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CHRIST'S RIGHTEOUSNESS MESSAGE

(PART 1)

The message most sublime and full of beauty that ever has fallen to the human ear is the message of Christ's righteousness. It was already proclaimed in paradise to the fallen human pair, giving them hope of gaining again that what was lost through sin. Throughout the ages it has brought hope to the lost human race bound by the chains of darkness. As a lighthouse in a dark sea, it has guided men and women back to their God. It is the only message of peace to the restless human heart.

It is the only message of power to lift up the souls fallen under the burden of sin and misery. By this message all becomes possible to us, even obedience to the law of God. This message brought comfort to the thief dying upon the cross. It is the message of greatest love which as a sweet music has thrilled the ears of desperate victims of Satan, fallen into vice and degradation.

"None are so low, so corrupt and vile, that they cannot find in Jesus, who died for them, strength, purity and righteousness, if they will put away their sins, cease their course of iniquity, and turn with full purpose of heart to the living God. He is waiting to strip them of their garments, stained and polluted by sin, and to put upon them the white, bright robes of righteousness; and He bids them live and not die." Test. Vol. 2: 453.

"Clad in the whole armor of righteousness, we can meet any influence and our purity remains untarnished." Test. Vol 4: 556.

"The righteousness of Christ alone can give you power to stem the tide of evil that is sweeping over the world." P.K. 175.

But sadly we learn that so few avail themselves of this marvelous gift. Very few receive it or even understand it. "There is not one in one hundred who understands for himself the Bible truth on this subject (justification by faith) that is so necessary to our present and eternal welfare." Review & Herald, Sept 3, 1889.

WHAT IS RIGHTEOUSNESS?

Righteousness means conformity to the moral law--right doing. "And it shall be our righteousness if we observe to do all these commandments before the Lord our God, as He hath commanded us." Deut. 6: 25.

"My tongue shall speak of Thy word: for all Thy commandments are righteousness." Psalms 119: 172.

"Awake to righteousness, and sin not." 1 Cor. 15: 34.

"And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for fine linen is the righteousness of saints." Rev. 19: 8.

Christ's righteousness means obedience to the law of God. Jesus did not come to save us in sin but from sin. "And she shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins." Matt. 1: 21.

“Justification through faith... is the message that God commanded to be given to the world. It is the third angel’s message which is to be proclaimed with a loud voice, and attended with the outpouring of His Spirit in a large measure.” Testimonies to Ministers: 92.

“The loud cry of the third angel has already begun in the revelation of the righteousness of Christ, the sin-pardoning Redeemer. This is the beginning of the light of the angel whose glory shall fill the whole earth.” Rev. & Her., Nov. 22, 1892.

“My brother, your righteousness will not be sufficient. You must put on the robe of Christ’s righteousness. You must be like Christ.” Test. Vol. 5: 510.

“Righteousness is holiness, likeness to God, and “God is love.” 1 John 4: 16. It is conformity to the law of God, for “all Thy commandments are righteousness” (Psalm 119: 172), and “love is the fulfilling of the law” (Romans 13: 10). Righteousness is love, and love is the light and the life of God. The righteousness of God is embodied in Christ. We receive righteousness by receiving Him.” M.B.: 18.

“What is justification by faith? It is the work of God in laying the glory of man in the dust, and doing for man that which it is not in his power to do for himself... The righteousness of Christ, as a pure white pearl, has no defect, no stain, no guilt. This righteousness may be ours. Salvation, with its blood-bought, inestimable treasures, is the pearl of great price.” The Faith I Live By: 111.

“The law of God is the great standard of righteousness.” In Heavenly Places: 144.

“The sweetest melodies that come from human lips,--justification by faith, and the righteousness of Christ.” Rev. & Her., April 4, 1895.

According to the Spirit of Prophecy, Christ’s righteousness is: A new life in Christ, in His power and leading. It is love, deeper than we can understand. It is purity, holiness and God-likeness. It is living without sin. It is the fullness of God’s Spirit. It is a promise of life to a sinner condemned to death. It is the hope of salvation and freedom from sin’s slavery. Can there be words more wonderful to a condemned sinner?

WHAT ARE THE SECRETS OF THE LOST RACES?

