

How Apostasy Starts II

How the World and Christianity Were Deceived

The way of human nature under Satan the devil and the walking dead!

Fred R. Coulter—December 8, 2018

Greetings, brethren! Welcome to Sabbath services! *Sabbath is the key thing in understanding about the Truth of God!*

I want to show you an interesting book produced by Ramona Wood. If anyone knows where Ramona is, I'd be happy to get in touch with her. It's very good concerning the Sabbath, *excellent!* I didn't find about it until last week. She's got one on the Holy Days and you can tell that this was done quite a while ago, because she still has the resurrection on Trumpets. These are some very interesting books. {note that Roman Woods has a number of books on amazon.com} I'm just informing you about them if you want them.

From **truthofGod.org**: 5-minute commercial:

I'm going to inform you about the Transcript Books that we have with the CDs for in-depth studies. We have about 110, and these are lifetime studies from a lifetime study.

- Sermon Series: *The Lord God and the Most High*: God the Father and Jesus Christ {transcript book & CDs}
- Book: *A Harmony of the Gospels*

We're going to go through Jesus' life that we find in *A Harmony of the Gospels*, and you'll be able to go along with it. I think you will enjoy it very much.

Jesus said that when He returns, or when He comes, 'will He find true faith on the earth?' *Yes, but very few!* As you look at your history in the Church and at our lives today, we are a Church that is being harvested all the time. Someone is dying, and hopefully someone else is being baptized and coming to the Truth.

As we get smaller in numbers, please pray that God will use the seven eyes that He has for those who are seeking Him, and those whom He is seeking, as well. It says in John 4, that if you worship God in Spirit and Truth those are the ones whom God is seeking. So, it's a two way thing that God is doing.

This last week Harry Curley died, a long time member in the Church of God, worked in Pasadena at Ambassador College, and was serving the Christian Biblical Church of God for about 15 years... I'll tell you one thing about Pasadena is nothing like it ever was. Just like we have a few here

in Hollister, we have a few down there, and a few that wherever they are, that love God and are holding to the Truth. That's what Harry Curley did. His wife died about eight years ago and he was looking forward to the time that he could just close his eyes, and when he opens them he will be able to see Cindy again, because they were very close.

Because people die, don't become maudlin or remorseful over it. God looks at as a harvest. Since the harvest comes every year, those who die before the resurrection are held, as we would say, in the granary.

We need to understand how much God the Father, along with Christ, are working with His people. Since He's given us free moral agency, He doesn't run our lives. If we ask God to lead us, He will lead us. When we sin, He will convict us of sin so we can repent.

When we die in the faith we have this; Hebrews 12:22: "But you have come to Mount Zion... [that's in heaven above] ...and to *the* city of *the* living God... [coming down from the Father] ...heavenly Jerusalem; and to an innumerable company of angels; *to the* joyous festival gathering; and to *the* Church of *the* Firstborn, registered in *the* Book of Life in heaven; and to God, *the* Judge of all; and to *the* spirits of the just who have been perfected" (vs 22-23).

That's the whole point: *perfected!* The Greek word—'teleos'—for 'perfected' means *completion!*

Verse 24: "And to Jesus, *the* Mediator of *the* New Covenant; and to sprinkling of *the* blood of *ratification*, proclaiming superior things than *that of* Abel."

Then there's a warning right after that. The Bible alternates between instruction, warnings and encouragement, all the way through. That's the way the Bible is structured.

- How did the world and Christianity get so deceived?
- How did it happen?

Let's look at this way: There is independent free moral agency that God gives to everyone. That's why, as much as all parents like their children to do well and do what they say, it doesn't work that way because of free moral agency. We've nicknamed that IFMA!

In the world and in all human beings they have IFMA *minus* God—because they have very little of God—*plus* Satan the devil is the basic menu, ingredient or recipe for how the world became deceived. Remember, Satan never comes as an evil, evil being. *He comes very slick and very appealing to human nature!*

What is the greatest example of that that we see in the world today right now? *Christmas!* ‘Do something nice for your children.’ *Yes, lie to them!*

There was a man on one of the Fox News Channel’s programs that was teaching the children in school that Santa Claus doesn’t exist and that Christmas really isn’t good. *He got fired!* Why? ***Because people love their lies!*** So, Satan comes along with something you love to do: have it for the family; have it for the children. Forget about the debt when you buy all of these things. ***That’s why the world has come to where it is today!*** Let’s look at some of the names of Satan the devil:

1. god of this age or this world
2. Satan
3. prince of the power of the air

Eph. 2 tells about how all humanity is, all of us, including those who are well-intentioned. The world is filled with a mixture of good and evil, so we can say that the evil over here is all the criminals, drug addicts, all of the great sinful people. Then we have the middle ground where good sometimes prevails more than evil. Then you have the next group that wants to be law-abiding. Then you have the next group who are the ‘Christians’ who *think* that they’re on the way to salvation. That’s the spread in the world.

