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NEW YEAR

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"THE NEW YOU FOR THE NEW YEAR"

IF YOU COULD CHANGE SOMETHING ABOUT YOUR PHYSICAL APPEARANCE, WHAT WOULD IT BE? TALLER? THINNER? YOUNGER? BLONDE? NOSE, HAIR, TEETH - WHAT? SOME OF THESE WE CAN CHANGE, SOME WE CANNOT. WHAT ABOUT SPIRITUAL CHANGES? ARE THERE HABITS WE MAY DROP OR PICK UP THIS YEAR THAT WILL HELP OUR SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT? LET US CONSIDER SOME IDEAS FOR THE COMING YEAR.

A NEW DIRECTION - MATTHEW 7:13-14

(2 Cor. 5:17)

Two Gates, Groups, Goals,

Remains 323 To 324
BROADWAY HAS SIGNIFICANCE OTHER THAN THE NAME OF A STREET IN NEW YORK CITY. WE ARE BORN ON THAT WAY. IT IS THE WAY OF LEAST RESISTANCE THAT LEADS MEN STEADILY AND SURELY AWAY FROM GOD. ITS DESTINATION IS DESTRUCTION! IT LEADS TO GOD'S ETERNAL PRISON HOUSE. ONE DOESN'T HAVE TO BELIEVE IT OR EVEN LIKE IT TO GO THAT WAY - YOU ARE ALREADY THERE! BY CONTRAST THE NARROW WAY IS TALKING ABOUT SOMETHING OTHER THAN ITS DIMENSION. THE GREEK WORD FOR NARROW CARRIES THE IDEA OF TROUBLE, AFFLICTION, TRIBULATION. (II COR. 4:8, 7:5) THE POINT IS THAT THIS WAY IS NOT EASY. THOSE WHO FOLLOW JESUS MAY EXPECT AFFLICTION. THE ROAD IS NOT EASY BUT IT IS BOTH EXCELLENT AND EXPECTED WITH ETERNAL BENEFITS! THE NEW DIRECTION LEADS TO A NEW DESTINATION. (REV. 21:1-5) Change Direction = Conversion!

from above
Dest. 3:10

II. A NEW DESIRE - I PETER 2:2

IN THE NATURAL WORLD, THE GREATER ONES DESIRES AND THE MORE REFINED HIS TASTE, THE HARDER IT IS TO FIND SATISFACTION. THE FLESH NEVER CHANGES AND IS NEVER SATISFIED. IT WANTS MORE NO MATTER MUCH IT ALREADY HAS. (TEN MILLION DOLLARS CRAVES 20 MILLION, ONE KIND OF CAR CRAVES SOMETHING FINER, ONE HUNDRED ACRES DESIRES ONE THOUSAND ACRES.)

Isaac

ESAU
JACOB

CAM
ABEL

- 2 -

Post-Conversion

desires:

(1) Bible

(2) Church

(3) Witness

4. Goals

THE FLESH ALWAYS WANTS SOMETHING BIGGER, BETTER, BRIGHTER, MORE BEAUTIFUL AND USUALLY AT A BARGAIN! IN THE SPIRITUAL REALM, THE BELIEVER WILL MATURE AS HE DELIGHTS OR DESIRES A PROPER DIET AND ITS PROPER DEVELOPMENT. (THE WORD DESIRE IN THE TEXT APPEARS MOST OFTEN IN THE NEW TESTAMENT WHEN DESCRIBING HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS NOT MATERIAL THINGS (PHILIPPIANS 1:8, 2:26, II TIMOTHY 1:4, I THESS. 3:6.) THE IDEA IS THAT OF LONGING TO SEE SOMEONE.