There has always been a generation of artful speculators who believe that super-intelligent beings from another galaxy had imparted their technology or intelligence to man. This speculation has been fueled over the years by an ever-increasing amount of what is called out of place artifacts or “ooparts” for short. Now, what is an ‘oopart’- or out of place artifact? It actually just exactly what it sounds like - some kind of evidence (physical or otherwise) which seems to say there was an incredibly advanced technological

society here on planet earth thousands of years ago. (It’s out of place according to the evolutionary theory only.) Things like a gold chain of intricate workmanship found in the middle of a chunk of coal that was supposedly millions of years old. Or a silver vase dynamited out of a solid rock that also, according to modern science had to be millions or years old. The list goes on and gets more intriguing: batteries found dating from more than 2,000 years ago, landing strips for aircraft built more than 3,000

years ago... Even large tracts of desert where sand had been fused into glass-something which only an explosion of great power could accomplish.

Scientists have a very hard time explaining these things. But the truth is that man is only now just starting to attain to a position that at least some societies or nations had before the flood.

In fact, so many things in science and history support Bible Creation and the Bible view of the world that our children and young people going to public school don't have any reason to be ashamed of their beliefs. Also, with all of these recent discoveries of "ooparts", as they are called, there is just that much more evidence to help support you as you try to uphold Bible religion before your class mates. When we think about it there's really a lot of sense to the Biblical account of Creation, a Flood and so on. All around the world even the tallest mountains have a layer of sea shell a few feet underground.

Doesn't it make sense that Adam and his descendants, that were so close to God, were very advanced intellectually, and full of vitality?

There were different nations - even whole civilizations that existed side by side back in the days before the Flood. Some were advanced technologically and some were not. Some chose to serve the Lord and some did not.

Compare that time with our time and the technology we have here in Canada with the Developing nations - kind of a similarity isn't there? Now please understand that I'm not saying that the godly people will be technologically advanced and the ungodly people will be technologically backward. Very often the developing nations, do not have much advanced technology. But what number and kind of Christians do they have in comparison to the Developed Nations like Canada? Very often there are more true-hearted Christians there?

In fact, the time before the Flood was also the same. The Lord had left more gold, silver and precious stones right out on the surface of the earth and man became more idolatrous in worshipping those things rather than the Giver of all good things.

So what are the secrets of the Lost Races? Well, first let's establish that unless we learn from histories' mistakes we are doomed to repeat them. Satan always tries to get us to be so stubborn and proud that we can't learn from anyone's past -

someone else's past or even our own. Solomon said, "There's nothings new under the sun." We flatter ourselves to think that we're more advanced than others who have gone before because we have technology. But tell me... has technology made any difference in man's spiritual condition? Has technology brought man any closer to God? Perhaps the greatest secret of the Lost Races is that they even existed at all. And if they had such great technology back in their time and it didn't save them - how can modern man put any hope in technology?

To trace from cause to effect is of the utmost importance in learning from the past, isn't it? They say that hindsight is always 20/20, (In other words - in looking back we can be completely accurate) but that's not always true. Look how modern man tries to flatter himself that he and all things on Earth are getting better and better. But God's people today are called upon to not only discern the past but the future as well. We are called upon to have spiritual sight which goes beyond the baubles, bangles and beads of technology.

God's original will was that there would be a clear line of distinction between those who served God and those who served Him not. When Adam's first son was born how happy he must have been. Cain - received from the Lord. (He thought that Cain was going to be the Savior). "And Adam lived and hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth." Gen 5:3 But what Adam didn't perceive up to the point of Cain killing his brother Abel was that now there was a fallen nature being passed on from him to his children. It was only after Abel was dead that the Lord appointed them another son - Seth. (For that's what Seth means appointed.) Seth was to be the father of that faithful line of Adam's posterity known as the Sons of God. The Son's of God led a more agricultural and rural kind of existence at first as God intended man to.