Ephesians 2:1: “Now, you were dead in trespasses and sins”—unless you repent, are baptized and receive the Holy Spirit of God, you are the *walking dead*, regardless of your age.

Verse 2: “In which you walked in times past according to the course of this world... [the way that the world goes] ...according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now working within the children of disobedience”—*to God!*

Regardless of how good you may have been in society, you’re still a sinner and are *walking dead* because you have ‘the law of sin and death.’ The Bible says that there’s ‘a time to be born, a time to die,’ and those who die in Christ will be in the first resurrection.

Verse 3: “Among whom also we all once... [because of repentance and baptism] ...had our conduct in the lusts of our flesh, doing the things willed by the flesh and by the mind...”

Look at all the genius people in the world who don’t know the Truth.

- Who was, in this age, recognized as the smartest man ever? *Einstein!*
- Did he know God? *No!*
- Did he have thoughts about God? *Yes!*
- Did he discover a lot of very interesting things about mathematics, the universe, light, etc.? *Yes!*

But he was one of the walking dead!

“...and were by nature *the* children of wrath, even as the rest of *the world*” (v 3). Think of this, since we’re going to get an historical view of how this comes about, ***God only dealt with the chosen ones. Sometimes it was one man!*** Everything that we do goes back to that one man, *who was Abraham!*

More names of Satan the devil:

4. the devil
5. the ancient serpent
6. the wicked one
7. the evil one

It’s very interesting that in the Old Testament Satan is not brought out like it is in the New Testament. We know about Adam and Eve (Gen. 2 & 3). There’s hardly anything about it, not even an explanation concerning how the Flood came about, because men and women were so wicked that God killed everything except for those He saved in the Ark, of human beings and various animals

The next time we find out about Satan—and quite a bit about Satan—is in the book of Job. Satan^[transcriber’s correction] likes to deal with people who are self-righteous. And the unspoken story of Job is that Satan was influencing—after the destruction of his sons and daughters and so forth—to make him believe that his righteousness was as good as God’s or maybe even a little greater.

So, the end of the story tells you about repentance. Regardless of how bad it was, or could be, there can be repentance and salvation. That’s the important thing. Job challenged God to come and speak to him, so God took him up on it.

Job 38:1: “Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, ‘Who *is* this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?’” (vs 1-2).

You want to talk to Me, v 3: “Now gird up your loins like a man; for I will demand of you, and you shall answer Me.”

Anyone who challenges God is going to answer it. Then God goes through how He did

everything with the creation and so forth.

Job 40:1: “And the LORD answered Job and said, ‘Shall he who contends with the Almighty instruct *Him*?...’”

Think about this in relationship to changing doctrines or taking away from the Bible, or adding to the Bible. We will see all of those things as we go along, and see how it developed in the New Testament Church: when these doctrines started to come in, and when they came to the full.

“...He who reproves God, let him answer it” (v 2). So, Job was in what you would say today, ‘deep doodoo!’

Verse 3: “And Job answered the LORD and said, ‘Behold, I am vile!...’” (vs 3-4). *That’s what human nature is:*

Jeremiah 17:9: “The heart *is* deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?”

Isn’t that something? What is the most deceitful thing you can think of, though you’re looked upon as ‘good’ in the world? ***That you think you’re better than God!***

Job 40:4: “...What shall I answer You? I will lay my hand on my mouth.... [it’s about time] ...Once I have spoken; but I will not answer; yea, twice, but I will proceed no further” (vs 4-5).

Verse 6: “ And the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, ‘Gird up your loins now like a man. I will demand of you, and you declare unto Me. **Will you even annul My judgment?....**” (vs 6-8).

Think about that in relationship to the Word of God, and in relationship to what modern ‘Christianity’ and the Catholics do to the Word of God. ***They annul the Word of God!***

How do they do that? *The Catholics say that’s the old Law!* But they don’t keep anything in the New Testament! Protestants say that everything in the Old Testament is fulfilled; you don’t have to even read it. How do you study the New Testament with all the quotes from the Old Testament?

This shows the contradiction of the human mind and the wickedness of it.

“...Will you condemn Me so that you may be righteous?” (v 8).

Someone recently said, ‘I don’t know if I can understand the Old Testament. That’s bloody, there’s war, death and killing.’ I answered and said, ‘You’re right! But what do you think is happening today? Look at what has happened from 1900 to this

time: Spanish/American War, WWI, WWII, Korean War, Vietnam War, Iraq War (twice), Afghanistan and all the wars that are going on right now. All the Old Testament is doing and recording is showing that human nature is that way under Satan the devil.’

So, God says, ‘Job, if you’re so righteous now, v 10: “Deck yourself now with majesty and excellency, and array yourself with glory and beauty.”

