. Then, instead of having people baptized in a ritual bath, immerse in a ritual bath, he takes them to the Jordan river."

Ritual bath again. They never pay much attention to what other scientists say, do they? When they have their mind set on something, they never let go. Why bring up John the Baptist in this context when he is never mentioned in the Dead Sea Scrolls? And where did Schiffman learn these things about John the Baptist when they are not in the Bible? For while John the Baptist led a kind of hermit life as he grew up, when the time came for him to prepare the way for the Messiah, he came out and started calling people to repentance publicly.

As for the claim that he taught Jesus Christ, it only shows his ignorance of the New Testament. It was Jesus Christ who taught John the Baptist a thing or two, not the other way around. John, like other Jews of his time, thought that Messiah would arrive and restore the Kingdom to Israel right then and there. When this did not happen, and he found himself in prison ready to lose his head, he despaired and asked Jesus whether He was the Messiah.

Luk 7:19 And John, calling two of his disciples to *him*, sent *them* to Jesus, saying, "Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?"

Luk 7:20 When the men had come to Him, they said, "John the Baptist has sent us to You, saying, 'Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?'"

Luk 7:21 And that very hour He cured many of infirmities, afflictions, and evil spirits; and to many blind He gave sight.

Luk 7:22 Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John the things you have seen and heard: that *the* blind see, *the* lame walk, *the* lepers are cleansed, *the* deaf hear, *the* dead are raised, *the* poor have the gospel preached to them.

Luk 7:23 And blessed is *he* who is not offended because of Me."

Jesus understood John's dilemma, and His answer was meant to convey the message that this was not the time to establish the Kingdom, but to draw people to God and pinpoint His Messiahship through miracles. John apparently had ignored the Scriptures which pointed out that Jesus had to die, be resurrected, and presented to the Father first, and only after that would He return as the glorious Messiah. So, far from John teaching Jesus privately, it was John who needed a lesson or two from Jesus.

Rachael Kohn: "Barbara Thiering says the reason her view is rejected is that it threatens traditional Christian beliefs and theology."

Whether this is why other people rejected her views, we do not know. What we do know is that we rejected them because they are so obnoxious and blasphemous it makes us shudder even to think about them. As far as we are concerned, only Jezebel might have been more blasphemous than this woman.

Barbara Thiering: "We are all together from the second century B.C. up to the early first century AD. And I say then there is evidence for the involvement of John the Baptist and Jesus, and they say no. And I say, you are refusing to look at the evidence. I say, let's look at the detail, let's look at all of it, not at just a little, little bit, and then refuse the look of the rest. There are theological reasons for being unwilling to look at the rest. And that's the actual issue, whether theology can get in the way of history, or whether one can be a pure historian on this subject. That is the actual issue."

Rachael Kohn: "All scholars recognize parallels between early Christianity and the Dead Sea sect, both in some of their beliefs and in the way the community was organized. Whether the sect at Qumran functioned as a kind of monastery is still a matter of debate."

James VanderKam: "I think it is true that the group living at Qumran was a male monastic kind of community, to use a later term for it, and this is very surprising in Judaism, err. . . but we do have this evidence and we know that of course Christianity was to develop this idea, especially a couple of centuries later, and the Judean wilderness became a place where many Christian monks spent their time just as the people of Qumran did, whatever term we want to use for them."

He admitted that the kind of living led by the Qumran people was not customary for the Jews, but not being aware of Apostle Peter's Christianity, he still ascribed them to the Jewish religion.

Rachael Kohn: "The suggestion that this was a male celibate community came from one of the first scrolls found, the Rule Of The Community, which made no mention of women, family, or children. But other documents, such as the Temple Scroll, and the Zaddekite fragments, do mention women and family life."

Precisely! The presence of women and children indicate that this was not a monastic community. Apostle Peter's Christianity was communal and included women and children.

Continued Rachael Kohn: "Still controversial however is the evidence from the excavation of 36 graves at Qumran by Father Roland Duvoe in the 1950s."