"For some time the two classes remained separate. The race of Cain, spreading from the place of their first settlement, dispersed over the plains and valleys where the children of Seth had dwelt; and the latter in order to escape from their contaminating influence, withdrew to the mountains and there made their home. So long as this separation continued, they maintained the worship of God in its purity. But in the lapse of time they ventured, little by little, to

mingle with the inhabitants of the valley. This association was productive of the worst results. "The sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair." The children of Seth, attracted by the beauty of the daughters of Cain's descendants, displeased the Lord by intermarrying with them. Many of the worshippers of God were beguiled into sin by the allurements that were now constantly before them, and they lost their peculiar, holy character. Mingling with the depraved, they became like them in spirit and in deeds; the restrictions of the seventh commandment was disregarded, "and they took with them wives of all which they chose." The children of Seth went "in the way of Cain" (Jude : 2); they fixed their minds upon worldly prosperity and enjoyment and neglected the commandments of the Lord. Men "did not like to retain God in their knowledge" they "became vain in their imagination and their foolish heart was darkened." Romans 1 : 21. Therefore "God gave them over to a mind void of judgment." Verse 28, margin. Sin spread abroad in the earth like a deadly leprosy.

It is true that the people of modern times have the benefit of the attainments of their predecessors. The men of masterly minds, who planned and studied and wrote, have left their work for those who follow. But even in this respect, and so far as merely human knowledge is concerned, how much greater the advantages of the men of that olden time! They had among them for hundreds of years him who was formed in God's image, whom the creator himself pronounced "good"-- the man whom God had instructed in all the wisdom pertaining to the material world. Adam had learned from the Creator the history of creation; he himself witnessed the events of nine centuries; and he imparted his knowledge to his descendants. The antediluvians were without books, they had no written records; but with their great physical and mental vigor, they had strong memories, able to grasp and retain that which was communicated to them, and in turn to transmit it unimpaired to their posterity. And for hundreds of years there were seven generations living upon the earth contemporaneously, having the opportunity of consulting together and profiting each by the knowledge and experience of all.

Notwithstanding the wickedness of the antediluvian world, that age was not, as has often

been supposed, an era of ignorance and barbarism. The people were granted the opportunity of reaching a high standard of moral and intellectual attainment. They possessed great physical and mental strength, and their advantages for acquiring both religious and scientific knowledge were unrivaled. It is a mistake to suppose that because they lived to a great age their minds matured late; their mental powers were early developed, and those who cherished the fear of God and lived in harmony with His will continued to increase in knowledge and wisdom throughout their life. Could illustrious scholars of our time be placed in contrast with men of the same age who lived before the Flood, they would appear as greatly inferior in mental as in physical strength. As the years of man has decreased, and his physical strength has diminished, so his mental capacities have lessened.

There are men who now apply themselves to study during a period of from twenty to fifty years, and the world is filled with admiration of their attainments. But how limited are these acquirements in comparison with those of men whose mental and physical powers were developing for centuries!" P.P. Pg. 81-83.

The lost races were lost because they forgot about God. In their mad rush for technology they were only concerned about exalting self-not glorifying God. If man cuts himself off from the past and operates in a historical vacuum this opens him up to operating in a moral and spiritual vacuum as well. If man is so arrogant today as to think that his mistakes have never been made before, he cannot and will not learn from anyone that has gone before, including those Races lost in the Flood. Only Christians that serve God in spirit and truth can discern the signs of the times and read the lessons of history in their proper context.

It is precisely because there are so many who name the name of Christ today who will not live by His values, that society has come to a point of being compared with the lawless age before the flood.

The Lost Races were not only lost for time and history but they were lost for eternity. May God help us to make our calling and election sure-that we can rightly interpret the lessons of history and live for Jesus day by day. Let us perfect our faith through Him who has loved us and died to save us.

BY JERRY EATON

UNPARDONABLE SIN

The day we commit the unpardonable sin is the last day of mercy to us. After this nothing can be done to save us. In the time of Noah the whole world had committed sin that could not be forgiven except Noah and his family. In the end of the world the same thing will happen. The unpardonable sins that existed in Noah's time will cause the destruction in the end also. Already now many have committed the sin against the Holy Spirit. They have crossed the line of no return. To such people it would have been better never to be borne into this world. "There is a sin unto death: I do not say he shall pray for it." 1John 5:16. We are told to pray without ceasing. Jesus prayed sometimes the whole night through for His disciples. Then suddenly prayers are useless when the person has committed the sin unto death. Then all the religious ceremonies and worship are meaningless, only an empty form.