In other words, ‘Job, just sit there and think about it and manifest yourself in glory.’ Of course, he couldn’t do that.

Verse 11: “Cast abroad the rage of your wrath; and behold everyone who is proud, and abase him. Look on everyone *who is* proud, *and* bring him low; and tread down the wicked in their place. Hide them in the dust together; *and* bind their faces in darkness. **Then**... [remember all the *ifs* and *thens* in the Bible] ...I will also confess to you that your own right hand can save you” (vs 11-14).

Job 42:1—let’s see the end of the story: “And Job answered the LORD and said, ‘I know that You can do all things, and *that* no thought can be withheld from You” (vs 1-2). *That’s something!*

Look at all the good people in the world, are their thoughts good? ***or*** Do they still have a lot of evil? Hatred? *Yes, indeed!* You can probably find some atheists who would be considered by the world good citizens, intellectual, helpful to society, ***but God knows the thoughts!*** What does God say of those who say there is no God? *They’re fools!*

“...‘I know that You can do all things, and that no thought can be withheld from You.’”

Verse 5: “I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; ***but now my eye sees You.*** Therefore, I abhor *myself*, and repent in dust and ashes” (vs 5-6).

Job was blessed with double the amount of things that he had lost. Blessed with some of the most beautiful daughters that the world has ever seen. ***All because he repented!***

So, when things get down low to a very bad level and it looks like everything is lost and there’s no hope:

- ***IF*** there is repentance
- ***IF*** there is forgiveness

THEN *things can be changed!*

We need to remember that. But in the Old Testament it doesn’t reveal Satan the devil very much. We have Job, then we have David, just one time with David (1-Chron. 21). What did Satan inspire David to do? *Number the children of Israel*

so he could count how many he had in his army! And how great he was! Remember that the plague came and what did it do because of that decision? Seventy thousand Israelites were destroyed in the plague!

How God did that and who He chose to bring it upon, I don't know. But you can look at government today and see the choices of the leaders of those governments and see how they lead to trouble.

Look at Macron of France, some call him 'Macaroni.' Look what he's done! He's going to bring about a lessening of 'global warming' by making everyone pay 20% more for fuel. All the people got out all their torches, fires and it's still burning and they're looting. They can find Macron!

Then there are two chapters that tell us about Satan: Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28. But it doesn't tell us what he does like the New Testament. Since in the Old Testament no one could tell the difference between the true God and Satan who is the god of this world, because you start out with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the 12 sons.

Now you come to the time that God is going to bring them out of Egypt, so God sends Moses and Aaron. What do they do? *They go in and challenge Pharaoh!* Pharaoh said, 'Who is the Lord that I obey His voice?'

God told Moses, 'You tell Aaron to take his staff and throw it on the ground and it will become a serpent.' So, the magicians of Egypt, the religious leaders led by Satan—don't you think they had a satanic religion?—took their staffs and they became serpents.

If you just looked at that one you would say that it looks like a draw, except that Aaron's serpent swallowed of the serpents of the magicians!

Then the next one God told Moses to go out in the morning, because the god of Egypt was the Pharaoh and the cobra, they all had a ritual that at sunrise they would go down to the water because the Nile River was also a god. They had many gods! So, when Pharaoh comes out in the morning and Moses was to tell him, 'Let my people go.' He won't let them go, so Moses was to strike the water with his rod and it will become blood.

What did the magicians do? *They took their rods and struck the water it also became blood!* So, you think this is an even tie. Then the third one is that Moses was to again go to Pharaoh and tell him, 'Let my people go, and if you don't let them go I, God, am going to fill the land with frogs.'

The frogs from the Nile River are big, and just imagine the millions of frogs that came. But the magicians were able to do the frogs.

So, if you're looking at it, you're saying, 'Who is God? Look at what the magicians have with their gods.'

Then the fourth plague came, and God told Moses and say, 'Let MY people go and if you don't let them go I'm going to fill the whole country with lice!' Lice everywhere! In your clothes, in your hair, in your bed, on the house, on the walls and ceiling. Flying around outside! So, the magicians went to do the same thing and couldn't do it. What did they tell Pharaoh? *This is the finger of God!*

Then you have all of the other plagues going up to the death of the firstborn. Those bring out the works of Satan. Isn't it interesting that in Egypt the word 'Satan'—in that account in Exodus—is not used?

Let's see what happens when you have a religion that gives or offers lip-service to God, but Satan is working behind the scenes—*always!* That's what happened to the children of Israel. Let's see the conclusion of what happens when that takes place.

- How far can things go and people think that they are right?
- That they are doing it to God?
- What do you think would happen to you if went up to one of the most devoted Catholics in the world and you tell them that everything that they are doing is not found in the Bible?
- It's not true?
- It's pagan?
- It comes from Satan the devil?
- And most of the things that you do in your church have nothing to do with the Bible!