III. A NEW DYNAMIC - EPHESIANS 5:18

THE GREAT CONFLICT IN THE BELIEVERS LIFE HAS TO DO WITH CONTROL. WHO OR WHAT WILL CONTROL HIS LIFE. THE TERMS OF THE TEXT ARE INTERESTING. PICTURE A MAN INTOXICATED FROM STRONG DRINK WHO IS LIVING A DIFFERENT KIND OF LIFE THAN IS NORMAL OR USUAL. (1) THE MAN OF MEAK AND QUIET DISPOSITION WHEN CONTROLLED BY ALCOHOL MIGHT READILY FIGHT OR SING OR DO SOMETHING DANGEROUS BECAUSE ALCOHOL TRANSFORMS THE PERSON INTO AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT KIND OF PERSON. HE IS DIFFERENT NOT BECAUSE OF WHAT HE IS BUT BECAUSE OF THE POWER TO WHICH HE HAS SUBMITTED HIMSELF AND THE CONTROL IT MANIFESTS OVER HIS MIND AND BODY. THEREFORE, A MAN MAY YIELD HIMSELF TO THE CONTROL OF WINE AND FIND THAT IT CHANGES HIS LIFE AND CHARACTER. HE SPEAKS, WALKS AND ACTS DIFFERENTLY BECAUSE HE IS UNDER THE CONTROL OF SOMETHING OTHER THAN HIS NORMAL SELF. SO THE MAN WHO YIELDS HIS LIFE TO THE CONTROL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT FINDS THAT GOD PRODUCES IN HIM A KIND OF WALK AND TALK THAT IS DIFFERENT. IN ONE SENSE OF THE WORD, ALCOHOL IS SATAN'S STIMULUS. IT IS USED TO CELEBRATE AND RELAX, TO WIND DOWN OR WIND UP. LIKE WINE, THE SPIRIT FILLING PRODUCES CONDUCT THAT IS DIFFERENT. IT QUIETS FEARS, LOOSENS THE TONGUE, REDUCES THE FEAR OF FAILURE AND DANGER. THIS CONTROLLED CHRISTIAN CONDUCT IS NOT FOR A FEW ELITE BUT FOR ALL. SPIRIT FILLING IS NOT ACCORDING TO FEELING BUT ACCORDING TO FAITH.

WHEN WE ACKNOWLEDGE THAT WE ARE NOT NOW FILLED AND WHEN WE CONFESS OUR SINS AND ACCEPT BY FAITH THAT HE WILL DO WHAT HE HAS PROMISED TO DO.

IV. A NEW DESIGN - PROVERBS 3:5-6

Malcolm ACCORDING TO JEREMIAH 10:23, WE DO NOT HAVE THE CAPACITY TO PLAN OUR LIVES IN A GOD ORDAINED DIRECTION. IS THERE SUCH A THING AS DIVINE DIRECTION? (PSALM 32:8, 37:23)

MANY OF US SAY WE WANT TO KNOW GOD'S WILL AND DIRECTION BUT TOO FEW SEEK IT! (THE STORY IS TOLD OF AN ARCHITECT WHO WAS HIRED TO DESIGN A CERTAIN SPECIAL HOME FOR A VERY WEALTHY CLIENT. AT EVERY PLANNING SESSION THE ARCHITECT'S IDEAS WERE DOWN-PLAYED WHILE THE OWNER INSISTED ON DESIGN AND BUILDING IN A CERTAIN WAY. THE ARCHITECT SOON DISCOVERED THAT THE CLIENT WAS NOT SEEKING HIS SERVICE BUT HIS SANCTION OF THEIR PLAN!)

HOW DOES GOD GUIDE US? IS THE GIDEON/FLEECE THE BEST PROCEDURE? IN MY OPINION SUCH A PROCEDURE IS A MANIFESTATION OF FEEBLE NOT STRONG FAITH! THE LORD USES VARIOUS INGREDIENTS TO DIRECT HIS CHILDREN. VERSES IN THE BIBLE COUPLED WITH THE INNER VOICE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT'S DEEPENING CONVICTION OF A CERTAIN COURSE OF ACTION. (ROMANS 8:14) THE WORD OF GOD, PRAYER, INFORMATION, REASON, COUNSEL WITH OLDER MORE MATURE BELIEVERS ALL GO TOGETHER TO DETERMINE THE LORD'S DIRECTION IN OUR LIFE. *View of spiritually mature friends*