In human strength one can still continue to practise religion, but without the power of God and without the Holy Spirit. Then the religious exercise is a joyless experience, without love, joy, or peace. "For a time persons who committed this unpardonable sin may appear to be children of God; but when circumstances arise to develop character and what manner of spirit they are of, it will be found that they are on enemy's ground, standing under his banner". Test. Vol. 5:624. These people can be pastors, ministers and religious leaders. They can be strict in the letter of the law, even fanatical, condemning others. Their obedience is self-righteousness, and they are proud of their own achievements.

Examples of sin against the Holy Spirit

In the early church there were husband and wife called Ananias and Saphira. Because of the nature of their sin, Peter did not pray for them, neither did he call them into repentance. He knew that they had gone too far for salvation. What was their sin? Was it not to lie to get human recognition and praise for their seemingly noble deed. To others Peter's message was "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" Acts 2:38.

For more than three years Jesus had been teaching Judas and praying for him, and then suddenly no more. "And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly". John 13:27. Jesus did not try to stop him of his terrible sin, but told him to do it quickly. Jesus knew that Judas had stepped over the line of no return. This crossing of the line took place at the Lord's Supper meeting. In the beginning of this communion service he still had the mercy lingering.

Herod had done much evil in his life; he had even killed John the Baptist, but his mercy did not end until he met Jesus face to face. "Herod joined the mob seeking to humiliate Jesus. The last rays of merciful light were shining upon his hardened heart." DA:731. In the presence of Jesus, Herod crossed the line of no return.

As the people of Israel worshipped the golden calf they committed unpardonable sin. Moses did not call them to repentance anymore, but only for their destruction. "When Korah, Dathan and Abiram rebelled against the authority of Moses, they thought that they were opposing only a human leader, a man like unto themselves. But by rejecting God's chosen instrument they rejected Christ and insulted the Spirit of God." PP:635. Many have committed similar sin; rejecting the authority of God's delegated messengers. "As the people of Nazareth refused to receive Christ as the Son of God, the Messiah, they sinned against the Holy Spirit. Reluctantly, Jesus departed from Nazareth, never to return." DA:241. "In 1844, after the disappointment those who denied that the Lord had led them through the first and second angels messages: they sinned against the Holy Spirit". GC:432. To reject the message that God has sent through His messengers becomes a sin against the Holy Spirit.

Felix trembled as he listened to the words of Paul, but when he said "go thy way for this time; when I have convenient season, I will call for thee." Acts 24:25. He sinned against the Holy Spirit. Never again was he to receive another call from God. He had slighted his last offer of mercy.

When the great Eternal God, the Ruler of the Universe calls a mortal man, offering to him eternal life and salvation and the man replies: "not now Lord, perhaps later when it is convenient to me. At the moment I am busy, I have no time for you." This is a sin against the Holy Spirit. "Closely connected with Christ's warning in regard to the sin against the Holy Spirit is a warning against idle and evil words. It is dangerous to utter a word of doubt, dangerous to criticize divine light." D.A. pg. 323. "The most common manifestation of the sin against the Holy Spirit is in persistently slighting heavens invitation to repent." D.A. pg. 324.

Think of the foolish man who made a pile of wood to carry, but it was too heavy for him-so he had to let it down. Now what did he do? He went and added more wood to it and now he could not even lift it up. So is every one who postpone and delay his obedience to God. Every time the heart becomes more hardened, the man becomes more accustomed to sin and the obedience to God becomes more difficult, until it is impossible to render service to God.

The sin against the Holy Spirit is committed quietly and unnoticed while we are spiritually asleep. Satan tries desperately to push professed Christians over the line of no return, and soon as he has accomplished this, he leaves them in their misery, and outer darkness which came over them when the Holy Spirit left them. In the time of the shaking all who have committed unpardonable sin will be shaken out from the church of God, into other churches and movements or into the world. Those who are still led by the Holy Spirit will be united with one another with closer ties than ever. In the vision it was shown to Sister White, an angel calling the people of God to "press together, press together." The closer we come to one another the less chance does Satan have to lead us away from God. It was Eve's downfall when she separated from her husband.

May the Lord help each one of us to watch and pray, lest anyone fall into temptation and sin against the Holy Spirit.

WHAT IS THE MARK OF THE BEAST?

Of all Biblical topics that excite controversy and speculation, there is not one more significant than the Mark of the Beast. Who is the Beast? And what is the Mark? This pamphlet will give you a good overview of the answers to these questions and identify how we can avoid receiving the "Mark of the Beast".