Here's what happens when ministers say what God says—and He hasn't said—*the people believe it!* Here's what happens, and this is part of the leftover of Manasseh.

Jeremiah 7:1: "The Word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, 'Stand in the gate of the LORD'S house, and proclaim there this Word, and say, "Hear the Word of the LORD, all Judah, who enter in at these gates to worship the LORD."'" (vs 1-2).

- Do the Catholics think that they're worshipping the Lord?
- Do the Protestants think that what they're doing is worshipping the Lord?
- Do the Pentecostals think what they're doing is worshipping the Lord?

- Do the pagans think what they're doing is worshipping God? *True! Satan!*

Verse 3: "Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, 'Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place.'" *Always repentance!*

When we get to Acts 2, what is the first thing that Peter said in his first sermons? *Repent!*

Verse 4: "Do not trust in lying words... [you've got to know the Truth] ...saying, 'The temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD are these'"—*meaning that: whatever is done at the temple, because it's the temple of God, it's got to be right if one of the priests or the king says that it's right.*

John 8 says, which we've read many times, 'We're of Abraham...' It doesn't matter who you are, it matters what your attitude is in relationship to God.

Verse 5: For **if** you thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; **if** you thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbor; **if** you do not oppress the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and **do not shed innocent blood in this place**, nor walk after other gods to your hurt" (vs 5-6),

What did Manasseh do in the temple area? ***He put in idols and booths for homosexuals in the temple area!*** That sounds a little bit like San Francisco!

Verse 7: "**Then** I will cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, forever and ever. Behold, you trust in lying words that cannot profit" (vs 7-8).

What is it that people believe? *We're going to be spared from the Tribulation, because we belong to this or that church! And the secret rapture and take us away! Never happen!*

When I die, my soul goes to heaven! And like with the recent funeral with George H.W. Bush, his son said—it was very touching and people get all emotional and cry—'Now he's in heaven holding his wife's hand again.' But there he was in the coffin in front of everybody!

I don't say that to make fun of it. But I'm just asking: How much do they believe that? *To the very depths of their being to cry over it!* It's so emotional and meaningful in their life. ***But they don't realize that they've been taught the wrong thing, because there is a Satan the devil!***

Verse 9: "Will you steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn

incense to Baal, and walk after other gods whom you do not know; and then come and stand before Me in this house which is called by My name, and say, "We are delivered to do all these abominations"? Has this house, which is called by My name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, even I have seen it," says the LORD. 'But now go to My place which was in Shiloh, where I set My name at the first...' (vs 9-12)—*before the temple was ever built!*

Do you remember what happened in the days of Samuel? Hophni and the Phinehas, the sons of Eli, caused it to be destroyed and lose the Ark to the Philistines and didn't get it back to Jerusalem for over 20 years! ***God means what He says!*** And God says, 'I'm going to cast you out of my sight!'

Verse 23: "But this thing I commanded them, saying, '**Obey My voice**...' [everything with God depends on those three words] ...**and I will be your God, and you shall be My people; and walk in all the ways that I have commanded you, so that it may be well with you.**" That's what God wants!

A lot of people say that the commandments are harsh, mean and evil. *No they're not! The wages of sin are harsh, mean and evil!* But if you keep the Laws of God even in the letter of the Law, what do you have? *A certain amount of blessings!* That's what is so deceitful about Protestantism, because they do a good number of things that are in the Bible and they get a blessing because of it.

Satan knows that, because God is no respecter of persons, so they think they're right! They're trapped with Sunday, and then comes all the pagan holidays.

Verse 28: "But you shall say to them, 'This is a nation which does not obey the voice of the LORD their God, nor receives correction; Truth has perished, and is cut off from their mouth. Cut off your hair and throw it away, and take up a lamentation on the high places. For the LORD has rejected and forsaken the generation of His wrath'" (vs 28-29).

How far away are we from this today? There is a might struggle going on politically and theologically. People might ask, 'Why did God pick Donald Trump to be President? Look at all the sins that he has!'

Well, in such a sinful generation, could they elect someone who is perfect? *No! But at least he's trying to do things to keep the nation from falling apart!* There is one thing that none of them understand, which is right here:

Verse 30: "For the children of Judah have

done evil in My sight,' says the LORD. 'They have set their abominations in the house which is called by My name, to pollute it. They have built the high places of Tophet, which *is* in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire...' (vs 30-31)—*offering a sacrifice to Molech!*

Did you know that's coming in America soon? They're working to allow mothers to exterminate the life of their babies up to two years. Will that ever get through? *I tell you, if the maniacs of the Democrats get in, yes, and they'll rejoice in it!*

"...which I did not command *them*, nor did it *even* come into My mind. Therefore, behold, the days come,' says the LORD, 'that it shall no more be called Tophet, nor the valley of the son of Hinnom, **but the Valley of Slaughter**. For they shall bury in Tophet, until there is no place *left*'" (vs 31-32).

