

# *The Revelation of Righteous Judgment Series*

## PART 24

### JUDGMENT AT THE HOUSE

(CONTINUED)

I Peter 4:17... *"For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall be the end of them that obey not the gospel of God?"*

**II Peter 3:3-13...** *"Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the Word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water perished: but the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same Word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise; but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the Day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the Day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."*

Men, wearied from the sin-stained world that now is, have long imagined that perhaps there was a world not yet found, a place of unblemished purity. They have dreamed of a paradisiacal place possessing perfect environment, but which had somehow eluded the gaze of explorer's eyes. They have feverishly scanned the starry heavens; they have trekked the uncharted regions of the earth. They have even surveyed the depths of the sea in search of their fabled "Atlantis", or other such story of legendary repute. Among those seekers was Columbus. Columbus set sail, and voyaged into the perilous unknown, risking life and limb and countrymen, guided by the misguided notion that the new world spoken of by Isaiah and other like prophets was out there somewhere, just waiting to be discovered. We marvel that, in spite of this erroneous interpretation, the Lord still used it in the accomplishing of His purpose for this nation. But, ah, Brother Christopher ("Christ-bearer"), if only you had known the little-known fact that "When anyone is united to Christ, THERE IS A NEW WORLD; the old order has gone, and a new order

has already begun. From first to last this has been the work of God!" (II Cor. 5:17, NEB). How that would have put your mind at rest! You see, the new world is not some place wherein you go. It is something you become. It is a realm of life, and a glorious state of being!

Yes, dear friends, as we pointed out in our last message, God's new world order actually began in Acts chapter 2, when the Holy Ghost and Fire came upon the assembled faithful in the upper room. It was there that the Lord suddenly came into His temple "not made with hands", and began, by the power of His resurrection, the revolutionary process of spiritual renewal! Hallelujah! Therefore, just as it was for Noah, when he stepped out of the ark onto that wind-dried land, swept clean by the roiling waters of God's righteous judgment; and just as it was for Lazarus, when he was called out from among the dead in response to the Voice of the Son of God, and was loosed from the tightly clenched fists of fatality and decay; so it was for them. When they stepped out of the upper room that bright and sunny morn, it was as if they had been transported to another planet! Everything around them looked different! And so it should have. You see, there is a new world for the believer the moment he is found to be in Christ. Old things immediately begin to dissolve away, and new things appear in their place, as soon as we are baptized with the purging, purifying Fire of God's holy Spirit. Truly, as Jesus said, the judgment of the world within us occurs at that point, and "the prince of this world is cast out" from that point on. And so, He systematically sends a steady stream of fire into our earth that He might consume the old, and establish the new in its place. The great thing about it is that we have the blessed assurance... that He Who has begun a good work within us will not fail to perform it until the Day of Christ (Phil. 1:6)! He will surely complete what He has started, to the glory of God the Father!

### **WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE**

While it is true that we as believers have spiritually entered into a new world, the world of God's Own making, it has now become our duty to be of it; that is to say, to acclimate to it. We must accustom ourselves to this new environment, learning to accept it as a present reality, and to think in terms of the new creation. As you know, this is no small challenge! There are basically two reasons for this. The first reason is because, as we have already said, the work is still ongoing in us, and has not yet turned out the finished product; and the second one is that, while judgment has begun at the house of God (Whose house are we), the world around us remains largely untouched. Beloved, it takes no great gift of discernment to see that we still live in a world which is desperately in need of transformation. And while physically we are in this world, we are not to be of it. Therefore, we find ourselves in the clashing interim of two worlds in conflict; two worlds which are in sharp contrast one with another; and two worlds which are both vying for our undivided attention.

In Romans 12:2, we are wisely advised by the apostle Paul, "Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God". That's easy enough to understand, isn't it? Don't be conformed to the old way... be ye transformed by the new. And pay

special attention to the fact that the arena of change is in the mind. That we understand where it begins is crucial to our understanding. For, conformity to the world has everything to do with aligning with its worldview (by the term, worldview, we mean the grid through which all things are seen in life). It is significant for us to note, however, that this was not written to the general populace of unconverted people. Nay, rather, it was directed primarily toward believers (as is clearly set forth in verse 1 of this chapter, "I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God..."), to folks who had already been born again, and "translated into the Kingdom of God's dear Son" (Col. 1:13). Paul was basically saying to them (as well as to us) that regardless of what might commonly be assumed, it was entirely possible for them to have been translated in their spirits, and yet not be completely transformed in their souls. In spite of how advanced they were (or, at least, thought they were) in spiritual matters, the danger still existed for them to be influenced by, and thus be conformed to this present evil world's way of viewing things. They could be living in retrospect, in accordance with their past perspective, in line with their old paradigm. This admonition becomes even more pronounced, when it is considered from the wording of a few other translations:

**Amplified** --- "Do not be conformed to this world (this age), [fashioned after and adapted to it's external, superficial customs], but be transformed (changed) by the [entire] renewal of your mind [by its new ideals and its new attitude], so that you may prove [for yourselves] what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God, even the thing which is good and acceptable and perfect [in His sight for you]."