Hanan Eshel, Archaeologist Bar-Ilan University, Israel: "Now in the sun and finger [?], there is some burial caves that instead of north-south, as we know, there is burial west-east. And the tombs

there were facing south. This is regular Muslim way of being buried. Now when we excavated there we found mostly women and children, but there is women here in the main cemetery as well. So although right now there is a big debate about the question, are those tombs [outside] really from second temple period, and I think that Josias (?) is correct that those are Beduin tombs that were buried here much later. Nevertheless, in the main cemetery there is females and children, and we have to wait now in order to do our statistics again.”

Rachael Kohn: “And what does that tell you about the community itself and its relationships to women?”

Hanan Eshel: “OK. When we read Josephus, he tells us about two kinds of Essenes. The Essenes that got married, and Essenes that didn’t get married. So I think the same thing happened here in Qumran. There was an inner circle who lived by the community rule, and those were the people who were sharing property. And probably in this group they were basically men. Then there is the other circle who still believed in the Teacher of Righteousness, still kept the laws by their interpretation, but they were not willing to go all the way, they were not willing to give their property to the community and they had their own property, and they had their families.”

Hanan Eshel comes across as the most honest and best informed of all the scholars in this program. He tells things as they are without pushing one view or another. Not surprisingly his findings fit very well with the proposition that the Qumran community was none other than Apostle Peter’s first Jewish Christian congregation.

Emanuel Tov, Chief Editor, Dead Sea Scrolls, Publication Project: “Qumran was a site which was probably one of its kind, I am not sure we should use the word monastery or novices at all; it was a group of people who excluded themselves from the regular life of society; they devoted themselves to intellectual experiences; and I don’t think it would be right to use any comparison to later Christian developments.”

Not only would it not be right to use any comparison with later Christianity, it would be downright wrong to do so. But why compare them with later Christian developments, and not with early Christian developments? Because that is the only Christianity he is familiar with. That is what they taught him in Sunday school.

Eileen Schuller, McMaster University, Canada: “Now certainly this was a very pious and devout community, and they did put a particular emphasis on the studies of Scripture, and you do, I mean in that this was often done in Christian monasticism, so maybe in that level there were some general parallels, but I would hesitate to draw too close a direct line.”

Rachael Kohn: “Eileen Schuller is an expert on the prayer and worship life of the Dead Sea sect. She sees its piety as being very Jewish, but no longer centered on worship and sacrifice at the temple in Jerusalem.”

Eileen Schuller: “So the assumption is that they withdrew from the normal temple worship that marked Judaism at this period, and put much more emphasis that it was their own life as the community that functioned to make atonement. And within that framework then probably they developed a system of prayer, and they saw prayer that in some ways as replacing the sacrificial system, or being an alternative at least for the present time.”

Rachael Kohn: “The most extensive sectarian prayers in the scrolls are the thanksgiving Psalms, which resembled closely the Psalms in the Bible. Some of these, like hymn number eight, may have been written by the Teacher of Righteousness.”

Voice over: “I thank the O Lord, for Thou hast fastened Thine eye upon me. Thou hast saved me from the zeal of lying interpreters, and from the congregation of those who seek smooth things. Thou hast redeemed the soul of the poor one whom they planned to destroy by spilling his blood because he served Thee.”

Eileen Schuller: “They structured them on the biblical Psalms, but particularly finding an expression of thanksgiving to God for having chosen them, for having given them knowledge, for bringing them into community, enabling them to pray with the angels. And this is a real window into the type of piety of this group.”

Yes, a type of piety more typical of the Christians than the Jews.

Lawrence Schiffman: “But the problem is that we still don’t know too much about the early history of the synagogue. There is no synagogue at Qumran, although it may be the big assembly room was also where they prayed.”

There you have it, another proof that this was not a Jewish, but a Christian congregation, for unlike the Jews, the Christians did not need a synagogue. In those early days they prayed anywhere and everywhere.

Rachael Kohn: “Lary Schiffman had also studied the prayers of the Dead Sea sect, and sees a continuity with later Jewish tradition.”

Lawrence Schiffman: “Perhaps one of the more important aspects of this Qumran material is that it shows us the earlier Jewish prayer was twice daily. And also the documents tell us that they recited the schmaa (?) ‘Hear of Israel, the Lord our God is One’, morning and night, which is an amazing proof of the antiquity of a very common Jewish practice.”

Or it could be “an amazing proof of the antiquity of a very common” early Christian practice.