V. NEW DANGERS - JUDGES 5:8

DEBORAH, THE FIRST WOMAN JUDGE, WAS ALSO A SINGER AND THE TEXT RECORDS HER SONG. IT IS A SONG OF GREAT SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE FOR IT REFERS TO THE TIME WHEN GOD DELIVERED ISRAEL FROM HER ENEMIES. THE NATION TOOK TO ITSELF "NEW GODS" AND OFTEN THEY WERE SENSUAL IN NATURE. NEW GODS PLACED NEW PRIORITIES ON THE LIFE OF

THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL. IT ALSO BROUGHT IN A SECULAR MENTALITY WHERE SPIRITUAL VALUES ERODE IN ANY ERA, THE BELIEVER HAS TWO PRIMARY DANGER AREAS:

(1) WHAT WE BELIEVE - DOCTRINE

THE CULTS AND THE CRAZIES MAY THREATEN THE CHURCH ON THE FRINGE BUT THE REAL DANGER IS SEDUCTION. SELFISHNESS TAKING PRECEDENT OVER SACRIFICE. ((A FRIEND OF MINE WHO TRAVELS THE COUNTRY ON A REGULAR BASIS SAYS THAT MANY CHURCH SERVICES HAVE MOVED FROM THE PREACHING AND TEACHING THE DOCTRINES OF THE WORD OF GOD TO "FIXIT" MINISTRIES. PEOPLE COME TO CHURCH TO GET THEIR FAMILY FIXED, THEIR PERSONAL LIFE FIXED, TO MEND ALL HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS AND HAVE LITTLE OR NO CONCERN FOR WHAT THEY BELIEVE. IN SO DOING THEY BECOME TARGETS OF SATAN TO BE SWEEPED AWAY BY EVERY WIND OF DOCTRINE.))

(2) HOW WE BEHAVE - DEPARTMENT

TO MANY PEOPLE, THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO DIFFERENCE IN THE BEHAVIOR OF CHRISTIANS AND NON-CHRISTIANS. IT SEEMS TO BE A PARADOX IN OUR SOCIETY. THE RAPID INCREASE AND INVOLVEMENT OF OUR GENERATION IN RELIGIOUS THINGS HAS MADE LITTLE OR NO IMPACT ON THE MORAL DECLINE. GEORGE GALLUP, SR. SAYS IN AN ARTICLE: "THERE IS LITTLE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THOSE WHO GO TO CHURCH AND THOSE WHO DON'T!" SOMEONE HAS SPOKEN OF THE FOUR C'S TO SPIRITUAL SHIPWRECK: (1) COMFORT (2) CASUAL (3) CARELESS (4) CASTAWAY. THE TEXT OF I CORINTHIANS 9:27 DOES NOT SAY CAST OFF OR OUT BUT CASTAWAY. IT IS POSSIBLE TO BE SAVED AND NOT FIT FOR SERVICE! THE CHURCH SUFFERS FROM SATAN'S SUBTLETY OF SLEEP. ACCORDING TO ROMANS 13:11-13 THE CHURCH TODAY MIGHT BE CALLED "THE LATTER DAY CHURCH OF THE SATISFIED SAINTS."

Revelation

VI. A NEW DOXOLOGY - ~~ROMANS~~ 5:9

EVERYONE HAS A SONG TO SING. IN LARGE MEASURE, THE WORLD IS SINGING ABOUT DISAPPOINTED LOVE. MANY RELIGIOUS TUNES ARE SUBJECTIVE AND NOT OBJECTIVE IN NATURE. THAT IS, IT IS MAN'S EXPERIENCE AND NOT GOD'S GLORY THAT IS THE DOMINANT THEME. HOLY HYMNOLOGY IS NOT A SUBJECT OF WIDE INTEREST. (Possible to "Sing" heresy as well as preach it!)

QUESTION: WHOSE SONG ARE YOU SINGING? HOW ARE YOU SINGING IT?