**Williams** --- "Stop living in accordance with the customs of this world, but by the new ideals that mold your minds continue to transform yourselves, so as to find and follow God's will..."

**Phillips** --- "Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold, but let God remold your minds from within, so that you may prove in practice that the plan of God for you is good, meets all His demands and moves toward the goal of true maturity".

In the plainest of language, then, we can see that the onus is on us to keep ourselves from being mentally squeezed into the mold of this present kosmos. However, this naturally leads to another question. If we are not to be conformed to this world, there must of necessity be a form. And if there is a form, there must be someone who is responsible for its formation. Who, then, is the culpable party for this?

## THE GOD OF THIS WORLD

In II Corinthians 4, verses 3 and 4, we read, "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, Who is the image of God, should shine unto them...". From these few words, we can see that the full weight is placed on the "god" of this world-system for mentally eclipsing the light of the good news of Christ, the image of God, from shining to those who are lost. But, again, who might this "god" be? Traditionally, it has been thought to have been "the great dragon", that subtle old serpent

referred to in Scripture as the devil, and satan. We can understand the logic of this, since it is said that he "deceiveth the whole world" (Rev. 12:9). Also, when the devil tempted Jesus in the wilderness, he showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, saying, "All this power will I give Thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me: and to whomsoever I will give it. If Thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be Thine" (Lk. 4:5-7). That would at least suggest that he would like to be worshiped as a god. No question about that. However, as we have been consistent to emphasize throughout this series, II Thess. 2:4 says that the man of sin (that is, the sinful, Adamic nature within man) is the one who, as God, has actually been sitting in the temple of God, showing himself to be God. Since it was Adam (male and female) who was originally propositioned in the garden with the prospect, "ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil", we find this to be very telling, indeed.

In a book we have been rereading by Watchman Nee, entitled, "Love not the World", and also in a recent article written by J. Preston Eby, a simple but important fact in relation to this was brought to our attention; and that is, that while the opening lines of Genesis begin with God's creation of the heavens and the earth, it does not say that He created the world in the sense that we are speaking of it here. (Now, we are aware that Acts 17:14 says that God "made the world and all things therein"; and that Jn. 1:10 says that Christ was "in the world, and the world was made by Him". Nevertheless, it should go without saying that these references are not made toward the world-system.) Before sin entered the picture, and death by sin, the world existed only in the sense of the earth, the inhabitants of the earth, and the things which pertained to the earth. This is a fact, is it not? Up until that time, there was no such thing as the kosmos, or world-system, as we know it today. There was only one system of thought, word or deed anywhere in God's vast creation, and that system was known as the Kingdom of God. Let us fathom for a moment what that seemingly unambiguous piece of information means, in relation to our study.

While Adam walked with God in the spirit of the day, he was primarily God-conscious; that is, he was fully conscious of God's immanent Presence, and walked in harmony of mind and unity of spirit with God's way of viewing things. He "read" his surroundings, and his purpose for being here, from the heavenly perspective, through the divine grid which God had placed over his understanding. Nothing of a contradictory or dichotomous nature had ever crossed his mind, or come into his consciousness. He was, as Scripture says, "innocent", knowing and believing only what he was told of the Lord. And he was content to remain in that state; at least, for a season. But the very moment he questioned God's motives, imagining that for some reason the All-Loving One was restraining him from reaching his full potential; the moment he contemplated in his mind an alternative way of experiencing success and satisfaction in life, without having to give God the glory; and the moment he entertained the idea that he, through his own efforts, could be "like the Most High" (that is, when he thought that he could rise to God's unrivaled position of transcendency over all things), the first humanist was confirmed, and the foundation of the world was laid. It was a world which had no need for God... fashioned after Adam's own rebellious heart.

Now, we are not ignoring the fact that it was satan who originally made these suggestions to "the Adam family". And we don't deny that he had much to gain in doing so. There can be no doubt that he is the chief enemy and arch-deceiver of the soul. But if you may recall, Adam the man was not deceived (I Tim. 2:14). He made a calculated decision to break with the mind of God, to follow another course. How, then, shall we say that he brought about the form of the world? Simply stated, he took his eyes off of the form, or image of God. Rather than continuing to walk in the light of the knowledge of the glory of God as it was being revealed to him in the face of our Lord, and rather than being conformed to the image of the Son, he looked the other way. (Matters not which way he looked; for a look in any other direction has the same effect). In that brief moment of time, the "earth" of his human mind was suddenly and cataclysmically without form and void, and darkness covered the face of his "deep". And so, having created a void through the entertaining of these questions, he attempted to fill that God-shaped void with himself. Therefore, it could well be said that when Adam partook of the forbidden fruit, he really did become a god (that's god with a little "g"). But he became a god over a world of his own making; a world which centered around, and was built upon, self.