Beasts are often used in apocalyptic (sweeping, highly symbolic) prophecy to denote political powers. In the 7th chapter of Daniel we see in the vision that God gave Daniel four beasts which are the symbols used to describe the four universal world empires of the past. (Vs 3-7 and 17). Also in the book of Revelation we see beasts employed in this same manner (please see the two beasts of Rev. 13). The Bible also uses heads and horns to describe worldly, political powers and in Rev. 17 and the four-headed leopard-like beast of Daniel 7.

In Revelation 13 the first beast comes up out of the sea (v. 1). Water is often used in apocalyptic prophecy to denote a populated region (please see Rev. 17: 15). This beast is a strange composite of several different animals. It has the feet of a bear, mouth of a lion, is like unto a leopard but the dragon gives him his power, his seat and great authority. All of the same beasts from Daniel 7 are mentioned again here in the beast--why? Because this beast incorporates something that was common to all those empires into itself. And what was common to all those diverse empires? Pagan religion.

Knowing that his beast received power from the dragon (the exact symbol Rome used on its flags and insignia), who in history received his power, seat and great authority from the Pagan Roman Empire? Why, the Pope of Rome, of course. In fact, his kingdom was even described as the Holy Roman Empire, his political power was so great in the Dark Ages.

The Papacy was looked to anciently by all the monarchs of Europe for spiritual direction. The Pope in turn, crowned the kings and queens of western Europe. Since the ruling Roman Caesar, Justinian abdicated the throne of the Western Roman Empire in 538 A.D., the Pope was left as the ruler in the throne. Thereby he received great political power. He first had access to, then control over, the largest army and navy in all of Europe. He sent out crusades to not only recapture the "Holy Land" but to punish dissenters and those that would

not bow to the authority of this self-styled "King of kings and Lord of Lords" (please see Rev. 19: 16 to understand this title could only belong to Christ, though the Pope has used it and many other of the appellations of Christ to describe himself).

But this power was to receive a deadly wound (Rev 13: 3). What event in the history of the Papacy could correlate with this? As Napoleon's general, Berthier marched into Rome to capture the Pope in 1798, he must have been thinking that this would be the end of the Pope's great political power. But not so--for this deadly wound was to be healed! Do we not see today the Pope exercising more and more of his ancient political influence around the world? In fact, this healing process began in 1929 with the signing of the Lateran treaty by Mussolini and the Pope's representatives. This treaty gave the Pope back in theory, all of the political power he had lost in 1798. The fact of that political power being restored is reality today. Which leads us to the second beast of Revelation 13.

In contrast to the first beast, this second beast comes up out of the earth. If the sea or many waters symbolize a populated region in prophecy, than the earth must be the opposite or an unpopulated region. This beast also is said to have two horns like a lamb. Remember that horns are a symbol of political power? And as we know, the lamb is a very peaceable power, also a godly power (Jesus was the Lamb of God). What is the only major world power today that came up in a unpopulated region and incorporates the two lamb-like horns of civil and religious freedom into its Constitution? Of course, only the United States of America answers all of these criteria.

We add to this equation the prophecy that this power is said to make an image to the beast to pay homage to the beast. Isn't it interesting that the President of the United States of America, the leading Protestant nation upon the earth, has recently become great personal friends with the Pope of Rome, who stands at the head of a system that is completely opposed to Protestantism? In fact, the Papacy has issued many statements in the past, that he has never retracted showing that every form of government which separated church and state he will do all in his power to oppose. Now considering the recent movements afoot in the

U.S.A. to break down the separating wall between church and state, could this be a fulfillment of prophecy? Is the way being prepared politically in the U.S.A. today to make an image to the beast? A law that would pay homage to the power of the Pope?

"The wall of separation between church and state is a metaphor based on bad history, a metaphor which has proved useless as a guide to judging. It should be frankly and implicitly abandoned." Chief Justice William Rehnquist. Justice Rehnquist sits on the Supreme Court of the United States and he is not alone in his opinions.

First, perhaps we should ask: Exactly what is the main mark that the Pope and others consider to show his power over Christianity? Anciently and quite recently also, the office of the Inquisition has issued statements which show that of all Papal errors, the one distinguishing mark of the Pope's authority in Christendom is the fact that he could set aside the sanctity of the Sabbath and try to place it on Sunday.