ALLAN BLOOM IN THE CLOSING OF THE AMERICAN MIND HAS A CHAPTER ENTITLED MUSIC. IN HIS OPENING STATEMENT HE CHARACTERIZES OUR TIME AS AN AGE OF MUSIC THAT HAS BECOME AN ADDICTION TO OUR GENERATION. IT IS AVAILABLE EVERYWHERE ALL THE TIME. IN THE HOME, CAR, CONSCIENCE, MUSIC VIDEOS, TELEVISION CHANNELS, WHEREVER YOU STOP IT IS THERE. HE SUGGESTS THAT ROCK MUSIC IS NOT ONLY TOO LOUD BUT IT APPEALS TO THE RAWEST, BASEST INSTINCTS OF HUMANKIND. HIS CONCLUSIONS ARE A BIT FRIGHTENING. ACCORDING TO II COR. 5:17 THE BELIEVER IS A NEW CREATURE IN CHRIST JESUS. NOT ONLY DOES HE HAVE A NEW VOCABULARY, A NEW LIFESTYLE, BUT A WHOLE NEW SONG! (PSALM 40:3)

- ① Brought me up
- v.2 "He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock and established my goings
- ② set me up
- ③ established my goings
- v.3. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God!
- ④ Tunes me up
- ① "mixe into the choir"
- ② "pit into the purgatory (Pew)"
- ③ "into the flock into the Rock"
- ④ Haze to Praise

THE NEW YOU FOR THE NEW YEAR

MOST PEOPLE HAVE EITHER PHYSICAL OR PSYCHOLOGICAL FEATURES THEY WOULD LIKE TO CHANGE. FOR EXAMPLE, SOME WOULD LIKE TO BE TALLER, THINNER, SMARTER, BETTER. THE BIBLE SPEAKS OF SPIRITUAL CHANGES THAT ARE NOT ONLY PREFERABLE BUT POSSIBLE.

I. A NEW DIRECTION - II Cor. 5:17

A BREAKDOWN OF THIS VERSE IS HELPFUL. "ANY MAN" SUGGESTS THAT THE NEW DIRECTION IS OPEN TO ALL. "IN CHRIST" IS A TECHNICAL TERM SPECIFYING OUR CONDITION AND POSITION SPIRITUALLY. "NEW CREATION" IS THE SAME AS THE NEW BIRTH MENTIONED IN JOHN 3, TITUS 3:5, I PETER 1:23. "OLD THINGS" REFERS TO THE OLD LIFESTYLE. THAT LIFESTYLE GIVES WAY TO A NEW LIFESTYLE THAT IS SPIRITUAL IN ITS MOTIVATION AND DIRECTION. ACCORDING TO MATTHEW 7:13-14 SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING THERE ARE TWO GATES, TWO GROUPS, AND TWO GOALS FOR ALL MEN TO PURSUE. THE TERM BROAD WAY REFERS TO THE FACT THAT ALL MEN PHYSICALLY ARE BORN ON THE BROAD WAY. IT IS THE WAY OF LEAST RESISTANCE, THE WAY OF MOST EARTH CREATURES AND IT IS POPULAR. THE PROBLEM IS ITS DESTINATION IS UNTHINKABLE! THE NARROW WAY IS THE WAY OF SPIRITUAL SECURITY AND THE WAY MEN NEED TO TRAVEL. HOWEVER, ENTRANCE TO THE NARROW WAY REQUIRES REPENTANCE, A CHANGE OF MIND AND CONVERSION, A CHANGE OF DIRECTION.

II. NEW DESIRES - I PETER 2:2

IN THE WORLD, THE GREATER ONE'S DESIRES, THE MORE REFINED HIS TASTES AND THE LESS LIKELY ONE IS OF FINDING SATISFACTION. THERE IS

ONE COMMON TRAIT OR FEATURE OF THE FLESH THAT NEVER CHANGES AND THAT IS IT IS NEVER REALLY SATISFIED AND LIFE BASED ON FLESHLY APPETITES IS ONE OF ENDLESS PURSUIT! (FOR EXAMPLE, IF A MAN OWNS 20 ROLLS ROYCES AND 5 THOUSAND ACRES OF LAND, THE FLESH REQUIRES THAT HE PURSUE 21 AND 10 THOUSAND ACRES!)

