

# THE REVELATION OF RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT SERIES

## PART 16

### "JUDGMENT AT THE HOUSE"

(CONTINUED)

**I Peter 4:17...** *"For the time is come that JUDGMENT MUST BEGIN AT THE HOUSE OF GOD..."*

**II Thess. 2:6-7...** *"And now ye know what withholdeth that he (the man of sin) might be revealed in his time. For THE MYSTERY OF INIQUITY DOTH ALREADY WORK: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume by the Spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy by the brightness of His coming..."*

It never ceases to amaze us how men continue to turn to that old man of sin, Adam, for the answers of life. What a pitiful story this is! This, in spite of the fact that more often than not, the answers he provides are really no answers at all. At best, they are only *rearrangements* of the problems themselves; correcting, perhaps, one thing, while adversely affecting something else! So, rather than remedying man's maladies, they are actually *protractions* of the problems! They have no real power to lift man out of his enigmatic state of being (they just leave that impression)! And if you will notice, they are constantly having to be revised, expanded, or updated (this is to keep folks coming back for more)! It reminds us of the popular old film classic, *"The Wizard of Oz"*. Please pardon our choice of illustrations, but if you are familiar with the story, you will remember that when Dorothy and her little dog, Toto, found themselves in a strange land, with many a trouble, she was instructed to *"follow the yellow brick road"*. This, according to her advisors, would lead them right to the mystical Emerald City, home of the famed *"Wizard of Oz"*. If and when she arrived, there was a chance that she might gain an audience with this Wizard, who was reputed to have the answer to any problem that might possibly be brought before him. Surely, she was told, if *anyone* could help them out of their dilemma, he could! Why, he knew *everything*! So, with the encouragement of the "munchkins", and without further ado, they were *"off to see the Wizard...the WONDERFUL Wizard of Oz!"* To make a long story short, you may recall that while she was enroute, she met with others, who, like herself, also had great needs: one who had need of a heart, another of a brain, still another of courage, etc. Therefore, with a heart filled with nothing but high hopes and expectations, believing that the Wizard could do *anything* but fail them, she persuaded them to join her in the journey. Through obstacles aplenty, and perils galore, they pressed onward, until at last they arrived at their appointed destination. Then, with trembling knees and trepidation, they stood in childlike innocence before "the great one", that giant godlike image with blasting voice, who was just about to turn them away empty-handed...that is, until little Toto pulled back the veil

(hooray for Toto)! That's when the truth came out, and the masquerade was over! Why, that thundering, threatening "Wizard", that bellowing, boasting braggart, that intimidating, inflated "know it all", was NOTHING BUT A MAN! No wonder he couldn't deliver the goods! He could only give them useless superficialities, which could in no wise help (He wasn't *so wonderful*, after all, was he)?

How many times have we needed an answer to a particular problem, or an answer for someone else's, and rather than turn to the One through whom all *true* answers come, have joined the "fool's parade" to Adam's house? How many times have we taken counsel with his mind, sought out one of his famous "one-liners" or generalized solutions, and/or encouraged others to do the same? C'mon now, admit it! Tell the truth! We've all been duped at one time or another! We've all gone off to see "the Wizard", either within or without ourselves! And we've all placed a certain degree of our faith and confidence in his instructions, in different ways. Our bootprints have helped to wear a beaten path to his doorstep, and so have yours! Ah, the "talking heads" on television seem to have an answer for everything (for the right price); the bookstores are full of self-help aids and manuals; and the yellow-pages are literally overflowing with listings of modern-day "wizards" (had Dorothy lived in our times, she could have just "let her fingers do the walking")! And for the most part, practically every one of them claim to have the magical answers to whatever ails us. But when we've gotten past the impressive settings, the intelligent-sounding voices, the important-looking titles, and the glossy slick covers, one thing has stood out above all else...WE WERE STILL DEALING WITH THE LIMITATIONS OF MAN'S PSYCHE! Package it how ever you choose, create the aura of your liking, even try to deify it with endorsements from "clergy"; but when the veil was removed, and the naked truth was exposed, it could not help but be said by the honest soul, in absolute astonishment and utter incredulence, "*Is **this** the MAN that made the earth to tremble...*" (Isa. 14:16)? Yup! It was just ADAM all along, feigning to be "the answer-man"! What a great let-down! And what a useless exercise!