Rachael Kohn: “As well as prayers written by the sect the scrolls contained all the books, except for Ester, of the Hebrew Bible. But unlike later Jews or Christians, who wanted uniformity in their sacred books, the Dead Sea sect tolerated different versions of the same texts.”

Frank Moore Cross, Harvard University: “The example I usually give is Jeremiah. We already had two traditions, the (?) which is a seventh shorter, and the Hebrew text of Jeremiah. Now from Qumran we have two manuscript that followed the short text, and another manuscript that follows the long text.”

Rachael Kohn: “Remarkably there are minor variations between the Bible of the Dead Sea Scrolls and medieval versions on which the modern Bible is based. Frank More Cross, has made detailed comparisons, and he says there are only small differences.”

Frank Moore Cross: “The example I usually like to give is that of the height of Goliath. He is about ten feet six or something in the biblical tradition that we are accustomed to, and he is just over six feet in the Hebrew manuscript from Qumran; and barely would have made a basketball team.”

Rachael Kohn: “Because the scrolls display a flexible attitude to different versions of the holy books, Professor Cross argues a strict literal approach to the Bible is no longer tenable.”

Because the Scrolls give two different sizes for the height of Goliath, does it mean that they “display a flexible attitude” towards the whole Bible? A strange way to reach that conclusion.

Frank Moore Cross: “Modern fundamentalist attitude, whether Jewish or Christian can’t be tolerated anymore. I think it means that instead of thinking of the Bible as something ‘Lord from heaven’, and I am changing an unchangeable, makes an opportunity for flexibility, and for as a matter of fact giving more attention to the content. Now I think its good, and I am very happy to have these new manuscripts.”

Rachael Kohn: “Lary Schiffman has been an important catalyst in bringing about the shift from viewing the scrolls almost as Christian writings to recognizing they are Jewish documents.”

By 'Christian' he means Gentile Christian. The Scrolls are neither Jewish nor Christian, they are Jewish Christian.

Larry Siffman: "People are always asking, the public was always asking, was Jesus there, was He not there? Is these the people that influenced Christianity? What we ought to do is to study the scrolls as documents of pre-Christian Judaism. Once we do that, we ought to use the results of that study amongst other things to illuminate the background of Christianity. Of course that's a perfectly reasonable and important thing to do."

Studying these documents outside their proper setting and ignoring their links to early Christianity, is not "a perfectly reasonable and important thing to do." We are happy that the Jews want to adopt these documents as their own, but not if they strip them of their Christian meaning.

Emanuel Tov: "This is a Jewish literature, and we have to find the right balance because this Jewish literature has many implications for our understanding of ancient Christianity. And so these writings remain important for both Judaism and Christianity. And we have to find the right way in describing these ancient texts in a neutral way. "

James Charlesworth, Princeton University: "What we have literally found, is a library revered by Jews that were living in the land in which Jesus was living, worshiping the same God Jesus was worshiping, and reading documents we knew nothing about. And these documents throw a light on to the stage where Jesus comes and moves, speaks, lives and dies."

And why did you know nothing about these documents? Because you did not do your homework, for had you read the New Testament, you would have found plenty of information there, just as we did.

James VanderKam, Notre Dame University: "I think it has shown that Christianity is less unique perhaps than was thought before hand. Because now we have a Jewish group which was very interested in the end of time, believed that it was coming soon, in that era, just as the early Christians did, it was a group that expected Messiahs to come, just as early Christianity of course has its Messiah. So it gives us a picture of a kind of Judaism that had some ideas which resembled the ones Christians had at their time. And it shows us I think in general that Christianity owes a lot to its mother religion, Judaism is of course its mother religion. Christianity, borrowed a very large amount from Judaism."

Rachael Kohn: "The old city of Jerusalem, the most sacred place for Judaism and Christianity. For much of their joint history there has been only antagonism between the two religions. But now things are changing. The discovery and study of the Dead Sea Scrolls are part of the growing realization of the common heritage."