The final of that is going to be Revelation and the final battle!

(go to the next track)

Let's see what happens when Satan deceives the whole world. We will find that sooner or later the whole nation gets involved. If you look at America today, with all of those who believe in law-keeping and so forth, more and more are dying. They did not even have a live veteran who survived the bombing in Hawaii in WWII; not one veteran alive. Everyday so many people die and so many are born. The whole population of kids going back 20, 30 40 years began bringing in all of the liberal—communitistic/satanic—ways of living and thinking.

That's why the Democrats were depending on a 'big blue wave.' In Southern California they had tsunami; they wiped out nine seats altogether. Think about what it's going to be in 2020. We don't know what's going to happen, but the forces of evil are dedicated to destroying the President and everything he stands for, and all the people who agree with him. This is a titanic struggle going on in America.

- How far will they go?
- Will there be any pushback from those who believe in law and order?
- Will there be any pushback from those who believe in the Constitution?

The Constitution has a lot of Godly principles in it, because those who wrote were praying every day in the writing of it, to get it right so that there would not be an oppressive government and an oppressive state religion. But none of them thought that Islam would come and take control.

How bad will the behavior of people be? And we have all these young ones coming up now who don't believe in God, but they believe in lawlessness! Anything they do, as long as it's good and it feels good, that's fine. Who cares if you live or die! Who cares! They just want their fun, their sex, their drugs and their money!

Well, that will involve the whole population. Look at Europe, look at France today. How would you like to be the leader of France, Macron gets shoved out and you get in there and take over; what would you do? *The first thing you would do with Truth, BANG! someone would say that's not Constitutional!*

I want you to understand that God does not bring His judgments because of the few. He can handle that individually. He brings His judgment because of the whole (Jer. 18)! *Any nation!*

Ezekiel 22:17: "And the Word of the LORD came to me, saying, 'Son of man, the house of Israel has become dross to Me. All of them *are* bronze, and tin, and iron, and lead, in the middle of the furnace; they are even the dross of silver. Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD, 'Because you have all become dross, behold, therefore, I will gather you into the middle of Jerusalem. *As they* gather silver, and bronze, and iron, and lead, and tin, into the middle of the furnace, to blow the fire on it to melt *it*, so I will gather *you* in My anger and in My fury, and I will cast *you in* and melt you....'" (vs 17-21).

That's talking about the destruction of Jerusalem in 586-585 B.C. and the prophecy of the one in 70 A.D.

"...And I will gather you and blow on you with the fire of My wrath, and you shall be melted in the midst of it. As silver is melted in the furnace, so you shall be melted in the midst of it; and you shall know that I the LORD have poured out My fury upon you.' And the Word of the LORD came to me, saying, 'Son of man, say to her, "You *are* a land that is not cleansed, nor rained upon in the day of indignation'" (vs 21-24).

Look at all the things that have been happening this last month in America.

- floods
- fires (especially in California)

The only good thing about the fires is that they're burning up all of the marijuana plantations in the forest. But the greedy one in Sacramento are now authorizing who is going to plant it and grow it. A little money coming back to the old polluted politicians for granting the license to grow the marijuana.

What's going to happen with the new Governor Newsome? *Look at San Francisco! He was major of San Francisco!* Now they're having it that no city can say they don't want marijuana. So, you're going to have a whole population all mixed up with all their other sins, now all in stupors with marijuana. They don't know the long-term effects of it! I heard an analysis of that very thing by Michael Savage concerning Obama. Why is he so irrational today?

How do all of these things come about? Accidental? *No!*

Verse 25: "There is a conspiracy..." And they call everyone who believes in a conspiracy, 'Oh you're nuts!' *Not true!*

"...of her prophets in her midst, like a roaring lion tearing the prey. They have devoured souls; they have taken the treasure and precious things; they have made many widows in her midst. Her priests have done violence to My Law and have profaned My Holy things. They have put no difference between the Holy and the profane, and have not taught the difference between the unclean and the clean, and **they have hidden their eyes from My Sabbaths...** [that's why they're blinded by Satan] ...and I am profaned among them. Her rulers in her midst *are* like wolves tearing the prey..." (vs 25-27).

Won't you see that when Pelosi unchains everything she wants to do?

"...to shed blood and to destroy souls, to get unjust gain... [and have it put into a charitable foundation] ...And her prophets have covered themselves *with* whitewash, seeing false visions and divining lies unto them, saying, 'Thus says the Lord GOD,' when the LORD has not spoken" (vs 27-28). *The people believe them, because the people are all involved!*

We will see this later when we come to Galatians, because there was a lot of people-pleasing going on in Galatia. Paul said, 'If I please men I am no longer the servant of God.' And that's the truth of it today, was well!