If the Lord is speaking anything in this hour, it is that Adam's advice cannot be followed. Though he projects himself to be bigger-than-life, wiser than God Himself, we must always remember that he is NOTHING BUT A MAN. Were time to continue indefinitely, and God were to restrain Himself from ever interfering, ol' Adam would still never solve the world's woes. This should be an established fact by now. This is because his solutions are drawn from an earthly perspective, and are restricted to that sphere. *No matter what he does, there is nothing he can do to change this condition. (He's fallen and he can't get up)! He simply cannot help himself, or rise from his trouble-ridden state!* But praise be unto God, there **IS One** who sovereignly rules "*over the rainbow*", and there **IS but One** who has rightfully earned the title, "Wonderful, Counselor", who infinitely knows all things, and sees all things just as they are. And if we will but learn to wait patiently for Him, being anxious for nothing, He will see to it that we receive clear directions for every situation in life! Hallelujah! Beloved, though others may continue to sleep on through Adam's age-long masquerade (at least for the time being), and though others may choose to remain imprisoned in his nightmare (if you remember, Dorothy's entire experience turned out to be nothing but a dream), we are currently experiencing the fulfillment of Psalm 126: "*When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like*

*them that dream*" (the Amplified adds, "it seemed so unreal"). For sure, He is fully and completely awakening us from the spell-bound slumber of worldly wizardry, from trusting at all on the wisdom of this age, and establishing us in the mind of Christ! Now, that is good news, indeed!

### ONE MIND...ONE ACCORD

When we left off in our last segment, we were discussing the contrast made between the wisdom of men and the wisdom of God, as found in the first four chapters of I Corinthians. And in the course of our presentation, we had pointed out that it is God's highest intention for us all to enter into and possess THE SAME MIND, AND THE SAME JUDGMENT. But how shall this be accomplished, you ask? With such a wide diversity of ideas and opinions in circulation these days, not only in the world, but also in the church, how can this possibly come about? Simply put, through the operation of God by the Spirit! He has determined to "destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the understanding of the prudent"...and He has begun the work in us! For those of us who have been called to be in His "firstfruits" company, He is progressively consuming and destroying the old man of sin, along with his mindset, in our midst. This is being done by the Spirit (Breath) of His mouth, and with the brightness of His coming! He is steadily bringing to naught the insubordinate reasonings of our natural minds, and bringing into total subjection our human intellects. He is eliminating the conflict that exists in our thought-lives now, so that ultimately we will share one mind among us all. This He is doing by the quickening of His Spirit!

Before we precede in our studies, however, perhaps we should clarify what we mean by this. When we speak of God "destroying" the wisdom of the wise, we are not suggesting that our Lord has purposed to somehow lower the corporate I.Q. of His body. Neither would He have us to disregard common sense altogether, nor to completely and immediately reject sound logic. This is simply *not* His objective! In case there might be some misunderstanding on this point, let us quickly set the record straight: God is not "pro-ignorance" or "anti-intelligence"; and He is certainly not against education in general. That is just another divisive prejudice (usually promoted by those who harbor a secret resentment toward those who are more intellectually inclined than themselves). Be it known that the Lord would *never* endorse that kind of thinking; no, not for a moment! Despite what some may believe, there is nothing particularly spiritual about stupidity; and there is no advantage in being ignorant (either willingly or otherwise). Over the years, we have been acquainted with folks, who, in their desire to be led by God's Spirit, have become a bit extreme. They have refused to perform even the simplest of their natural duties in life, performances that would have required but common knowledge to execute; and they have resisted against making decisions that common sense would have easily guided them through, until and unless they "felt" they had first "heard from God". They assumed that if it seemed like a natural response from the mind, or if it appeared to be an intelligent decision, based on facts deduced by their reasoning faculties (rather than by some supernatural "sign" from heaven), it must automatically be wrong. (We could tell some funny stories here)! Then, there are others, who have somehow gotten the idea that anyone who has or exhibits more than a third grade education or vocabulary cannot