James Charlesworth: "The Dead Sea Scrolls have laid the foundations for building bridges among Jews and Christians. You've heard me talking about, you can't use the word Christian in the first century. These are Jews who followed Jesus, and if we recognize that, that Jesus is very Jewish, He is a very devout Jew, the people who followed Him are Jews, then one of the great barriers between Jews and Christians, namely Jesus, is becoming a bridge. We recognize that He is a Jew."

Now wait a minute. What is this "These are Jews who followed Jesus"? He is the man who told us that the Scrolls were dated between 50 and 100 years before Christ. He said then: "It is impossible that someone who lived 50 years before Jesus could refer to what Jesus was doing." How is it then that Jews who lived 50 years before Jesus could be His followers? There is nothing like the logic and consistency of a biblical scholar.

Lary Schiffman: "There has been a whole long period in which both in research of Jews and Christians there has been a greater and greater understanding that Christianity is very much rooted in Judaism in its origins. The Scrolls when legitimately used, and properly used for research both about Judaism and Christianity, tend to highlight this and to show it. Now in spite of the fact that the people who wrote these scrolls, were always antagonized by, and antagonistic to, other groups, ironically their

materials have helped very much to spar understanding between Jews and Christians today, who have come to realize the importance of this communality.”

Geraldine Doogue: “What a great story it is. The Dead Sea Scrolls bringing Jews and Christians together.”

To which we can only add, Amen!

And so it is, biblical scholars who have never read the Bible could not discover the identity of the Qumran people, when that is so clearly spelled out in the New Testament.

This is the standard of scholarship in the world’s top academic institutions. Imagine what it is like in lesser institutions.

For more than two centuries, ever since the advent of the “age of enlightenment”, scientists and scholars have derided the Word of God and portrayed religion as the “opium” of the masses, and gave the world a new religion – evolution.

***The Christian Herald* has adduced ample proofs that true science upholds the Word of God, and that what they teach in educational institutions these days is anything but science. The time has come to turn the tables back on them.**

Such is the moral decrepitude in those institutions that no one who believes in God and makes his beliefs known is accepted in their midst.

We first published this edition a decade ago. We have anecdotal evidence that this edition in particular is widely used in academia, yet in all those years no one has ever contacted us to acknowledge, comment, consult or contribute to it.

We would be prepared to debate these scholars live anytime and anywhere.

THE LAST JUDGMENT

He woke up dazed and confused, not knowing where he was. He rubbed his eyes, paused, looked around, but nothing seemed to make sense. He did not know that he had been dead for centuries, but realized that something was amiss when he was brought before an imposing panel and told that this was the last judgment.

When he heard the words ‘the last judgment’ his heart started pounding. Is there really a judgment of God? He had led a sinful life, never giving a thought that one day he would answer for all that he had done, but before he had time to recollect his thoughts and think what he would answer, God spoke to him.

“You have led a sinful life, a life of lawlessness and dissipation. You were disobedient to parents, obnoxious to teachers, a bully on the playground. You used drugs, tobacco, and alcohol. Committed fornication and adultery. You were a liar and an idolater. You were even a preacher for a while, yet privately you continued to wallow in sin. What do you have to say for yourself?”

“I know I have done all that, Father, and I am truly sorry. I tried hard to abstain from sin and turn to righteousness, that’s why I became a preacher too, but in the end sin proved too strong for me. But if you can forgive me just one more time, I promise I will never, ever, depart from the right path again.”

“You promise to never ever depart from the right path again? Don’t you know that it is too late for that now? You knew that if you did not repent during your life time you could not be given another chance at this stage, so how could we forgive you?”

“I know Father, but You are a forgiving God. Please give me another chance and I promise to be good this time.

“I see, you are a flatterer too. He says he will be good, never to depart from the right path if we forgive him this time”, said the Father as He turned to Jesus Christ.

“Well, if he promises to always remain on the right path maybe we should give him another chance”, answered Jesus.

He could not believe his luck. He knew that if Jesus was prepared to forgive him they would all forgive him in the end. He could hardly control himself, his heart was racing uncontrollably. He feared he might have a heart attack before they decided his fate.

“Well, if Jesus is prepared to forgive him, so are we”, said an elder from the panel. “After all, He died for him, so we won’t stand on the way if He forgives him.”

“Did you hear that?” said the Father. “Everyone is prepared to forgive you, but I am not sure we could trust you to keep your word. After all, you never kept it before.”