All Catholic and Protestant churches have made, at one time or another, many statements acknowledging that the true Bible Sabbath is not Sunday, nor has the Sabbath ever changed from Saturday.

But what do we see today on the religious/political scene? Many quasi-political groups like the Lord's Day Alliance, Moral Majority, etc. that are trying to force through political pressure, Sunday-keeping enforcement laws. Even though Jesus never tried to enforce anything spiritual, these religious leaders are courting and getting more and more political clout to force people to be religious. This quote from "Sunday", the official magazine of the "Lord's Day Alliance of the United States": Cardinal Law urges... to reconsider Executive decision of Sunday openings... The current efforts to erode the special significance of Sunday have a wide spectrum of opposition, including labor and various religious groups. I have written... to urge that he reconsider an executive decision which further disregard the value of Sunday as a special day." This from the "Boston Herald", Feb. 5, 1990: "The President trusts the cardinal's judgment... Law gives his opinion right away, and the president listens... It is a relationship that lugs at the vaguely defined borders separating church and state."

Sunday laws are seen by the "New Conservatives" of the Religious Right as a very attractive way to get all of the Christian churches united. This parallels exactly how Constantine, the Roman Caesar passed the first Sunday law in 321 A.D. in order to unite the Roman Empire by means of Catholicism.

Anciently the process of compromise began to bring within the Christian church every concession to Paganism that was thought necessary to convert the Pagans. Even the day upon which Pagans worshipped, Sunday honoured the pagan Sun-god and repudiated the true Bible Sabbath.

The Sabbath of the Bible is the only place where God's name, His title, authority and territory appear together. These are all the things which characterized an ancient king's seal or his sign of authority. So today God designs that we should receive His seal by keeping His Sabbath which acknowledges His authority over all of Creation (please see Exodus 31: 12-18, Mark 2: 27, Matthew 24: 20, 1 John 2:3-6, James 2: 10).

May God help you, dear reader to see by faith the fulfillment of prophecy today going forth so rapidly. Why have all the barriers fallen between the Eastern Bloc Communist countries and the rest of the world? Because the Bible predicted on world super-church. Why are so many hailing the Pope as a great spiritual leader today (Many of whom would never have been heard a few years ago proclaiming this)? Because the Pope is poised to step to the head of this world super-church and direct the affairs of the world's governments as the United States is giving to him today.

"The rush to freedom in Eastern Europe is a sweet victory for John Paul I." Life, December, 1989.

"In private meetings with heads of state, back room consultation with dissident groups and persistent propagandizing for his crusade against tyranny, he (John Paul I) has helped bring about the greatest policy change since the Russian Revolution." Life, December, 1989.

Will you not consider dear reader, the truths in this short pamphlet and reflect? Perhaps God is calling to you to stand for truth and righteousness with true Christians today.

ANCIENT VS. MODERN ISRAEL

By Wendy Eaton

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." Isaiah 2:2-4 (also written in Micah 4:1-3)

The nation of Israel was the means whereby God desired to bestow His blessings to the world in the old testament times. They were His agency for the salvation of the world. This is not the case any more in modern times, (according to scripture). Yet the vast majority of the Christian world is still looking to the nation of Israel as the depositories of God's blessings to the world. This prophecy above is taken literally and many people are flocking back to Israel to partake of God's blessings and to be a part of His nation. "Few passages of Scripture are more commonly misunderstood and variously interpreted than those containing the divine promises made to ancient Israel through the prophets....generally speaking, the promises and predictions given through the Old Testament prophets originally applied to literal Israel and were to have been fulfilled to them on the condition that they obey God and remain loyal to Him. But Scriptures record the fact that they disobeyed God and proved disloyal to Him instead. Accordingly, what He purposed to do for the world through Israel of old He will finally accomplish through His church on earth today, and many of the promises originally made to Israel will be fulfilled to His remnant people at the close of time." BC vol.4 p. 25, 26

Through ancient Israel God desired to provide the heathen nations with a living example of his holy character. Of course this is where ancient Israel failed. God placed His people in Canaan, which was at the crossroads of the world, and provided them with every opportunity to become the greatest nation on the earth. He promised them that if they obeyed His commandments that, "...the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth." Deut. 28:1 They were promised unparalleled prosperity, both temporal and spiritual if they would put into practice the principles of heaven. As the heathen nations living around Israel would notice their prosperity their interest would be aroused. Then " Even the heathen would recognize the superiority of those who served and worshipped the living God." COL p. 289 Desiring the same blessings for themselves they would be led to ask the Israelites how they obtained so much prosperity. And so the plan of God was for them to witness to these heathen people telling them how they too can know God and accept Him as their Saviour. Then He would do the same for them. All the nations on the earth were to share in the blessings so generously given to ancient Israel.