Verse 29: "The people of the land have used oppression and committed robbery, and they have troubled the poor and needy. Yea, *they* have oppressed the stranger wrongfully. And **I sought for a man among them who should build up a wall for the land...** [What do you know about that?] ...and stand in the breach before Me, so that I should not destroy it. But I did not find one.... [that's how bad it gets] ...Therefore, I have poured out My fury on them. I have burned them up with the fire of My wrath. I have recompensed their own way upon their heads,' says the Lord GOD" (vs 29-31).

Let's carry that forward into the New Testament, because the same things apply. Satan the devil works the same way all the time.

The coming of Christ fulfills so many things; you can read it in *A Harmony of the Gospels!* We won't get into here. But let's see what Jesus said or did to the religious leaders. We're going to find as we get into the New Testament the Orthodox Jewish leaders in Jerusalem. We have later in the outlying areas some with the Essenes in Qumran; those are basically pagan Jews. There are pagan Jews there and out of Egypt.

Matt. 23—we find what Jesus said concerning them. It sounds a awful lot like the Old Testament. We'll just clarify a difficult Scripture in the first couple of verses. There are a lot of false prophets who come along and say that because Jesus said what the Pharisees, Sadducees and judges tell you, *you do!* So, they get off and incorporate 15th Passover, Jewish traditions, prayer shawls, prayer blankets; put a carpet on your head and God will hear your prayer more! It's the other way around, the carpet blots it out and it doesn't go up.

Matthew 23:1: "Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, saying, 'The scribes and the Pharisees have sat down on Moses' seat *as judges*'" (vs 1-2).

That goes all the way back to what Moses setup in the Old Testament: judges of 10s, 50s, 100s and 1000s. They were to go by the Word of God. You have everything there in the Old Testament showing about the judge, and it had to be based on the Word of God.

Verse 3: "Therefore, every judgment that they tell you to observe... [from the Word of God; and they were pretty faithful in making that judgment] ...observe and do. But do not do according to their works..."

What were their works? *Their traditions!* So, this is one of the elements that the Church was up against all during the ministry of Jesus Christ and then immediately afterward.

"...for they say and do not. For they bind heavy burdens and hard to bear, and lay *them* on the shoulders of men; but they will not move them with *one of* their own fingers. And they do all their works to be seen by men. They make broad their phylacteries and enlarge the borders of their garments" (vs 4-5).

I'll tell you about a little experience I had in the airport in Chicago, not O'Hare, but the other one. I get off the plane and look ahead and here's an Orthodox Jew with his hat on and his curls down the

side and his prayer shawl over his shoulders. He had his prayer book in his hand and his two little boys right with him. There he is rocking back and forth in a public place in the airport, to be seen of men!

What did Jesus say when we pray that we are to go to quiet, private place and pray. I thought, those poor kids. What's going to happen to them? Everyone was gawking at them.

Verse 6: "And they love the first place at the suppers, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and the salutations in the marketplaces, and to be called by men 'Rabbi, Rabbi.' But you are not to be called Rabbi..." (vs 6-8).

Jesus was called Rabbi occasionally, and there's the book out *Jesus the Rabbi* by Dwain Miller.

"...for one is your Master, the Christ, and all of you are brethren. Also, do not call *anyone* on the earth your Father... [in a religious sense] ...for one is your Father, Who *is* in heaven" (vs 8-9). *Of course, your mother and father, you can call them mother and father, no problem with that!*

Verse 10: "Neither be called Master; for one is your Master, the Christ. But the greatest among you shall be your servant. And whoever will exalt himself shall be humbled; and whoever will humble himself shall be exalted. But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows' houses, and as a pretext you offer prayers of great length. Because of this, you shall receive *the greater judgment. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!...*" (vs 10-14)—*all the way through!*

That's the element that they were fighting. What did that element do in conjunction with the government? *Killed Christ!*

One thing you need to learn about, because everyone always asks: Who killed Christ? *The Jews can say, 'We didn't, because Pilate ordered it! But who demanded it? Pilate can say, 'Well, I didn't want a riot on my hands, so I acquiesced it, and what is one man to me? And the people can say, 'We don't want this man, crucify Him.'*

What are we looking at? *The high priest represented, in this instance of the crucifixion, **all the religions of the world!*** Jesus said that 'you are of your father the devil.' Are not all the religions of the world satanic? *Yes!*

Pilate represented *all the governments in the world!* All of the Jews who said to 'crucify Him' represented *all the people in the world,* because He had to die for all their sins. It wasn't just that little group there, because God thinks in bigger terms.

After Jesus was risen from the dead He

came and talked to the disciples and ate honey and fish. If you've never tried honey and fish, try it, it's good. He came right in the middle of them. In the account of John it says that they were in this room 'for fear of the Jews.' Why? *Because they couldn't find the body, and if they got the apostles—because they were saying that the apostles stole it away—that they would kill them!* They were there in fear and all of a sudden Jesus appeared and they were terrified, and He said, 'Peace!'