SOLOMON SAW THESE PURSUITS AS VAIN IN NATURE. BECAUSE MAN WAS MADE IN THE MORAL IMAGE OF GOD, THERE IS A SPIRITUAL SIDE TO HIS NATURE WHICH MATERIAL THINGS CANNOT SATISEY. FOR EXAMPLE, WE GROW TIRED OF THE THINGS WE WEAR LONG BEFORE THEY WEAR OUT! THIS MAY

ALSO BE TRUE OF RELATIONSHIPS. WHEN A PERSON GETS SAVED, GOD CHANGES HIS NATURE AND HIS DESIRES. IF A CONVERSION IS GENUINE IN NATURE, THERE WILL BE A FASCINATION AND HUNGER FOR THE WORD OF GOD. JUST AS A NEW-BORN BABY KNOWS HOW TO EAT, SO THE NEWBORN CHRISTIAN WILL REVEL IN THE SINCERE MILK OF THE WORD OF GOD. PROBLEMS ARISE WHEN

FOLKS WEAN THEMSELVES FROM THE WORD OF GOD AND SUBSTITUTE A SPIRITUAL DIET OF "SPIRITUAL JUNK FOOD." SOME SUFFER FROM A "DEFECTIVE OR WORN WANTED!" BOOKS AND LITERATURE EVEN BY FUNDAMENTAL AUTHORS WERE NEVER DESIGNED TO BE A SUBSTITUTE FOR THE WORD OF GOD. FILMS, VIDEOS, TAPES, SEMINARS AND THINGS ARE NOT SUBSTITUTES FOR THE WORD. SENIORITY IN CHURCH IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR THE WORD. ONE MAY BE OLD IN HIS FAITH AND COLD IN HIS EXPERIENCE.

THIS YEAR, MANY PROFESSING CHRISTIANS NEED TO DEVELOP NEW HABITS - LIKE READING THE BIBLE ALL THE WAY THROUGH, SPENDING TIME EACH DAY WITH A QUIET TIME. SOME NEED TO DIVEST THEMSELVES OF THEIR HANGOUTS AND HANGUPS AND GET SERIOUS ABOUT SPIRITUAL THINGS. IF ONE IS CONCERNED ABOUT

BECOMING A FANATIC, PLEASE KEEP IN MIND THAT IT'S EASIER TO TONE DOWN A FANATIC THAN RESURRECT A CORPSE!

III. NEW DANGERS - JUDGES 5:8

DEBRA, THE FIRST WOMAN JUDGE, WAS ALSO A SINGER AND THE TEXT RECORDS HER SONG - IT'S TERRIFIC. THIS SONG IS OF GREAT SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE FOR IT REFERS TO THE TIME WHEN GOD DELIVERED ISRAEL FROM HER ENEMIES AND ISRAEL PROMPTLY SHOWED ~~THE~~ APPRECIATION BY BACKSLIDING! THE NATION TOOK TO ITSELF "NEW GODS" AND OFTEN THEY WERE SENSUAL OR SEXUAL IN NATURE. YOU AND I, IN MANY RESPECTS, SHOW NO MORE LOVE AND LOYALTY TO GOD THAN DID ISRAEL. IT IS POSSIBLE FOR US TO DEVELOP "NEW GODS" WHICH SIPHON PRIORITIES OUT OF OUR LIVES. WHAT ABOUT COMFORT, RECREATION, SPORTS, PLEASURE, MONEY, AND ALL THE THINGS THAT MAKE UP A SECULAR SOCIETY, A SECULAR MENTALITY WHERE SELF IS FIRST AND SPIRITUAL VALUES ARE VIRTUALLY NONEXISTENT. COLSON IS CORRECT IN HIS BOOK ENTITLED "WHO SPEAKS FOR GOD?" WHEN HE SAYS COMMENTING ON THE TIMES IN WHICH WE LIVE: "FAR TOO OFTEN WE HAVE FAILED TO CLEARLY DISCERN THE TRUTH OURSELVES, LET ALONE IMPART IT TO OTHERS: WE HAVE FAILED TO EXPOSE FALSE VALUES OF OUR CULTURE TO THE PENETRATING LIGHT OF BIBLICAL REVELATION...BEFORE THE CHURCH CAN MAKE AN IMPACT ON OUR CULTURE, IT MUST BREAK WITH THE IDOLATRIES AND MISCONCEPTIONS THAT DOMINATE THE CULTURE. SECULARISM SO OFTEN DONS THE GUISE OF RELIGIOSITY, THAT THE PRIMARY DANGER IS NOT PERSECUTION BY THE CULTURE BUT SEDUCTION." OUR POTENTIAL DANGER LIES IN TWO BROAD AREAS:

(1) WHAT WE BELIEVE (DOCTRINE) IN MY OPINION IT IS NOT THE CULTS OR THE CRAZIES WHICH THREATEN THE CHURCH BUT THE SUBTLETIES OF WHAT I CALL A GOSPEL OF PSYCHOLOGY AND SELF-HELP. READ "THE SEDUCTION OF CHRISTIANITY" BY DAVE HUNT.

(2) HOW WE BEHAVE IS A FACT IN AMERICAN LIFE THAT MOST PEOPLE SEE ABSOLUTELY NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE CHRISTIAN AND THE NON-CHRISTIAN. GEORGE GALLUP, SR. CALLED IT A PARADOX IN OUR SOCIETY WHERE RELIGIOUS INTEREST AND INVOLVEMENT IS INCREASING AT A RAPID PACE BUT MAKING VERY LITTLE MORAL IMPACT ON OUR SOCIETY.... "THERE IS LITTLE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THOSE WHO GO TO CHURCH AND THOSE WHO DON'T!"

FOUR C'S TO SPIRITUAL SHIPWRECK:

(1) COMFORT

(2) CASUAL

(3) CARELESS

(4) CASTAWAY - PLEASE NOTE THAT THE TEXT IN 1. COR. 9:27 DOES NOT SAY CAST OUT

(JOHN 6:37) BUT CASTAWAY. IT IS POSSIBLE TO BE SAVED AND NOT FIT FOR SERVICE! THE CHURCH SUFFERS FROM SATAN'S SUBTLETY IN SLEEP. ROMANS 13:11-13 HAS BEEN CALLED "THE LATTER DAY CHURCH OF THE SATISFIED SAINTS." NOTICE THE PHILLIPS TRANSLATION: "WHY ALL THIS STRESS ON BEHAVIOR? BECAUSE, AS I THINK YOU HAVE REALIZED, THE PRESENT TIME IS OF HIGHEST IMPORTANCE - IT IS A TIME TO WAKE UP TO REALITY. EVERY DAY BRINGS GOD'S SALVATION NEARER. THE NIGHT IS NEARLY OVER, THE DAY HAS ALMOST DAWNED. LET US THEREFORE FLING AWAY THE THINGS THAT MEN DO IN THE DARK, LET US ARM OURSELVES FOR THE FIGHT OF THE DAY! LET US LIVE CLEANLY, AS

IN THE DAYLIGHT, NOT IN THE DELIGHTS OF GETTING DRUNK OR PLAYING WITH SEX NOR YET IN QUARRELING OR JEALOUSIES. LET US BE CHRIST'S MEN FROM HEAD TO FOOT AND GIVE NO CHANCES TO THE FLESH TO HAVE ITS FLING."