The Israelites first showed their weakness on the borders of Canaan by their sin in committing fornication with the Midianitish women. At this point they should have been strong after witnessing all the tremendous blessings God had bestowed upon them in the wilderness. Though they were forgiven (after many lost their lives) this incident showed the weakness of man without a firm hold upon Christ. Israel was up and down in their experience in the promised land due to their weaknesses and sins. They had no right to be exclusive because they were no better than the Gentiles without God. There were times when Israel did prosper, for example during the reigns of King David and Solomon. These two kings began what might have been the beginning of a golden age for Israel. But toward the end of the reign of Solomon, the nation was already

beginning to crumble. There were occasional good kings afterwards but they never had the same prosperity and greatness as when the nation was led by King David and Solomon. Israel's unwillingness to submit to the requirements of God prevented them from reaching the high ideal placed before them, and thus they forfeited His blessings. When the Messiah came His own people, the Jews, "received him not." (John 1:11) When the Jews rejected Jesus that prepared the way for the final rejection of Israel as God's chosen nation a few years later. Then came the transition from literal Israel to spiritual Israel in the New Testament times. Paul speaks about this at length in Romans chapters 9-11. Although the nation was rejected, individual Jews can still be saved. How odd that the world is still looking to physical Israel for salvation today.

Even though ancient Israel failed, still the Holy Spirit was moving on the hearts of the Gentiles. In the Old Testament we see God's special care for the Gentiles in sending Jonah to warn the city of Nineveh of coming destruction. We then read of the conversion of the city. Also in the time of Elijah, Elijah had to flee to a Gentile nation and stay with a widow woman at Zarephath for refuge. The greatest faith that Jesus found while on earth was by a centurion in the Roman army. His servant was sick and he believed that Jesus could heal him by just speaking a word. Jesus did heal the servant and then went on to say, "...I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." Luke 7:9 And a Gentile woman who sought healing for her daughter was scorned by the disciples but Jesus healed her daughter and said, "O woman, great is thy faith.." Mat. 15:27 Just before the final passover Jesus was in Jerusalem, and some Greeks had also come to worship at the feast. These Greeks met Jesus and Jesus was glorified in their presence and the Father spoke audibly before them. (John 12:20-30) Also it was the centurion at the cross that acknowledged the divinity of Jesus in His dying moments. "Truly this was the Son of God." Mat 27:54

Even though the Jews treated the Gentiles with contempt and considered them as dogs, we see that it was Gentiles that often had a greater faith when in a crisis. They had much less light than did the Jews but some of them lived up to the light they had, as best they knew how, which was more important anyhow. The Jews should have been missionaries to the Gentiles instead of looking down upon them as unworthy of any of God's blessings. While it was the Jews who prided themselves with being in favour with God and having His special blessings, it was their leaders who were constantly plotting the death of the Messiah. Murder was in the hearts of the leaders. But yet they claimed to be God's chosen.

But what does the history of ancient Israel mean to us today? "Satan's snares are laid for us as verily as they were for the children of Israel just prior to their entrance into the land of Canaan. We are repeating the history of that people..." Test. Vol. 5 p. 160

If we are repeating the history of that people, Satan is making a special effort to lead astray spiritual Israel. Modern (physical) Israel is not spiritual Israel. Satan has all those people deceived already so now he is after spiritual Israel with his snares. We have to hold on by faith to the promises of God and decide that we will not repeat their errors. It is only possible by the grace of God. Many promises made to ancient Israel will be fulfilled in God's remnant church. We may not be wealthy in material goods but God has promised to make us wealthy in spiritual blessings and also to supply our every need, if we are faithful. The rich spiritual blessings He promises to bestow upon His remnant are for the purpose of being a light to the world.