go very deep in God; so, they have attempted to "unlearn" what they had already learned by deliberately neglecting their normal, God-given powers of intelligence (as if this would make them more useful to God). Seriously! Now, for the most part, we do not question their sincerity (although we believe them to be sincerely wrong); and we understand where some of them are coming from (however, it is obvious that they are attempting to build upon a false premise); nevertheless, we are obliged to say that this is but another of Adam's foolish exercises. Paul **did not** say, "...not **any** wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called..."; he said, "not **many**..."! There is a difference, you know! Dear friends, we have said it before, and we shall say it again: the soul, along with its powers of sense and reason, is not intrinsically evil. Neither is the acquisition or employment of natural wisdom or knowledge necessarily wrong (for that would be quite difficult to avoid, as long as we live and communicate in this natural world). Nay, the problem comes when we become *dependent* upon the soul, and those things which are apprehended through it, rather than giving due and proper regard to the Spirit. It is when we give precedence to sense-knowledge, rather than to revelation-knowledge, that it becomes detrimental to our spiritual well-being. Let it be clearly understood that God is free to use any vehicle He chooses to speak to our hearts, and to convey His will; howbeit, He is not limited to any. He may express Himself to us through our knowledge of the principles of science, history, or the laws which govern nature or physics; or He may communicate to our hearts through a bit of conventional wisdom, which we (or others) have obtained from the common experiences of life. Then, again, He may choose to by-pass the mental route altogether. It is all the same to Him; useful, at such times when He deems it necessary; useless, when He does not. He needs *nothing* at all to accomplish His purpose; and yet, He can use *anything*! Our convictions on this are best summed up by a French brother from the early 1700's, Jean-Pierre deCaussade: *"The mind and all its activities would like to hold first place among the tools used by God, but it must be relegated to the lowest, as if it were a dangerous slave, a slave from which a really good man could benefit greatly if he knew how to handle it, but one which could also harm him seriously if it were not kept under tight control. **When we crave to be helped by conventional means, God tells us that His action is all we need. When, on the other hand, and without good reason, we wish to dispense with external help, God tells us that such help is an instrument which must be neither casually used nor rejected, but employed sincerely and naturally to serve His designs, used with total detachment, as if we had nothing though we have everything.** God's action is boundless in its scope and power, but it can only fill our souls if we empty them of all false confidence in our own ability. This false confidence can check the activity of God within us. God can, when He pleases, change all other obstacles into aids for spiritual progress. For, to Him everything is the same, equally useful or equally useless. Without Him everything is nothing, and with Him nothing is everything"* ---end quote. We couldn't have said it better! In short, then, we should not attempt to make the process of being led of the Spirit complicated. And we should not attempt to limit the Most High to a particular sphere of activity. It is He who designed the spirit and soul of man to work together; and it is He who designated to each its intended role. He is free, therefore, to use them according to His own discretion and choosing, and to serve His purposes. Certain decisions in life do not demand or require a thundering voice from heaven to direct us (such as the color of socks we wear, how often we should bathe, when we

should go to the bathroom, whether we should replace a light bulb in our home, etc., etc.); some things we just know we should do. If the Lord should desire for us to change our routine, or to do things differently, He can certainly let us know about it! He has proven that again and again! (What some people call "acknowledging the Lord" is actually being overly self-conscious, anyway. They worry themselves unnecessarily, trying to decide which of their own feelings or emotions is "God", and finally concluding that the strongest one must be. This is a soulish practice). Therefore, we should faithfully perform our daily duties, exercise good common sense, and employ our natural abilities (in accordance with biblical principles and standards), all the while being mindful of the governing impressions of the Spirit. We must constantly maintain an "open heaven", in a manner of speaking; so that if the Lord *should* choose to place a "check" in our spirits about a thing, or to direct us in a particular manner, we will be quick to acknowledge and respond to Him. We should always move in faith; thoughtfully, responsibly, acknowledging Him every step of the way...prepared, at any moment, to immediately and unquestionably do whatever the Spirit bids; even if it looks foolish to the natural man. This is one of the ways we are able to "neutralize" the dangerously overpowering influence natural wisdom and knowledge can tend to have, as well as help to insure that we do not place an unhealthy confidence in our own understanding. (We will have more to say on this later).