“Please, Father, You forgive me too. I promise to keep my word this time. I will remain faithful and on the right path forever.”

“All right then, I will forgive you too. But let this be known to you: if you depart from the right path again, you won’t come before us anymore. You will go straight into the lake of fire.”

“If I do that, Father, I’ll deserve it.”

“As you say, so it shall be done. Show him the way and tell him what to do,” said the Father to one of the waiting angels.

He was led out the back way to a sight of breathtaking beauty. Well tended gardens, blooming trees, rolling meadows, a crystal clear lake, white beaches, snow peaked mountains in the distance, colourful singing exotic birds, sun bathing people on white sandy beaches, playful children, you name it, he could see everything in the vast expanse of the horizon.

“That is truly wonderful” said he as he expected an approving reply from the angel. But the angel showed him a broad tree lined boulevard on the side, and said:

“This is nice but first you must pass a test before you could enjoy all that. Keep going on this boulevard until you come to a fork on the road. Then if you take the right path, you will enter the Kingdom of God, but if you take the wrong path you will end up in the lake of fire.”

“Have no fear. I will never even think of departing from the right path again.”

“Good! We’d like to see you in the Kingdom of our Father.”

“I promise.”

He went on that road for quite some time, enjoying the scenery, but wondering what that warning about the fork on that road might mean. Having escaped hell, he would never think of going wrong again, so why was everybody so adamant that he won’t keep to his promise? Well, he will prove them all wrong.

He had achieved the impossible, now all he had to do was help his people, his friends and relatives, do the same. But how?

How do people in heaven speak with those on the earth? Maybe he could reach them through a dream. Those in heaven are supposed to be able to communicate with those on earth through dreams and visions. He will leave no stone unturned until he reaches them.

Imagine their surprise at finding out that he is in heaven. But they are going to pay a price for being helped to come to heaven too. Not a big one, just that they promise to be his servants forever. I mean, isn’t a servant in heaven infinitely better off than a king in hell? Who wouldn’t pay such a price? But he must get them to swear it to him, because in heaven people are not allowed to break their promises.

Just as he was musing and giggling to himself in anticipation at their reaction, he reached a wide opening and the much anticipated fork on the road. There were two huge gates in front of him beyond which nothing could be seen. The gate on the right was flanked by twelve or thirteen people, all holding Bibles in their hands. In front of them, a large table contained mouth watering delicacies and drinks.

As soon as they saw him, they waved at him, called him over, and invited him to help himself of their delicacies. He did not wait for a second call. He went over and indulged himself to his heart’s desire. When he filled himself, he finally asked:

“Tell me, who are you and what are these things all about?”

“We are the Apostles of Jesus Christ and are here to guide people into the Kingdom of our Father.”

“And those on the other side, what are they doing there?”

“They are serving the Adversary, and are there to lead people to Hell.”

“Really? But if they are leading people to Hell, why are there people still going their way?”

“Oh, they don’t tell people that they are being led to Hell, but to Heaven. They are deceivers.”

“But shouldn’t someone tell these people that they are being led to Hell instead of Heaven? Do you mind if I go over and have a word with them?”

“No, not at all, but be careful, for they are crafty men. Don’t let them deceive you into entering their gate.”

“Have no worry. No one is going to deceive me now.”

He walked briskly to the other side and asked?

“Tell me who are you and what are you doing here?”

“We are the representatives of all religions and are here to lead people to heaven.”

Hmmm! This is a different story from what he heard on the other side. He would have to do more inquiries to find out exactly what was going on in there.

“How would you all lead people to heaven when your religions are so different?”

“Oh, not any more. We held an ecumenical meeting in which we discussed our differences and discovered that at their root all religions are the same and all roads lead to heaven.”

“Really?”

“Yes, really!”

“What about those tables? Why do you have so many small tables, when those on the other side have one big table?”

“Well, we don’t force people to eat the same food. They say that one should eat anything and everything that is being sold in the market, but we give people a choice. Muslims, Hindu, Jews, Christians, you name them; they all have their own table and their own food here. That is why none of these peoples go over there.

“Did you say you have Christians too?”

“Yes, we do. We have representatives from the Catholic and Orthodox Churches, as well as from various Protestant and fundamentalist Churches.”