Today the Christian community generally prides themselves with having the light and love of God shining upon them while the heathen world is in darkness. Various cults are also looked down upon with contempt. But has the Christian community kept the commandments and requirements of God? Some of these churches were actually God's church at some point in time in history. They remained God's church until God desired to bring more light to His people. Many times the church refused to accept this new light with its added responsibilities. God was desiring to bestow more spiritual blessings upon them but they rejected this new light with its privileges

and responsibilities. Yet they still claim today to be God's chosen. How sadly disappointed some people will be who cling to their church as their saviour.

What about the heathen religions? Many of them are more faithful to the light they have than is Christendom to the light it has. I have met many kind, generous Sikhs, Hindus, Moslems etc. who have a genuine desire to be a blessing to humanity without asking anything in return. Also observe the missionary activities of the different cults like the Watchtower and Mormons. They may be condemned by the Christian community but yet they are more faithful to their belief system than is the Christian community in general. Christianity has failed as had ancient Israel. Much of Christianity is still looking to modern, physical Israel to receive the blessings of God when God is no longer working through physical Israel. They have no concept of the idea of spiritual Israel. They themselves were to be the depositories of the law to the heathen religions but they have given this responsibility up. They are looking to Israel for salvation instead of to God and what God can accomplish through them.

The great sin of Israel on the borders of Canaan was fornication with the Midianitish women. And today the snares of Satan are set for us just as surely as they were set for ancient Israel. Later they became exclusive of the Gentiles because of their own spiritual weakness when they were meant to be a light and help to the heathen. Is Christendom committing fornication with heathen women? We can see that today marriage has lost its sanctity even in the eyes of Christianity. Divorce and remarriage is rampant. But also spiritually because "the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her.." (Rev. 18:3). Christianity is sold out to the kings of the earth today and there are very few left who are separating themselves from the world.

That leads us to God's church. How do we stand with the great light that God has given to us? Shall we make the same mistakes that ancient Israel made in keeping the light to ourselves creating a wall of separation between us and the world? Shall we just sit at home and enjoy the privileges ourselves? Shall we reject new light if the Lord brings it to us in the proper channels? "God's remnant people, standing before the world as reformers, are to show that the law of God is the foundation of all enduring reform, and that the Sabbath of the fourth commandments is to stand as a memorial of creation, a constant reminder of the power of God. In clear, distinct lines they are to present the necessity of obedience to all the precepts of the Decalogue. Constrained by the love of Christ, they are to cooperate with Him in building up the waste places. They are to be the repairers of the breach, restorers of paths to dwell in." PK p. 678

There is only a small remnant left in spiritual Israel who are willing to sacrifice all on the altar of service to their Master. A mighty shaking has been predicted among God's people and the number in that remnant may get smaller. Even in God's church there will be some who will join themselves in committing fornication with the kings of the earth, but a remnant will remain. On this small remnant will be poured out the riches of God's blessings for them to share with the world. They are the depositories of His law today. It is time for each one of us to personally and seriously consider where we stand in relation to God and His law.

Time is rapidly coming to a close, we have work to do. Although we may be repeating the history of ancient Israel, we need not make the mistakes that ancient Israel made. "To live for self is to perish. Covetousness, the desire of benefit for self's sake, cuts the soul off from life. It is the spirit of Satan to get, to draw to self. It is the spirit of Christ to give, to sacrifice self for the good of others." COL p. 259 Isn't this the true prosperity that God designs all His people the world over to have today - spiritual blessing - which makes us truly prosperous?

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THE GARDEN OF GOD

*FROM THE ENDLESS VARIETY OF PLANTS AND FLOWERS,
WE MAY LEARN AN IMPORTANT LESSON.*

ALL BLOSSOMS ARE NOT THE SAME IN FORM OR COLOR.

SOME POSSESS HEALING VIRTUES.

SOME ARE ALWAYS FRAGRANT.

*THERE ARE PROFESSING CHRISTIANS WHO
THINK IT THEIR DUTY TO MAKE EVERY CHRISTIAN
LIKE THEMSELVES. THIS IS MAN'S PLAN,
NOT THE PLAN OF GOD.*

*IN THE CHURCH OF GOD THERE IS ROOM FOR
CHARACTERS AS VARIED AS ARE
THE FLOWERS IN A GARDEN.*

*IN HIS SPIRITUAL GARDEN THERE
ARE MANY VARIETIES OF FLOWERS.*

EVANGELISM, p. 99