Now then, as we begin our examination in chapter 3, we are obliged to make a brief recall of the previous position Paul had established in chapter 2. The apostle therein stated that while he did not attempt to declare the gospel unto them with enticing words of man's wisdom (lest their faith should stand in his natural eloquence or profundity, rather than in God's power), he did, nevertheless, say that he spake wisdom among them that were perfect. The wisdom that he employed, however, was not a worldly wisdom, but was "the wisdom of God in a mystery" (verse 7). This "hidden" wisdom was such that the spiritual man could easily comprehend and digest; but *"the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned"* (verse 14). This, according to Paul, was where the saints differed from their pagan neighbors. For while the natural minded men of Corinth had to rely on their human abilities, their intellectual skills, and their earthly psychic powers for deduction and discernment, the saints had received, *"not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that [they] might know the things that were freely given to [them] of God"* (verse 12). Not only were their spiritual faculties awakened, but they were each endowed with the promised Holy Spirit of truth, which would personally teach them how to compare "spiritual things with spiritual" (verse 13), and would thus enable them to make righteous judgments. Surely, the awakening of these propensities would give them a definite advantage over those who were forced to make their determinations and judgments based solely on information provided through their physical senses...even though it would still be necessary for them to develop them, and for them to be exercised therein. And exercise, they must; for as the writer of Hebrews said, *"But strong meat belongeth to them that are of **full age**, even those **who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil**"* (Heb. 5:14). In other words, if they were to become spiritually mature, sharing the same mind and the same judgment one with another, it was imperative that they each develop intuitively. Their

powers of discernment must be exercised individually, that they might understand for themselves what was from God, and what was not. This was absolutely crucial for growth (seeing that this is one of the main standards of measure)!

Paul closed this chapter by saying, *"But the spiritual man tries all things [he examines, investigates, inquires into, questions, and discerns all things], yet he is himself to be put on trial and judged by no one [he can read the meaning of everything, but no one can properly discern or appraise or get an insight into him]. For who has known or understood the mind (the counsels and purposes) of the Lord so as to guide and instruct Him and give Him knowledge? But **we have the mind of Christ (the Messiah), and do hold the thoughts (feelings and purposes) of His heart"** (verses 15-16, Amplified). What a highly enlightening statement! Paul was simply reminding them that the mind of Christ was not something that would become available to them at some future date; nay, it was already their present possession, the true and abiding foundation for life. It was because of this very thing that the judgments and appraisals offered by the world were not applicable to them (any more than they are to us now). Their lives were built upon an entirely different set of principles! It is true that the natural man may know certain things about man in general (such as thought-patterns and behavioral traits), because of the spirit of man that dwells within him (verse 11). His human spirit may be able to search out these things, and draw some fairly accurate conclusions at times, based on the processes of analysis and comparison. But since the natural man cannot get an insight into those who are born from above, his evaluations and opinions of them are always somewhat off the mark. His advice and instruction in counsel will no more apply to them than if he were trying to analyze the Lord Himself! Imagine that, if you will! Mere mortals, trying to instruct omniscient God! How foolish that would be! As Jesus told Nicodemus, *"The wind blows (breathes) where it wills; and though you hear it's sound, yet you neither know where it comes from nor where it is going. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit"* (John 3:8, Ampl.). This explains why the natural man can't figure us out! He has no idea where we came from, or where we're heading!*

As this closing passage indicates, the true nature of the spiritual man is exploratory. He diligently analyzes and probes all things opened to him by the Spirit; and only *of those things* does he inquire. He is not speculative; nor is he suspicious. He obediently waits upon the Lord, and allows Him to lead in the investigation. *"For **the Spirit searches diligently, exploring and examining everything, even sounding the profound and bottomless things of God [the divine counsels and things hidden and beyond man's scrutiny]"** (I Cor. 2:10, Ampl.).* As Watson was to the legendary Sherlock Holmes, we might say that the spiritual man has been called to be the assistant-agent to the Chief Detective, the Holy Spirit! He has the glorious privilege of following the Super-Sleuth into the depths of the mysteries of God (for it is for his benefit that all these things are revealed)! Hallelujah!