“But if you have them all here, who are those on the other side representing then?”

“Oh, they represent an obscure sect. They say that they alone worship the true God, and that we are false representatives. That the whole world is wrong and they alone are right. Have you heard anything as ridiculous as that?”

“I don’t know what to believe anymore. I don’t know who is telling me the truth and who is not.”

“Well, look at it this way. How could a Jew or a Muslim eat pork, or a Hindu and a Buddhist eat flesh? We went out of our way to accommodate everyone, while they say that people who don’t eat anything and everything are weak and cannot enter the Kingdom of their Father. Come on, you know better than to believe that kind of doctrine.”

This only confused him more. These people are making sense, but then, those on the other side did not strike him as deceivers either. He had to find a way of testing them to find out who was genuine and who was false, but how?

Then a brilliant idea came into his mind. He is going to ask them to let him have a look behind their gate. Those who have nothing to hide would have no reason to refuse it.

“Tell me, is there any reason why I cannot have a look inside your gate without me entering it?”

“No reason at all. In fact, we have a better idea. Why don’t you peep through this window and see what you would find in Heaven.”

He looked through their window and what do you think he saw? A giant Ferris wheel in the middle of a fun park! Scores of people were having fun. Then, on the beaches of a lake nearby, many beautiful girls were sunbaking or frolicking in the water and only a few men with them. And wonder of wonders, they were all in the nude. Exactly how he had always imagined Heaven would be like. Since he had never liked much competition, this suited him very well. No doubt there were more girls than men because men were more sinful and fewer made it to Heaven.

“Well, do you like what you see”, asked one of the representatives.

“Yes, it’s wonderful, but I am not the type of person who would rush in before I knew exactly what I was doing. I would like to know what is behind that gate on the other side too.”

“Well, if you must, do so, but don’t forget what you saw here, for their offerings are pitiful compared with ours. And don’t let them convince you to enter their gate, for if you do that you will never come out again.”

“Have no fear; no one will deceive me now.”

He walked back to the other side and asked the same question.

“Tell me, is there any reason why I cannot have a look inside your gate without me entering it?”

“Not at all! You may look and even go inside if you want and see for yourself. Then come out if you so desire.”

Ah hah, that rang alarm bells. They are trying to tempt him.

“I am certainly not going to step foot inside any gate before I know exactly what is there. All I want now is just to take look from here”.

“Don’t worry, son. No one will force you to stay inside if you don’t want to.”

They pushed open one of the gates and said: “Here you are, son. Look as long as you wish”.

Now what do you think he saw? People labouring with hoes, pickaxes, shovels, etc., landscaping a huge garden. It was a beautiful scene, but did they really think that he was going to start using those tools now when he had never laid his hands on them all his life? They must be kidding! Where were the mansions Jesus promised to those who’d follow Him to Heaven?

Joh 14:2 In My Father’s house are many mansions; if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

He knew now who was telling him the truth and who was not. But he was not going to offend them, for after all he had enjoyed their delicacies. “That is very nice indeed”, he said, “but I must go back and have a look behind that other gate too.”

He already knew what was behind it, but couldn’t think of anything else to say. He expected them to protest at his decision, warning him to be wary of those “deceivers”, but instead they said nothing. They merely gazed at him with a forlorn look as if to say, “we lost you didn’t we?” No doubt they had seen him look through that window and knew that he was lying. Well, never mind, he knew now who was telling him the truth, and was not going to waste any more time before reaching those beckoning naked beauties. He called on them from the distance to open the gate for him immediately.

“Well done, son. Welcome home! We told you that this is the place for you. This guide will show you the way ahead.”

“Thank you very much.”

He was led inside through the gate, but to his surprise all he saw was a huge forest and an alley beside it leading to a mountain in the far background. No doubt the fun park, the lake, and the naked girls, were behind those tall trees.

They walked together for quite some time without a word. He wondered why his guide did not volunteer an explanation. He was a bit of a moron, but then what do you expect from a dumb guide? After a while he broke the silence and said: “Can you tell me where we are going and why are we getting so far away from the fun park and the lake?”

“Be patient young man, be patient. You need to be purified first before you enter Heaven. Then you can enjoy those beauties for as long as you want.”