Luke 24:37: "But they were terrified and filled with fear, thinking *that* they beheld a spirit *apparition*. Then He said to them, 'Why are you troubled? And why do doubts come up in your hearts? See My hands and My feet, that it is I. Touch Me and see *for yourselves*; for a spirit does not have flesh and bones..." (vs 37-39).

Notice that He didn't say *flesh and blood*; which tells us then that a spirit being can appear as flesh and bones. Did He appear in a glorified form later on? *Yes!*

Sidebar: What are we going to be able to do when we're in the Kingdom of God? *I don't know, but we'll find out!*

"...as you see Me having.' And after saying this, He showed them *His* hands and *His* feet. But while they were still disbelieving and wondering for joy, He said to them, 'Do you have anything here to eat?' Then they gave Him part of a broiled fish and a *piece* of honeycomb. And He took these *and* ate in their presence" (vs 39-43).

I don't know what happens when a spirit being eats food, but He did!

Verse 44: "And He said to them, 'These *are* the words that I spoke to you when I was yet with you, that all *the* things which were written concerning Me in the Law of Moses and *in the* Prophets and *in the* Psalms must be fulfilled.' Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures" (vs 44-45).

- How do we understand the Scriptures? *God opens our mind!*
- What are the conditions? *Repentance! Obey My voice! Love God and keep His commandments!*

That's what it is! All the rest of our life is growing in grace and knowledge and overcoming self, sin and society. That's what it's all about.

Verse 46: "And said to them, 'According as it is written, it was necessary for the Christ to suffer, and to rise from *the* dead the third day. And in His name, repentance and remission of sins should be preached to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. For

you are witnesses of these things. And behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you; **but remain in the city of Jerusalem until you have been clothed with power from on high**” (vs 46-49).

Let’s come to the book of Acts, and we’re going to see the initial struggle between the Church and the orthodox religious authorities in Jerusalem. The Gospel was preached and taught for the first 12 years to the Jews.

That fulfills the prophecy in Zech. 12 that He’s going to save the tents of Judah first. The second fulfillment of that will be when the two witnesses come on the scene and there are those who repent. There will be a third Elijah to do the administering of baptism. The two witnesses won’t be doing that.

Here’s how the Church started. Think about this whole setting and Day of Pentecost. Three and a half years before that the ministry of Christ, all the miracles, all the healings, all the confrontation with the scribes and Pharisees.

Now here’s the promise of the Spirit on Pentecost. You go back in the Old Testament and that’s the day God spoke the Ten Commandments. All of these are fulfilled according to the Word of God.

The reason that the Holy Spirit was given and they all spoke in different languages, and each one, regardless of where they came from, heard the Word of God in their own language. This is also a prophecy by God that the Word of God would then go to all nations.

When God does something it’s greater than what we think. What do you think that the disciples supposed when Jesus told them that they’re going ‘preach from Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth,’ the end of the earth.

How much of the world did they know? Who knows? *They knew enough!* He told them to teach them all things that He had commanded. So, here it is, this is a fantastic day. If we can look at Jerusalem where the temple was, filled with all of these people, and God’s Spirit. Imagine how many angels were around there, because the activity going on spiritually was greater than the activity going on physically.

When Peter preached the sermon it was straight from the Word of God. He gave part of it here. He said that they weren’t drunk that it was only the third hour:

Acts 2:16: “But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel: ““And it shall come to

pass in the last days,” says God, “*that* I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh...” (vs 16-17).

At that time it was only on those in Jerusalem who were there that the Spirit was poured out upon, and directly to the apostles, not to the people generally. But they could hear the words inspired by the Holy Spirit. *This is a prophecy into the Millennium! See how God’s Word just expands and expands!*

“...and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; and even upon My servants and upon My handmaids will I pour out My Spirit in those days, and they shall prophesy; and I will show wonders in the heaven above...” (vs 17-19).

- Did they have wonders when Jesus died? *Yes, it was dark for three hours!*
- Was there a great earthquake? *Yes!*
- Did it rip the veil in two from top to bottom? *Yes!*

And the Sanhedrin building, where they had the final judgment of Jesus was so disheveled and nearly destroyed, that that was the assembly of the Sanhedrin in that room and they went some other place.

“...and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and vapors of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood, before *the* coming of the great and awesome day of *the* Lord” (vs 19-20).

So, the apostles were thinking that this is like the coming of the Lord. They had first thought that the Kingdom of God was going to be pretty quick. Look at all that was going on. They wanted to know when Israel would get the Kingdom. What did He tell them? *You just go to Jerusalem and do what I said, that’s in the hands of the Father!* He couldn’t tell them that it would be over 2,000 years! How do you think they would have responded?