Throughout chapter 2, we saw that Paul made a clear distinction between the natural, unregenerate man, and the spiritual man, that is, the man who has been quickened by the Breath of God, and raised up in the newness of life. The two are entirely different species, and are as separate as east is from west. Nevertheless, with that in mind, listen to

his next words in the opening of chapter 3. Here, he introduces a third class: *"And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, **are ye not carnal, and walk as men?** For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?"* It's kind of hard to believe that he was still speaking to the same group, isn't it? One minute, they were declared to be the privileged possessors of the mind of Christ; and in the next, they were said to be carnal! What a confusing condition!

Indeed, one might wonder...if it were really true that they had the mind of Christ available to them; and if it was a fact that they had the Spirit of Christ to tutor and instruct them in all the ways of the Spirit; exactly how was it possible for them to still be carnal? Elementary, dear Watson...the answer is found in our portion of reading. They had allowed the old man of sin some "breathing room", so to speak, by failing to fully comprehend, and to develop in the revelatory relationship God had ordained *for each and every one of them* to personally experience; and they had halted along the way, by continuing to entertain a line of reasoning that was obstructive to their spiritual progress! Unknowingly, without their even being aware of it, they were being beguiled of their reward. They were being hindered from apprehending the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God by the way they were thinking! They were listening to the old man of sin in the temple, and were following his advice!

Once again, we are reminded of the problem Paul previously exposed in chapter 1; that is, the spirit of partiality and sectarianism. He just **will not** let us get around this issue, will he? Oh, we realize that this is commonly accepted these days, and lightly esteemed by the majority of religious folks. In fact, it is normally expected (and practically required) of Christians to be a part of *some* man-made organization, so that they might quickly be placed in a theological category. It has been our experience, and perhaps yours as well, that after we have been identified as Christians, one of the first questions we are generally asked is, "of what denomination are you a member?" or else, "with whom are you affiliated?" (We have certainly incurred some strange and wary looks by our response! We ask: what's wrong with just being "generic"?) This type of religious inquisition is, to them, considered prudence. It is a mixture of curiosity and caution; and is intended to satisfy their suspicions. But what appears to be wisdom to men is actually foolishness with God! It is the vain and foolish voice of Adam, crying out from the grave! You see, it was directly attributed to this that the church in Corinth was spiritually stunted; they were yet undeveloped. They still insisted on having something they could say they belonged to, or someone they could point to as their representative, in order to give them a sense of importance, and a sense of security! And, very much like their former peers and countrymen, they were greatly divided, as a result! They were still entertaining thoughts like the world!

Let us stop right here and say that Paul was not discouraging them from gathering in local assembly; neither was he dissuading them from bodily participation with other believers. This was clearly not his intention, and therefore, would be erroneous to try to read this

into his text. As we have already stated, he was addressing the matter of partisanism among them; the fleshly inclination to form cliques, clans, and clubs (with or without their leader's consent). And he was raising the issue of following personalities, for the purpose of representation (or to make themselves a name, wherewith they might be called). But why was Paul so concerned about such a natural, and seemingly "harmless" proclivity as this? And why was it so terribly wrong to possess? Well, for one reason (the most obvious), instead of uniting, it serves to separate the people of God. Whenever folks take sides, identifying themselves exclusively with a particular ministry, it polarizes them from those who are not in their "camp". It has the tendency of creating a certain sense of elitism among them, and can even cause them to look down upon others as being less spiritual than themselves. As you well know, divisions can run deep among those who are involved in such practices. Little more needs to be said about this (nearly two thousand years of church history makes our point for us). But another reason is that it has the potential of producing spiritual dependents. This can be true with honorable and dishonorable ministries alike. Paul understood this, and felt the need to warn them. "Be on guard---LET NO MAN DECEIVE HIMSELF! Your future progress is at stake"!