“Oh thank you, I wasn’t thinking of those beauties”, answered he sheepishly, embarrassed that the guide had read his mind. “I was just wondering where we are heading, and why things are so different here from what I saw through that window.”

“Well, things are different because what you saw was virtual reality?”

“Virtual reality? What do you mean, ‘virtual reality’?”

“Well, we couldn’t bring Heaven to you, so we only gave you a glimpse of it.”

“O, thank you. You gave me a scare there. For a second I thought you might have deceived me.”

“Now why would you think that?”

“I am sorry, I did not mean to offend you, I just spoke rashly without thinking.”

He got no answer. They kept walking and getting closer to that mountain. He just wondered why the air was getting so hot.

“I hope we don’t have to climb this mountain, do we? This heat is beginning to get to me.”

“Unfortunately we have to. The purification bath is on the other side.”

“Well, why did you build it so far? Couldn’t it have been a little closer?”

“First of all, we did not build it, God did. Secondly, it could not have been any closer because of the heat that it generates.”

“I hope the water is not too hot then. I never liked very hot baths.”

“Don’t worry; there is hardly any water there.”

“No water? What kind of a bath is that?”

“It’s a special bath. You only have to be bathed there once.”

“I hope so. I cannot imagine having to come all this way every time I needed a bath.”

“Don’t worry. You will never come this way again.”

“Thank you, thank you!”

When they finally reached the top, he could not believe his eyes: a lake of fire and brimstone as far as he could see. This man must be joking. Surely he does not call that a “purification bath”, does he? Fearing what he might hear, he dared not ask. But instead of volunteering an explanation, the guide became transfixed as if in a dream, gazing across that awesome sight. In the end he broke the silence.

“You don’t seem to be bothered much by this terrible heat.”

“Oh, I’ve made this trip so many times, I got used to it by now.”

“Well you may have gotten used to it by now, you fool, but I have not”, he felt like telling him, but he bit his lip and held his tongue. Then he said.

“If we don’t get out of here quickly, I will expire soon.”

“Get out of here? Where do you think you are going?”

“Well, where is the purification bath you were talking about?”

“What do you think that is?”

“That? You call that purification bath? You must be joking. Please tell me you are joking.”

“Now why would I be joking with you?”

“You know very well that I would die there.”

“Well, of course you will die there. Didn’t you believe you are going to heaven after death? So what is your problem?”

“I don’t believe what I am hearing. I just can’t believe it.”

He paused for a while then asked:

“Tell me, those who enter the other gate, are they being purified too?”

“No, they are not.”

“Well, why not?”

“Because they do not go to Heaven, but to the Kingdom of Heaven!”

“Well, what’s the difference?”

“The difference is that people go to Heaven after death, and to the Kingdom of Heaven after resurrection. Remember, when you were a preacher, you never mentioned the kingdom of Heaven, always telling people that they go to Heaven after death. On the other hand, those in the Churches of God never spoke of going to Heaven after death, but to the Kingdom of Heaven after resurrection. As you very well know, salvation is all a matter of belief.”

“I believe in the Kingdom of Heaven too. Why can’t I go back and enter the other gate? After all, I was resurrected and judged just like those who go to the Kingdom of Heaven.”

“First of all, once you come here you cannot go back. Secondly, those who are given a place in the Kingdom of Heaven are no longer being judged. They have already been judged during their lifetime, all while you debauched yourself in sins and pleasures. They suffered while you rejoiced. Now they enter the Kingdom of Heaven while you need to be purified for Heaven.”

“In other words, I blew my chance when I chose to come this way!”

“Don’t kid yourself that you had a chance. God knew exactly which way you would go.”

“How could He? I could have gone the other way!”

“You could but you didn’t. God saw your heart and knew that it was bent on pleasures.

“And you were there to deceive me.”

“We were there to lead you to Heaven.”

“You wretched creatures when will you stop deceiving people?”

After a pause he asked:

“Who are you man, you are the Devil, aren’t you?”

“Listen, you are asking too many questions! I spent too much time with you than I should have anyway. I have other people to take care of too. Look at the crowds coming this way.”

“Yeah, look at the mugs coming this way. To be purified in a bath without water.”