Beloved, we would certainly not make a fuss with anyone who chooses to ascribe the title "god of this world" to satan. We believe it may be said either way without doing damage to the Scriptures. Besides, noting the vital alliance which exists between them (we call it, the Adamic/satanic alliance), we're not sure that it matters so much, anyway. The two are inseparatively entwined in all of their works and activities. (However, let us say for the record that we do reject the notion they are one and the same. Some have made the assumption that the devil is nothing more than the carnal mind. But if that were true, it would mean that when Jesus was tempted of the devil in the wilderness, he was tempted by a carnal mind, something which He simply did not have. The same goes for the swine into which legions of devils entered. We would likewise have to believe that carnal minds drove them to commit suicide! And it would mean that the psychiatrists have been right all along; it IS all in our heads! Sorry, Sigmund. We don't think so.) The main point we are making here is that the initial groundwork for the world-system came about as a direct result of Adam's vile thinking. He visualized a world wherein he was God, wherein he was the highest authority, wherein he received the glory; and that world began to take on form and shape around him. Shall not this be recognized as the power of positive thinking? It is positively the worst thing anyone could have ever imagined!

### **THE FORMATION OF THIS WORLD**

In speaking of the world that now is, we find that there could be many applications. The reason for this is because, within the world that now is, there are untold hosts of smaller worlds. For example, we could speak of what is commonly referred to as the eastern world, or the western. There are economic "worlds" (i.e. "Third World" countries), or different levels of power on the global economy. There are religious "worlds", business worlds, political worlds, worlds of sports, entertainment, amusements, fashions, and interests, each having their own ultimate authorities, achievers, "champions", or "gods". Apart from these, there is the ever-broadening world of "cyberspace", with it's "World-Wide Web", a veritable smorgasbord of sites and pages which appeal to almost every

appetite known to man. There are even "virtual" worlds, designed by computer simulation to specifically fit the needs and fantasies of each particular individual. (This really allows the user to experience the sensation of being his own god). No matter which of these worlds we are speaking of, however, be it in the field of science or technology, music or the arts, commerce or education, or any other, we must always keep in mind that each of them is built upon the same basic foundation of ideas, and linked to the selfsame spirit; which spirit is by nature hostile toward God (I Jn. 5:19). Therefore, we must take heed how deeply we become involved with them. For they all, without exception, bear the mark of their creator! "The whole world lieth in the wicked one" (I Jn. 5:19)! How easily we seem to forget that!

The late Francis Schaeffer once made a profound statement, when he said, "The Christian is to resist the spirit of the world. But when we say this, we must understand that the world-spirit does not always take the same form. So the Christian must resist the spirit of the world in the form it takes in his own generation. If he does not do this, he is not resisting the spirit of the world at all." To this, we would certainly agree. However, we would expand that thought to include this. Not only does the spirit change from one generation to the next, but one has to also be able to recognize the form in which the world has taken on in his or her particular area, as well. As you are no doubt aware, it may change from one geographical location to the next! For example, when Paul wrote to the Corinthian church, he was mainly concerned about their inclination toward licentiousness. They were greatly attracted to the ways of the heathen, and had even taken to adopting some of their immoral lifestyles, fashions, and habits as their own. However, when he wrote to both the Roman and Galatian assemblies, the primary form of worldliness confronting them was that of strict legalism. According to his writings, they were still in danger of being "bewitched", that is, of being tricked into going back under the weak and beggarly elements of the world, whereunto they desired to be in bondage. Imagine that, will you! Something within them actually wanted to conform to the old way, and to live once again under the heavy burden of the commandments and traditions of men! It was as if they'd found some sense of security in them! All of which prompts us to say that what some in our day call "holiness", with their stringent standards and dress codes, and their humanly-contrived lists of "do's and don'ts", Paul would have called "worldliness"! (What? Are those gasps we hear from the audience?) He would have exposed this works-based mentality for what it really is... a poor substitute for true spirituality, masquerading itself as righteousness! Regardless of the form it took, however, whether it was legalistic or antinomianistic (lawless), the apostle considered himself to be dealing with the same worldly spirit in each group. In his estimation, they were no different; one form was just as ungodly as the other!