IV. NEW DOXOLOGY - REVELATION 5:9

THE SUBJECT OR TITLE OF THE SONG IN THE TEXT IS THE LAMB - JESUS. IT IS HIS BLOOD FOR WHICH MAN SINGS HIS ETERNAL GRATITUDE. LISTEN TO THE "TUNES" RELIGIOUS PEOPLE ARE SINGING TODAY. IN LARGE MEASURE SONGS ARE SUBJECTIVE, NOT OBJECTIVE IN NATURE. IT IS MAN'S EXPERIENCE AND NOT GOD'S GLORY THAT IS PREDOMINANT IN THE THEME. THESE FOLK SING THAT THE LAMB IS A GREAT SAVIOUR AND NOT THAT I AM A GREAT SOMEBODY. FEW SUBJECTS GENERATE MORE HEAT AND LESS LIGHT THAN THAT OF CHRISTIAN MUSIC AND HOLY HYMNOLOGY. THERE IS A WIDE VARIETY OF TASTES IN MUSIC WHETHER IT BE CONSERVATIVE OR CONTEMPORARY THERE IS GREAT DIFFERENCE. HOWEVER, ACCORDING TO THIS VERSE, THERE ARE SOME BASIC QUESTIONS WE NEED TO ASK OURSELVES REGARDING THE MUSIC WE SING IN CHURCH:

Chiefest
least
Saint

(1) WHOSE SONG ARE YOU SINGING?

(2) HOW ARE YOU SINGING IT? (COMMENT REGARDING STRAUSS OF CONSUMING HIGHEST PERCENTAGE OF TIME IN SERVICE WITH THE BEAT AND APPLAUSE THAT ACCOMPANIES CONCERTS. IT'S SHOWTIME AND NOT THE SAVIOUR'S TIME. HAVE YOU EVER HEARD ANYBODY APPLAUD PRAYER? SOME SINGERS KNOW HOW TO WORK AN AUDIENCE WITH HIGH HARD NOTES TO INVOKE AN ENTHUSIASTIC RESPONSE. MANY CHURCHES DO NOT REALIZE THAT IT IS JUST AS WRONG TO SING

(3) Why am I singing?

HERESY AS TO PREACH IT! (COMMENT ON NICK'S REPEATED EMPHASIS ON THE TEXT OF SONGS.)

V. NEW DESTINATION - Rev. 21:1, 2, 5

HUMAN HISTORY AND HUMANKIND BEGAN IN A GARDEN WHERE MAN FELL SPIRITUALLY. IT CONCLUDES IN A CITY WHERE MAN'S FAVORED CONDITION IS EMPHASIZED. IN THIS CONTEXT GOD DWELLS WITH HIS PEOPLE, HIS PEOPLE DWELL WITH HIM. THIS IS THE CITY FOR WHICH ABRAHAM LOOKED (HEBREWS 11:10) THE NEW THINGS REGARDING HEAVEN AND EARTH HAVE TO DO WITH RENOVATION AND REGENERATION, NOT ANIHILATION. (COMPARE II PETER 3:6 WHERE THE WORD PERISHED MEANS OF LOSS OF WELLBEING AND NOT BEING.) THE THEME OF NBC AND ALSO WEST VIRGINIA IS THAT OF "COME HOME." FOR THE BELIEVER, IT IS ALSO OUR THEME - THIS IS THE CITY WHICH WE, LIKE ABRAHAM, EXPECT TO ACHIEVE AND ARRIVE. (COMMENT ON LEWIS PAUL LEHMAN'S DEATH AT CALVARY CHURCH ON CHRISTMAS EVE BEFORE 2500 PEOPLE. THE GRAND RAPIDS PAPER HEADLINES WERE "PASTOR DIES SERVING THE LORD." HE IS HOME NOW. THIS IS OUR FINAL DESTINATION. THE QUESTIONS IS ARE YOU READY FOR THAT FINAL CALL?

OLD
NEW WORDS FOR A NEW YEAR

"YOU LEARN SOMETHING NEW EVERY DAY," WE ALL HAVE SAID THIS FROM TIME TO TIME WHETHER IT'S TRUE OR NOT. (DESCRIBE VISUAL LESSON OF GOD'S CARE FOR HIS CREATURES. CRABAPPLE TREE - SPRING, SUMMER, FALL BREAKING LIMBS, NEED FOR SHAKING - MESS - ANSWER THIS WEEK - BIRDS, BIRDS, BIRDS. NOW BOTH TREE AND BIRDS READY FOR SPRING AGAIN. GOD MADE PROVISION.)

FOR A NEW YEAR, LET US CONSIDER THREE WORDS FROM WHICH WE MAY LEARN SOME SPIRITUAL LESSONS. THE WORDS ARE: VISION - INTEGRITY - TEAMWORK.