Generally speaking, those who abandon themselves to blindly "following the leader" usually start out from a genuine awe and admiration; they become impressed with the superior wisdom of a minister or ministry, and eventually become devoted to their teachings. Now, there is nothing wrong with studying behind those who have been anointed to instruct. Their teaching skills have been given to the body as gifts from God (Eph. 4:11-13), and should be recognized as such. And there is nothing wrong with having a healthy reverence and respect for those who are worthy of honor. In fact, we are told in Scripture to know them that labor among us, and to esteem them highly in love for their work's sake (I Thess. 5:12-13; I Tim. 5:17). But all too often, people end up looking entirely too much to their mentors to provide judgment and spiritual discernment for them, rather than developing it in themselves. They figure that since they obviously cannot hear God as well as "Paul" or "Apollos", they should just leave the responsibility up to them. "Let *them* show us the steps we should take; and that way, we'll *know* that it's right", they say. This is precisely what had happened in the Corinthian church. They were able to operate in all the gifts of the Spirit (which is generally *assumed* to be a sign of maturity), and they had direct access to the mind of Christ; but when it came to receiving revelation knowledge, they were still carnal, unable to assimilate the deeper truths of God's Word, or the impressions of the Spirit. They still required their leaders to feed them with "milk", that is, *with food which had been pre-digested*, in order for them to be able to receive it; and they still depended upon them to direct them in the will of God, rather than seeking it for themselves. Is this not the way of babes? Having never developed their senses of discernment to any level of personal confidence, they still had to rely on those whom they perceived were more spiritually advanced than themselves to transform what they had been shown into milk. Now, again, don't take us wrong; there is no shame in being a babe, if one is a new convert. It is quite normal for children to require assistance. But this was obviously not the case with Paul's readers. At what time they should have been teachers, able to commune with God directly for themselves; and when they should have been enjoying an exciting relationship with the One who explores and uncovers the depths of the mysteries of God, they were still fussing and feuding over who they should

follow! How silly! You might say that through their distraction, they had allowed themselves to become spiritual dwarfs; mere "munchkins" in spiritual mentality, at a time when they should have been men of maturity, stature, and strength! What a tragedy!

Considering these things, it is easy to see why there is so much abuse and deceit in ministry these days. It is simple to see how false doctrines flourish among the masses. By entertaining these types of thoughts, folks leave themselves vulnerable. They abandon themselves to second-hand judgment, and just hope that it's right. Many have come to unquestionably accept the instructions and doctrines of their denomination, apostles, elders, etc., simply because of the position they hold. They have decided that this is the safest way for them to stay on the right track. Sometimes, this conclusion is reached independently (with a little help from Adam); and sometimes, it is the result of teaching. Certain unscrupulous characters openly teach an absolute submission to their ministry; while with others, it is a general understanding. According to these "pied pipers" in the pulpit, whatever they promote, whatever they approve of, their members should readily endorse; and whatever they disapprove of, whatever does not come through their channels, they should wholeheartedly condemn. They should never challenge a decision, or the authority of those who issue it. What a trap! Having surrendered their discernment, the poor souls who submit to such bondage have become like blind men led by the blind...and have joined them in their doctrinal "ditches"! (The most pathetic thing about all this is that after they have fallen, then, these same people argue back and forth about whose "ditch" is the deepest! God help us)! Beloved, you know as well as we do, this would never happen if folks were listening to the Lord! (They have obviously forgotten the admonition, "Prove ALL things; hold fast to that which is good")!

We thank God that this is not always the case. Not every ministry is power-hungry, desiring to lord over the people; and not everyone feels that kind of pressure to conform. However, our beloved brother Paul made no apologies, and made no exceptions, when he said to his readers, *"For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, ARE YE NOT CARNAL, AND WALK AS MEN?"* He told it like it was! But just what did he mean by this terminology, "ye walk as men"? Was he talking about a particular stride or pace; the way they shuffled their feet? You know better than that! That was totally irrelevant to the subject! We can gain some special assistance from Eph. 4:17-19, where he defines his meaning further. Here, he says, *"...walk not as other Gentiles walk, **in the vanity of their mind**; having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart..."*. This tells us, in no uncertain terms, that "walking as men" has to do with the way one thinks. It speaks of "walking" in one's mind in a manner that is consistent with the common lot. Going back to what we had previously pointed out in our series (Parts 13 & 14), we find that when the Lord originally brought forth man by the Breath of His mouth, He purposed that they should walk together "in the cool (Heb. "spirit") of the day". These "walks" did not require physical steps to be taken, however; for they pertained to a spiritual exercise. In the language of symbolism, the first man was said to have "walked upon the stones in the midst of the fire" (Ezek. 28:14). That is to say, he walked in the Spirit, in accordance with the mind of Christ, upon the foundational truths of divine revelation. The Lord was daily instructing him, revealing to him the