## **GODS OF THE MODERN WORLD**

Of a truth, the form of the world that now is has undergone some radical changes in these "last days". This is especially true for those of us living in the Western Hemisphere. It is vastly different from the way it was even a generation ago. We have witnessed what has been referred to by secular voices as a "paradigm shift" in the way people think, which, in turn, has opened up possibilities of evils never before imagined. Where once as a society

we approached the subject of truth and knowing on the basis of antitheses (that is, if one thing were true, its opposite had to be false); and where once we romantically recognized God as being the absolute and final Authority on every issue, we are operating on a completely different premise these days. No longer can we just assume that when we speak to an individual on the street, he or she will think as we do, in accordance with the law of non-contradiction (the presupposition of "either / or"). They may see life through the "both / and" mentality (that is, that two or more things may equally be true, in spite of their obvious contradictions). What this means is that the standards for truth and morality are no longer fixed and stationary; they may differ from one person to the next. What great confusion this has caused! It's like the tower of Babel revisited (only suspended in mid-air)!

This, then, is the unstable infrastructure laid down by the "gods of this world" ---Hegel, Kierkegaard, Jaspers, Sartre, Kant, Nietzsche, Marx, Jung, Freud (just to name a few of the more influential ones). Every age has had its principal molders and shapers; and each one of them has contributed in his own unique way. Some of you might say that you've never even heard of these men, much less read their writings. But just being exposed to the general mindset governing society puts us in touch with their teachings. Following the example left by their forefather, Adam, these philosophical "antichrists" were the primary framers of the modern worldview, the ones who have blinded the minds of an entire generation, "lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine unto them". But how did they accomplish so difficult a task?

What happened is somewhat complicated to describe; but basically, it went something like this. A void was gradually created, when the "old-fashioned" idea of a monotheistic, transcendent Deity was called into question, and Deism was eased into its place. Deism is the belief that while there may be a "Higher Power" out there somewhere, He cannot be known. Furthermore, He is neither interested nor involved in the affairs of men. As the theory goes, when God brought forth creation, He wound it up like a clock. Everything was predetermined, set in motion, unchangeable in its course; and so, it was not necessary for Him to reveal Himself, or to involve Himself further. The world would run like "clockwork", without His presence ever being required. Man would simply look to reason as his guide. When this notion was first introduced, it was met with fierce opposition. But once men grew weary of resisting it, and eventually became comfortable with the idea, God was successfully moved to the background. The next step in the logical order of descent, then, was to remove Him completely. This is where Naturalism came into the picture. Naturalism stated that all that existed was matter; and matter was all there was. According to this theory, man, in his evolved state, was the highest form of matter, and therefore, naturally ruled over creation by virtue of his superiority. He had no one to answer to but himself. This attitude seemed to satisfy for a while, and had an intoxicating, empowering effect on the mind. But men, being the spiritual creatures that they are, could not be content with the absence of any belief in the supernatural for long. There had to be a way to bring some spiritualism into the religion of science, without jeopardizing man's newly found sense of autonomy. (Besides, many who had followed this line of reasoning were becoming nihilistic; they were experiencing a loss of a sense of significance. We can understand how this would be; for it would get pretty depressing

to think you were all there was!) So, in order to provide this need, and in order to avoid returning to the monotheistic mindset, they began looking toward the East for answers. Eastern ideas, such as pantheistic monism began creeping in (the idea that God is all, and all is God), and became the "in thing" in philosophical circles. Gurus, recognizing the unique opportunity set before them, readily made their pilgrimages from the East to introduce their foreign deities and concepts to a new audience in the West. And to no great surprise, they were welcomed with open arms! You see, while men would not tolerate the idea of one God, with His exclusive claims and His indiscriminate absolutes in matters pertaining to life and godliness, they would allow for a variety of gods, as long as they felt they could pick and choose among them (this is the natural man's idea of freedom). And so, a multi-cultural world was envisioned, where all thoughts in the marketplace of ideas would vie equally for acceptance --- and would be universally understood that all roads lead to "God" (Ultimate Reality, Brahman, Nirvana, or whatever other term one might choose to use). In this cosmopolitan environment, no one way would be exclusive, and, so, no one way would be emphasized over another. How convenient this would be for the man of sin to show himself as God! And what great freedom this would give him to change his colors as often as he wanted! For who could challenge his authority in this kind of an atmosphere? And by what standard would it be challenged? There would be none!

You see, in this envisioned "Eden", it is not man who is driven out, but God; leaving man to be his own ultimate authority, and final judge between good and evil. And you can believe that those who share this vision have wasted no time promoting it, either. The institutions of higher learning (most of which were originally founded by Christian leaders), are now filled with pantheistic and atheistic professors and lecturers, raping the young minds of their students by removing from them any sense of conviction or moral absolutes. The engineers of advertising daily bombard us with powerful images, cliches and slogans, all designed to endorse a life of self-indulgence, and to "liberate" us from the old "taboos" which would deny us any pleasure the flesh might crave. The film producers, news anchors, political commentators, and an innumerable company of talk-show "evangelists" are all exerting their mega influence, by giving their values, opinions, and distorted polling results on just about every issue imaginable, leaving the impression that what they say is the way the majority of people think. As if that were not enough, we have the "thought-police" constantly patrolling the national community, determinately trying to undermine the foundations upon which this country was built (Psa. 11:3), and to enforce a "political correctness" on the public psyche. The hope is that once they have gotten us thinking "correctly", and everyone has accepted all belief systems as being equally true and worthy of celebration, a quantum evolutionary leap will take place among humanity, a new age will be ushered in, and the mind collectively shared by the masses will be recognized as "God". This is their agenda, to fashion and manipulate "God" into their own image!