Then Peter explained all about it and that David was still in his grave. Now we come into the real beginning of the expansion of the Church:

- the foundation of the Church: Jesus Christ, His life death and resurrection
- the 12 apostles
- later the Apostle Paul to finish the Word of God

We will see that every step of the way they had foes, resistance. At first it was really quite something.

Verse 36: “Therefore, let all *the* house of Israel know with full assurance that God has made

this *same* Jesus, Whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.' Now, after hearing *this*, they were cut to the heart; and they said to Peter and the other apostles, 'Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?' Then Peter said to them, 'Repent and be baptized each one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for *the* remission of sins, and you yourselves shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit'" (vs 36-38).

So, the Holy Spirit came to activate the apostles to preach in all those different languages, but the Holy Spirit was given to any of the people except those who repented and had laying on of hands.

Acts 3—Peter and John were going in the temple and there was a man who had been there for years. They healed him. The man was asking for money, but they said they didn't have money, but stand up in the name of Jesus and walk. He was jumping, walking and leaping going into the temple!

Don't you think that every Jew who came to the temple knew who that man was and what happened to him? *It was a great miracle!* They all gathered around and wanted to know about this. Here's what Peter said:

Acts 3:19: "Therefore, repent and be converted in order that your sins may be blotted out, so that *the* times of refreshing may come from *the* presence of the Lord." *This stirred up a storm!*

Acts 4:1—here's the first resistance: "Now, as they were speaking to the people, the priests and *the* captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, being dismayed because they were teaching the people, and preaching through Jesus the resurrection from *the* dead. And they arrested them..." (vs 1-3). *How far after the resurrection this is, we don't know!*

"...and put *them* in *the* hold until the morning... [a small jail cell] ...for it was already evening. But many of those who had heard the message believed, and the number of men was about five thousand" (vs 3-4).

Think of the 3,000, 5,000 and then thousands and thousands more. They were really stirring up a storm!

- Satan didn't like it
- the scribes and Pharisees didn't like it

We're going to see as we do this survey of Acts that the officials of Jerusalem and Judea had three powerful witnesses given to them, and they didn't repent.

Verse 5: "Now, it came to pass in the morning *that* their rulers and elders and scribes were assembled together in Jerusalem, and Annas, the

high priest, and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and as many as were of *the* high priest's lineage. And after placing them in the midst..." (vs 5-7).

Here is the whole assembly, all the big wigs and important people, high priests, scribes, Sadducees, Pharisees.

"...they inquired, 'By what power or in what name did you do this?'.... [he had been there for many years crippled] ...Then Peter, filled with *the* Holy Spirit, said to them, 'Rulers of the people and elders of Israel, if we are examined this day as to a good work *done to the* infirm man, by what *power* he has been cured, be it known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarean, Whom you crucified, *but* Whom God has raised from *the* dead, by Him this *man* stands before you whole'" (vs 7-10). *Then he gives them a little instruction about Jesus!*

Verse 11: "This is the Stone that was set at naught by you, the builders, which has become the Head of *the* corner. And there is no salvation in any other..." (vs 11-12).

He's telling that that their thoughts of salvation through Judaism are worthless, as well as all other religions.

"...for neither is there another name under heaven which has been given among men, by which we **must** be saved.'.... [necessary] ...Now, when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlettered and uninstructed men..." (vs 12-13)—*meaning they didn't go to any rabbinic schools!*

"...they were amazed; and they took note of them, that they had been with Jesus. Yet, seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they said nothing to oppose *them*" (vs 13-15).

What are you going to do about it? Were you the one? *Yep! I was the one!* What happened? *They looked at me and said to jump up and walk, and I came in yelling and screaming into the temple!* That was a wonderful thing, too bad you weren't there and you missed a great deal!

Verse 15: "But after commanding them to go outside the Sanhedrin, they conferred with one another, saying, 'What shall we do to these men? For a remarkable miracle has indeed come to pass through them *and is* manifest to all those living in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny *it*'" (vs 15-16).

It's like when they came to Jesus and asked Him 'by what authority do You do these things?' He said, 'I'll tell you, but you first have to answer me a question. The baptism of John, was it of heaven? *or* men? *They got together and reasoned. If we say of*

heaven He's going to say, 'why didn't you repent.' If we say of men the people are going to stone us. So, they said very intelligently, 'We don't know.'

Verse 17: "But that it may spread no further among the people, let us warn them with a *severe* threat not to speak any more to anyone in this name.' And after summoning them, they commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered *and* said to them, 'Whether it is right before God to listen to you rather than to God, you judge, for we cannot but speak what we have seen and heard.' And after further threatening them, they let them go, finding no means by which they might punish them, because of the people, for all were glorifying God on account of what had been done" (vs 17-21).

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