eternal principles upon which all things operated; and was carefully and meticulously directing him in the will of God. You might say that they were "walking through" the plan of God on a daily basis; and Adam was in total agreement with God's pace. "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3). As long as Adam was yielded to the Spirit's lead, he enjoyed the privilege of this heavenly revelatory relationship. He steadily increased in wisdom and spiritual stature, and was developing into a perfect man. But the moment he chose to walk contrary to the divine arrangement, and decided to lean to his own understanding, he fell from the heavenlies (that is, from the spiritual realm); and he was forced to walk by himself in the realm of carnality, "upon the stones of the pit" (Isa. 14:19). From that day on, his principles and precepts were founded on the carnal mind, which invariably lead to death. Now you know *the rest of the story!* Like father, like sons, Adam's posterity has historically followed in his footsteps, stepping from stone to stone in the slippery depths of carnality. They have trusted in ways "which seemed right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov 14:12)! This is because it is their nature to do so! In light of this, then, we can better understand why Paul would say that those who were men-followers were carnal, and "walked as men". *The idea of sectarianism came straight from the pit!* It is but one more of Adam's carnal concepts, a stepping stone for the flesh. And those who attempt to find safety through it will ultimately be deceived thereby!

We have noticed that men and ministries who lack understanding like to play "Wizard". They think they have the answer for everything (at least, that's the way they want it to appear)! They will oftentimes set their laws, rules, and regulations in stone...and then compel their followers to walk upon, and in accordance with these stones. They will demand a strict conformity from those who seek the privilege of walking with them; and threaten excommunication to those who will not. (This is how they imagine that unity of mind and judgment is attained). However, we have not been called to walk upon the stones of man-made rules and regulations; and we were not meant to walk out another man's personal convictions, no matter how admirable they may be. We were intended to walk upon the stones of Kingdom revelation! We should all be free to move in the Spirit, as the Spirit leads us; for we have been ordained to walk as spiritual men, even as sons of God, upon "the stones in the midst of the fire" (this will cause our feet to look like the firstborn Son's, whose feet were said to be "like unto fine brass (symbolic of divine judgment), as if they burned in a furnace"; Rev. 1:15)! This alone will lead us to the top of Mount Zion, our appointed destiny!

### **THE HEART OF THE MATTER**

The question will no doubt be asked: are we against spiritual leadership? Certainly not. With so much emphasis on it in the Scriptures, and so much need for it still evidenced in the body, we would be absolutely foolish to take such a position. We definitely believe in divine government, as it is revealed in the Word of God. (What's more, we are not of the persuasion that corporate gatherings, group meetings, or other forms of assembled fellowship are already "old order", and therefore, obsolete. Who has ears to hear, let him hear). But the aim of all true ministry should be to bring believers to a place of spiritual maturity (Eph. 4:11-16); to help to educate and instruct them in the ways of the Spirit,

that they might be able to recognize the voice of the Lord for themselves. (It was originally designed by God to be *a means* to an end, not an end in itself). Those who have genuinely been ordained by God to minister a perfecting word to Christ's body will not seek to create in their listeners a dependency on their ministry, but will ***always*** point people to the true Head, our Lord Jesus. Neither will they *allow* people to form a dependency on them, as if they possessed some special connection with God that was unavailable to others. It would help us immensely to hear Paul's words: *"What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Ministering servants [**not** heads of parties] through whom ye believed, even as the Lord appointed to each his task; I planted, Apollos watered, but God [all the while] was making it grow and [He] gave the increase. **So neither he that plants is anything nor he that waters, but [only] God Who makes it grow and become greater"** (verses 5-7, Amplified). What our beloved brother was basically telling them was this: *"I am nothing. Apollos is nothing. We are merely channels through which God has chosen to minister to you, for an appointed season. **BUT CHRIST IS EVERYTHING!** It is He who provides the Seed for the sower, and Water for the waterer...and it is He who causes Life to spring forth from it. We cannot do that! This is why He alone deserves the credit; and He alone is worthy of attention; for He is the only One who can bring the increase!"* Beloved, he refused to let folks make an idol out of him, or to think more highly of him than they ought to think! He clearly understood the dangers of it, both for them and for him! He would ***not*** be their "Wizard"!*