While it is certainly disturbing to consider these things, our main concern should not be the beliefs which are circulating around the world. Instead, it should be that many of these same ideas have infiltrated the



The first question that comes to our minds is, how can an old man possibly produce a new age? It simply cannot be! Therefore, regardless of how new the teachings might appear, and regardless of how novel they may seem, they are nothing more than a repackaging of old, Eastern ideas, or an expansion based on those ideas, which have failed to deliver what they promise!

We are aware of the fact that the revelation of the Kingdom of God antedates all of the ancient religions. In fact, it was established long before the foundation of the world was ever even laid in the heart of man. This might explain why there is often an element of truth found among the various religious worldviews among man. They have all borrowed certain details from the divine Record, and put their own twists to them. This also explains why certain "new age" teachings sound so much like the message of the Kingdom today. True, many of the terms and concepts commonly used today were first introduced to the public on a worldwide scale via new age proponents. And true, many of them were popularized by anti-christian advocates, who received their inspiration from the god of this world. But if the truth be known, they were first "coined" by the Spirit, and revealed to messengers of God, who, in turn, shared them in small, obscure little gatherings around the country. Therefore, we need not shy away from certain truths, for fear of being labeled, "new age". These truths were given to the saints of the Most High, and we refuse to avoid them, simply because the corporate "man of lawlessness" wants to claim them for his own. At the same time, however, it is our responsibility to clearly delineate the differences! And there ARE differences, you know! MAJOR differences!

While there are many teachings which concern us these days, we will limit ourselves to addressing but three. The ones which really seem to stand out to us are the refutation of the transcendency of God, the attempts to "impersonalize" God, and the thrust toward pluralization (the belief that all roads ultimately lead to the same goal). In these three elements, we see an Adamic coup to conform us to this world, and to sidetrack us from the path "which shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Prov. 4:18).

To begin with, we suppose that we should state our position on "the God issue". Earlier in this message, we had made the statement that Adam became a god after he partook of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. That may have raised some eyebrows, until we were able to elaborate more fully on what we meant. But if you really want to know the truth of the matter, he was already a god before this ever took place. Allow us to explain. One of the most common Hebrew words used for God, "Elohim", is a plural word. And, as a plural word, it is used in a variety of ways throughout Scripture. Not only does it speak of God, the supreme Being and Creator of the universe, but also, as Strong's Concordance gives it (#430), "gods, in the ordinary sense". It is used in reference to the gods of heathen nations; it is used of angels; and it is used to describe the rulers and judges of Israel. In a purely generic sense, it can speak of anyone who is in a position of authority, or as the superlative of anything (for example, see Gen. 23:6; Ex. 18:11; 20:3; 22:8, 28;

Psa. 8:5; 82:1; 138:1; Mal. 2:15; Jn. 10:34-35; Jon. 3:3; I Sam. 14:15). That takes some of the mysticism out of it, doesn't it?

Male and female Adam had already been given a limited authority over creation. Together, they had dominion over all things on the terrestrial plane, i.e., "over the fish of the sea, the fowl of the air, the cattle, over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth". However, there was a higher place reserved for them in the realm of dominion. Once they demonstrated responsibility on that level, they were destined to advance to rulership over all the works of God's hands (which included "the work of His fingers", the celestial realm; compare Gen. 1:26 with Psa. 8:3-6). In this regard, Adam was an "elohim" to the earthly creation; possessing power and authority to bring God's will to pass. And inasmuch as they were uniquely made in the image of God, they twain were to be admired as such. They were facets and concepts of God, showing forth the radiant glory of their resplendent Lord. They were the kings over which He was King, the lords over which He was Lord (Rev. 19:16); and they were the gods over which He was God (Dan. 2:47) However, the status which they held should not be confused with that of THE Elohim, Who Alone is Self-sufficient, Self-existent, Self-sustaining (see Exodus 3:14, "I AM"), and Who is the sole Object of worship. Whenever folks have a problem with this subject, it seems that their fall can always be traced back to a misunderstanding of this one particular point!