“Well, are you going to jump in, or do you need a little help? OK, there you go.”

“Aaaaarrgh!”

THE CHRISTIAN HOLY DAYS FOR THE YEARS 2001 - 2003

	2001	2002	2003
<p>The Passover (Pesah – Nissan 14) Unlike the Jews, who used to kill the Passover lamb “at the twilight” of Nissan 14 (meaning in the evening towards Nissan 15), we, Christians, observe the Passover when our “Lamb” – Jesus Christ – was sacrificed. That happened on the afternoon of Nissan 14, before the twilight of Nissan 14, meaning that we keep it a little earlier than the Jews. We commemorate His death, not His supper, which occurred the previous evening, as some churches do. The time when His body was broken, not when He broke the symbolic bread.</p>	7 April	27 March	16 April
<p>Days of Unleavened Bread (Nissan 15 – 21) On the first and seventh days there shall be holy convocations. No customary work shall be done on these days.</p>	8 – 14 April	28 March – 3 April	17 - 23 April
<p>Pentecost (Shavuot – Sivan 6)</p>	28 May	17 May	6 June
<p>Feast of Trumpets (Rosh Hashanah – Tishri 1)</p>	18 Sept.	7 Sept.	27 Sept.
<p>Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur – Tishri 10)</p>	27 Sept.	16 Sept.	6 Oct.
<p>Feast of Tabernacles (Succoth – Tishri 15 – 22) On the first and the eighth days there shall be holy convocations. No customary work shall be done on these days.</p>	2 – 9 Oct.	21 -- 27 Sept.	11 – 17 Oct.

A few words here about the weekly Sabbath. Some people have made a major virtue out of observing it in the strictest sense. They forget that the Pharisees were very strict Sabbath keepers, yet that did not prevent them from committing the greatest sin ever. They did not understand the truth of God because their heart and their attitude were not right before God.

Jesus Christ said that the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath, and that He was also the Lord of the Sabbath, meaning that He could make exceptions when these are needed.

“At that time Jesus went through the grain fields on the Sabbath. And His disciples were hungry, and began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to Him, ‘Look, Your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath!’ But He said to them, ‘Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: how he entered the house of God and ate the showbread which was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests? Or have you not read in the law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless? Yet I say to you that in this place there is One greater than the temple. But if you had known what this means, ‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice,’ you would not have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.” (Matt. 12:1-8).

There is a great deal of difference between our modern society and the pastoral and agrarian society of ancient Israel when God gave them the commandment to keep the Sabbath together with their servants.

“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your

son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates.” (Exod. 20:8-10).

It is virtually impossible in our present society to prevent all people from working on the Sabbath day. Your fridge, stove, oven, lights, radio, television, etc. work because some “servants” keep them going for you. There are electrical power stations that cannot be shut, programs that have to be broadcast, traffic lights to be operated, hospitals and emergency stations to be manned, police stations to be opened, etc.

The world can never return to a pure pastoral or agrarian society. The society of the future shall always need people to operate these things during the Sabbath and during Holy Days. These people perform a function that is similar to that of the priests who work during the Sabbath and during Holy Days, and take their rest in other days. Therefore, we would be hypocrites to condemn those who make it easy for us to keep the Sabbath if they are unable to keep it with us. So let us worship God and give Him thanks that we can keep His Sabbaths and His Holy Days at the appropriate times, but pray for, and be forgiving towards, those who cannot keep them with us. Let them worship God and take their rest in other days, but let these be as Sabbath days, not as days of the Sun (Sundays) or days dedicated to some other pagan gods.

Another point to be made here is that although Jesus Christ said that “the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath”, this does not mean that people are allowed to change it from the seventh day (Saturday) to the first day of the week (Sunday).

This is not what He meant. Proof of this is the fact that none of the Apostles, or the early Churches of God, worshipped on Sundays. They all observed the Sabbath correctly on the seventh day of the week. The change to Sunday occurred several centuries later after the Romans imposed their festivals on Christianity and forced the believers not to “Judeaize” by worshipping on Saturday rather than on Sunday.

“Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh [has come in the form of the Holy Spirit to dwell in us] is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world” (1 John 4:1-3).