Now, lest any of them should get the false impression that there were divisions between Apollos and himself, or that the clannish endeavors of those who were going by their names were endorsed by either of them, the apostle follows up by saying: *"Now he that planteth and he that watereth **are one**: and every man shall receive his own reward for his own labour"* (verse 8). That is to say, they twain were of the same mind, working together toward the same vision, though their administrations may have differed somewhat. Paul sowed the initial seed truths in their hearts, establishing Kingdom principles within them; and Apollos came behind him, watering and confirming them with the refreshing waters of God's inspired Word. But it was all toward the same goal! They were one in Spirit...both desiring above all things that their listeners would grow up into their rightful positions in Christ. They had no intention of building up their own reputations. They saw no reward in that. Neither did they want to keep folks relying upon them, in order to make them feel important. They had no desire to create "munchkin" communities, who pointed men to them! Nay, their rewards came when they saw God bring forth the increase. It was the satisfaction of knowing their labors were not in vain!

Now, we know that this is a delicate subject. And we know that there are some who would twist our words, take them out of context, and try to use them to justify their spirit of "antiestablishmentarianism" (a big word coined during the sixties revolution, which simply means, "rebellion against all forms of established authority"). Those who embrace this spirit have a resentment toward government in general; they refuse to submit to anything. And they would just as soon do away with ministry altogether, by rendering it unnecessary. (A common saying among them is, "I don't need anyone telling me what to do. If God wants me to know something, He can tell me Himself!" Ever heard that before?) Therefore, if you are just looking for an excuse to avoid accountability, or to

distance yourself from those who would speak a word of correction or discipline into your life, God knows your heart. And if you are rebellious to authority, simply because of a wound from the past, He knows that, too. Spiritual leadership is still a part of God's present arrangement, whether we like it or not. That is not our issue. The issue is how we look at ministry! For, you see, if we lean to either extreme, we will still be in the slimepits of carnality! It's just that simple!

We truly thank God for the "Pauls" and "Apollos" that have been instrumental in establishing Kingdom principles in our lives. They have helped to define and interpret the impressions of the Spirit for us, and have served to confirm His many dealings over the years. We would never want to belittle that. But if we ever fail to understand their intended role, they can become anti-christ to us (at least, *our perception of them can*). They can take the place of the Spirit of Christ in our lives, and become the main focal-point of our attention. THIS IS NOT THEIR FAULTS, BUT OURS. Even godly men, who are careful to maintain their proper place in ministry, and frequently clarify their position, can inadvertently become a stumblingblock in the minds of those who hear them, NOT BY ANYTHING THEY HAVE DONE, BUT WHAT THEIR LISTENERS HAVE FAILED TO DO. If it can happen to Paul, it can happen to anyone! We hope you can hear that by the Spirit!

Ah, dear one, we need to be provoked to exercise discernment! Our Father intentionally places us in unusual situations, and among various individuals. He arranges the circumstances, and allows certain things to come to our attention, all for unique opportunities. But when we leave it up to someone else to decide for us whether a doctrine, prophecy, situation, spirit, etc. is of God or not, we miss the prospect, at least for the moment, to exercise our spiritual senses. And we do ourselves a great injustice! The Lord has purposed that we all develop into "A PERFECT MAN, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ"...and He alone knows what it will take for each of us to become a part of that many-membered Man! The goal is that "we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine...[but] grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ..." (Eph. 4:14-15)! If we look to the Lord as our "Inspector General", learning to follow His lead above all others, we'll have nothing to worry about!

Beloved brethren, we encourage you to acknowledge the Lord in all thy ways. He shall surely direct thy steps! This, in itself, is a highly rewarding experience, and one to be treasured above rubies. But one of the most amazing things we have found is that when we purpose in our hearts to do so, we will naturally flow together with those who have done likewise. We will not have to "try" to walk together; neither will we have to force it to happen through ecumenical means. It will come as naturally as trickling mountain streams merging into a river! Who can separate the waters, once they have met? Who can change their course? Therefore, as we seek Him who is One, we shall become one in the same mind, and in the same judgment! This is His way, and His work; for He knows what He is doing! Praise His holy name!

to be continued...

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