One idea which is circulating these days is that the problem with mankind is simply a case of "mistaken identity". According to some who teach this, the entire human experience has been nothing but an illusion, with man walking around in a state of spiritual amnesia. He has forgotten that he is God! Therefore, it is the mission of those who have been "enlightened" to awaken the rest of us to who we really are; and if we can but do away with our sense of self-consciousness, and if we can lose all awareness of our personal identity, everything will be restored to its original condition. However, it is our contention that this comes closer to representing the problem, than to describing the solution!

You will have no problem getting people to believe that they are God... it comes quite naturally (although, explaining it from Scripture is another story! If you have ever heard anyone attempt to do this, you know how confused they can become)! The Pharaohs believed it. The Caesars believed it. Nebuchadnezzar believed it, too... that is, until he awoke one day to find seven years of grass stains on his teeth! He knew, from that experience, that he was more closely related to a beast than to a god, whenever he failed to acknowledge the transcendence of God!

It has been our considered opinion that this mindset is very much akin to atheism. For while atheism denies the existence of God altogether, the "I AMers" generally deny the existence of God apart from themselves. Not a great amount of difference, we say! Nevertheless, let either of these groups get into serious trouble, and just see who they call on then! We can assure you, brethren, that in their moment of desperation, when they really need a miracle for themselves or for someone they love, they will recognize

Someone other than themselves, and call upon Him for mercy and grace to help in time of need! They will not hesitate to do so!

(While we are on this subject, we would be so bold as to say this. This talk of destroying all sense of personal identity is nothing but nonsense. The Buddhists have been seeking the extinction of the self for thousands of years, but to no avail. This is because it simply cannot be done. To prove it, just try conversing with other people for one full day without the use of personal pronouns! That should be enough to convince anyone of the absurdity of such an idea! Besides, if Jesus used them when referring to Himself and to others, why do we think we should do otherwise?)

In spite of the way it is being portrayed, self-consciousness is not an evil thing. It is a God-given faculty of the spirit of man (I Cor. 2:11); and we find absolutely no evidence that it was a result of the fall. However, it does have its place. As we have said before, when Adam was in his original state, he was primarily God-conscious. But secondarily, he was self-conscious. He knew himself to be the son of God (Lk. 3:38), and recognized himself to be a productive member of the God family (this is the identity man has lost sight of). However, his was a walk WITH God, not a walk AS God. There is the difference, dear friend. There is such a thing as unity in diversity; as oneness between two or more separate beings. Marriage is a perfect illustration of this. A woman may lose her identity as being an independent person when she is joined to her husband. She may receive a new name. And she and her husband may be in such oneness of accord that she can speak his mind on almost every issue. But she does not confuse herself as being her husband. That would warrant a genuine concern for her sanity! Rightly understood, the sense of individualism, with its independent sense of self-importance, must be done away with. It must give way to a corporate mentality, in order that, together, we may accomplish God's purpose in the earth. And may we say that the days of "personality" preachers are over with! In those senses, we would agree that personal identity must be put away. But in just the same way the human spirit cannot be annihilated, neither can any faculty of the spirit. There is an eternal quality about it, which makes it indestructible. To even imagine the possibility of such a thing would be to concede that annihilation is a viable option in God's dealings with mankind. And this is one thought we cannot accept! Ah, beloved, we need but to think some of these matters through to their illogical conclusions, in order to discern whether they be of God or not!

No matter how high we ascend in Him, He will always be "the Most High". We may be priests of the Most High, and, as priests, be able to bridge the gap between creature and Creator; but a distinction will always be made. He is the Head, and we are His body, and it will forever remain that way. His position will never be rivaled, threatened, or usurped in any way. So, while there may be room for a polytheism of gods ("ascended masters", or whatever else you want to call them) in the so-called "new-age" movement, each being equal in power, and each being the sovereign objects of worship, there is but ONE GOD in the Kingdom of God, and His name is JESUS! ALL power and authority belongs to, and comes from HIM! You might as well get used to it! Therefore, to those who make the profession, "I AM GOD", there's only one thing we'd like to say: YOU "AM" NOT!

The second thing we mentioned was the impersonalization of God. It seems that some have attempted to strip God of His personality, reducing Him to a mere energy force. According to this view, God is kind of like electricity. If we can just discover the principles by which He operates, we can channel Him to serve our purposes, and we can have whatever we say. Whether you are aware of this or not, this is straight from the Hindu handbook! Consider this for a moment. If it was true that God is just a force, He would be incapable of possessing the qualities and attributes which give life meaning and purpose. Furthermore, since we are being made in the image of God, the highest form of existence for us would be to lose those qualities, as well. It would also mean that God would be amoral; for why would morality matter to an impersonal Being? We would dare say that those who are preaching about God as if He were just a power source have lost any intimacy they may have ever had with Him! We ask you: When was the last time you had an intimate conversation with electricity? And how did it respond? Ah, that's what we thought! Dear friend, if Christ is truly the image of the invisible God, and the express image of His person... how could that be, if there was no personality to express? Think about it before you answer!

The third thing we mentioned was the current trend in the church toward pluralization. To be sure, it is not recognized by that name among the Christian community. The natural interpretation drawn from it would draw too much suspicion in a Kingdom which has inscribed upon its coat of arms, "one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in you all". However, this worldly mindset has been smuggled into the camp via the "Trojan horse" of Christian terminology, in order to get it past the guard, so to speak. What exactly is pluralization? It is the attitude being promoted today that since no one has all the truth, we should all just put away our differences, and come together for the sake of unity. It is the opinion that what might be true for you might not necessarily be true for me. "The Lord may lead us down different paths, but, when it is all said and done, He will ultimately bring us to the same conclusion". Now, we would agree that some of the differences separating folks are petty; some are merely semantic (differing only in the way we say certain things). And we would certainly agree that no one man or ministry has all truth, in its purest form. There should be no mistaking the fact that each of us need what the other members of the Body have to offer. However, there are some things pertaining to sound doctrine which are concrete and absolute; they cannot be compromised, altered, or viewed in any other way, without doing great harm to the gospel. And we are set for the defense of the gospel!

Beloved, if it does not matter whether there was a virgin birth; if the gospel record is just an analogy of spiritual events, and none of it ever really happened in the natural; if the shedding of real, sticky, red blood was not necessary for the remission of sins; and if salvation may be procured in any number of different ways; then, a man named Jesus (historically proven to have existed during the first century, we might add) died without good cause, His disciples laid down their lives for the wrong reason, untold multitudes throughout church history have been martyred unnecessarily, and we are fools for ever believing that it made any difference!

We know it is not the popular route to take, but there are just some things with which we cannot in good conscience be identified. To do so would be to deny the very Truth which has made us free. Where there are clear contradictions between what the pattern Son, Jesus, left us as an example, and what some of our brethren have chosen to teach, both ways cannot possibly be right. Therefore, we are compelled to take our stand on the side of Christ! If conscious prayer is an obsolete practice, and any external display of worship is "old order"; if there is no such thing as sin, and no more battles to fight in the spirit; if, since we are "the living word", the Bible (affectionately referred to by some as "those old black lids of death") is outdated, and no longer relevant in our day; and if all men are already saved, perfected, immortal, and glorified (needing nothing but notification of the fact); what do we yet wait for? We tell you most emphatically, brethren, that if this is the case, then WE OF ALL MEN ARE MOST MISERABLE!

We could spend much time on these issues, and others like them of equal importance. We have simply scratched the surface. But suffice us to say that the way back to Eden's fair land is NOT from west to east; it is from east to west! The tabernacle was laid out in similar fashion. The High Priest moved away from the east to the west in his journey toward the Most Holy Place! Why, then, do some think we can enter into fullness through Eastern techniques? "For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be" Matt. 24:27. We have read that the man of sin will be consumed by the Spirit of Christ's mouth, and destroyed by the brightness of His coming... but we can be certain that his end will not come through Eastern "enlightenment"!

Know ye that the old world view presently dominating earth's populace will not be dissolved through convincing apologetics or roundtable discussions. It will not fade away through ecumenical efforts, or "agreeing not to disagree". It will not come by meditation or visualization techniques, or the devising of doctrines which go beyond that which is written. It will only come by a direct revelation of Christ's manifest presence, shining brightly into the darkened regions of the soul. No one can accomplish such an awesome task but Him!

### **THE GOD THAT ANSWERS BY FIRE**

In the end, God shall destroy the elementary principles of every world-system which is in opposition to Him, be it Judaism, Catholicism, Mohammedism (Islam), Buddhism, Taoism, Hinduism, Secular Humanism, Cosmic Humanism (New Age), or any other "ism" not mentioned. They shall melt with fervent heat, and be dissolved as if they'd never been! Glory!

Now, we cannot say exactly how all this will happen; but happen, it shall! We do know that Christ will come in flaming fire, being glorified in His saints. And He will be admired in all them that believe (II Thess. 1:10). Furthermore, His ministers will be as flames of fire (Heb. 1:7). He will come to vindicate the truth that is in Him, so as not to leave any doubts concerning that which is right! We believe that in many cases, our Lord will speak directly to the hearts of men, bypassing the need for human involvement in

their conversion. In other cases, the saints shall be privileged to participate in this glorious work. Some men shall respond immediately to this gospel of the Kingdom, and the promise of new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, as soon as it is revealed to them. Others will fight it for as long as they can, until they can resist it no longer. Perhaps, Zechariah 14 gives us a picture of that. In that day when the Lord shall be recognized as King over all the earth (v. 9), and living waters shall flow from Jerusalem (v. 8), the prophet says that those who resist His reign shall be plagued with a very unusual condition. According to the prophecy, their flesh shall dissolve while they stand on their feet, their eyes shall dissolve in their sockets, and their tongues shall dissolve in their mouths (v. 12). They will be smitten with a great panic, as they realize that their long-held beliefs have failed to deliver them (v. 13). Now, this would surely be a frightening scenario, were we to envision it from a natural point of view (those who believe in the "global meltdown" theory have traditionally taken these verses to describe the way in which a nuclear holocaust would affect humanity). But the truth of the matter is, this plague is a most merciful judgment from the Lord. For, in that day, the Mighty God shall loose all men from the fleshly works upon which they stand, the eyes of their human understanding shall be dissolved, and the arguments which they have so carefully fashioned shall melt while they are yet in their mouths! Their "heavens" may pass away with a great noise; but what a wonderful sound that will be! The Lord shall universally confound the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nought the understanding of the prudent, in order that they might all learn to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles (v. 16)! Hallelujah! This, dear friend, is the purpose of "the plague", to turn men back to God, and to cause them to see things through new eyes! (That this cannot be referring to some form of natural crisis is seen by the fact that if you read the 14th chapter of Zechariah in its entirety, there are nations which survive the catastrophe, and remain alive to keep the Feast! This could not be possible, if the entire planet has been destroyed!)

Ah, what glorious times are ahead! They have already begun! We expect that we shall witness some "Elijah" type showdowns in different parts of the world... with God's sons challenging the modern-day prophets of Baal to open contests. That would not surprise us one bit! As often as it happens, though, we are persuaded of this one thing. If the contests are truly of God, arranged and inspired by Him, the fire that precedes out of the mouths of His sons shall be words of love (Eph. 4:15)! It shall be a redemptive fire, not destructive in nature. And it shall prompt a worldwide confession, "The LORD, He is THE God; the LORD, He is THE God" (I Kings 18:39; Phil. 2:10-11)! Praise God, there shall be light, TRUE LIGHT, at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice (I Kings 18:36; Zech. 14:6-7)! And that light shall lighten every man that has ever come into the world (Jn. 1:9; also Isa. 49:6)! Could anything be more exciting?

The sons of Love shall be God's response to a groaning creation; His reply to it's long travail. Every time a helpless unborn child is violently ripped from the safety of its mother's womb, and offered up as just another nameless sacrifice to the spirit of the age, creation groans. Every time an innocent young boy or girl turns to the dehumanizing "slave trade" of prostitution in order to survive, or to support a gnawing, craving drug addiction warring in his or her members, creation groans. Every time someone dies as a

result of being the unsuspecting victim of some barbaric, heathenistic laboratory "experiment" for the "advancement" of medical science, or for some new government testing, creation groans. And every time a person's life is terminated, simply because they are no longer considered to be "a productive member of society", creation groans. As we have been wont to declare in this article, the indifference of society toward human life is the result of years of subtle mental conditioning. We are now living in the twisted "utopia" envisioned by the architects of Adam's vile Eden, and, may we say, it is not a pretty sight! However, God has allowed the wickedness of the man of sin to be revealed in all of its fullness, in order that we might see for all eternity the consequences of his ways. We are convinced that there is a more excellent way; and that way shall be revealed by those whom God has chosen "after the order of Melchisedec". The ills of a sick society, the ravages of this dread disease called indifference, and the ideas promoted by the religions of the world which have helped to create this condition in the first place, shall all be purged by the Fire of God's love. The sons of God will have the answers to the problems produced by the so-called "new world order" of man, when once it dawns upon men that in spite of all their crying aloud to the gods of this world from the morning of creation even until late in the evening, "there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded" (I Kings 18:29). In that same hour, "there [shall be] great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the Kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign forever and ever" (Rev. 11:15)! This is the real NEW WORLD ORDER, and it shall fill all the earth (Dan. 2:34-35; Hab. 2:14)!

The final verse of Zechariah 14 could not be a more fitting way to close this message. It needs no interpretation! We read after "the great holocaust" is over, and all things have been made new, verse 21 says, "In that day, there shall no longer be a Canaanite (merchandiser) in the house of the Lord"! Oh, be encouraged, ye saints of the living God! For once the Fire has performed it's necessary purpose, and burned intensely in the heart of every man; and once the various worldviews presently dominating men's minds have been completely vaporized into thin air, the man of sin which has sat in the temple for, lo, these past six thousand years, shall sit there no more! He'll be out'ta here for good! Hallelu-Yah!

This concludes the first segment of our series on "The Revelation of Righteous Judgment", subtitled, "Judgment at the House". Part 25 will continue with the series, but will be the beginning of the second segment, "A Judging Priesthood". We look forward to hearing what the Spirit has to say on this.

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