I. VISION - PROVERBS 29:18 ^{"Where there is no vision, the people perish..." (NIV)}
^{"Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint..." (NIV)}

THE INTERPRETATION OF THIS VERSE REFERS TO A PROPHETIC VISION, THAT IS, A MESSAGE FROM GOD SPOKEN THROUGH A PROPHET. THE PROPHETS WERE CALLED "SEERS" FOR THEY SAW SOMETHING FROM GOD AND THEY SAID SOMETHING FOR GOD. WE USE THE TERM VISION TO DESCRIBE PEOPLE WHO HAVE SPIRITUAL INSIGHT AND FORESIGHT. THEY HAVE SPIRITUAL EARS THAT ARE TUNED TO THE THINGS OF GOD. THEY MOVE INTO AREAS THAT ARE OFTEN UNEXPLORED, UNMARKED AND UNTRD UNDER THE DIRECTION OF GOD. VISION IS ONE WAY TO DESCRIBE KEEN FAITH IN GOD. (IN THE BOOK ENTITLED YEAGER, ONE OF THE SUPERIOR PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF CHUCK YEAGER WAS HIS SUPERIOR SIGHT - HE WAS ABLE TO SEE BETTER AND FURTHER THAN OTHER PEOPLE.) VISION AND VENTURE GO TOGETHER. "IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO STARE UP THE STEPS, WE MUST STEP UP THE STAIRS." (HAYNER) "EYES THAT LOOK ARE COMMON. EYES THAT SEE ARE RARE." FOR EXAMPLE, IN THE DAYS OF WILLIAM CAREY THERE WERE MANY MINISTERS IN LOCAL PARISHES WHO HAD A BURDEN FOR REACHING THE LOST FOR CHRIST BUT CAREY SAW THE WORLD. HE SAW WHAT OTHERS SKIPPED - THAT'S

Colanin
 Sam
 To B. & To
 Whip
 David
 as Target
 To E. & To
 Miss

And
 Eyes!

Sam
 Walton

1 - Many
 with
 Vision
 1 - So Dime
 Steve in
 And
 Sam Walton
 Robert

Remember:
God had already told
them what the ~~land~~
land was like!
there to possess!

John
Prayer

VISION. A CLASSIC EXAMPLE OF VISION IS
NUMBERS 13-14. ¹ JOSHUA AND CALEB SAW GOD'S
PROMISE FOR CANAAN AND SAID "LET'S GO." THE
² TEN SAW THE GIANTS AND SAID "LET'S GO BACK."
¹ JOSHUA AND CALEB SAW NEW TERRITORY TO BE
TAKEN, THE TEN ² SAW TERRIBLE OBSTACLES AND
WERE TERRORIZED. THEY WERE THE "QUITTERS"
AND THE "CAN'TTERS." BY THE WAY, THE

Terrain
of the
Terrorized

MAJORITY IS NOT ALWAYS RIGHT - THEY ARE ALWAYS
THE MAJORITY BUT NOT ALWAYS RIGHT IN THEIR
JUDGMENT. VISION DOES NOT BEGIN IN A
COMMITTEE, OR CROWD, BUT WITH THE CALL OF GOD
UPON THOSE WHO WILL TRUST HIM. SOMEONE HAS

NVL

SAID THAT JOSHUA AND CALEB WERE GOD'S
ORIGINALS, THE TEN WERE COPIES. APPLICATION:

Every
Development
Progress!

CANAAN IS NOT A TYPE OF HEAVEN BUT OF THE
VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN LIFE. GOD HAS A PLACE
OF VICTORY FOR THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN BROUGHT
OUT OF BONDAGE THROUGH BLOOD REDEMPTION BUT
THE TERRITORY MUST BE CLAIMED. THE OPPORTUNITY

1 Cor
16:9

² AWAITS THE CHILD OF GOD BUT IT IS NOT WITHOUT
OBSTACLES AND THE OUTCOME DEPENDS ON WHETHER
OR NOT THE BELIEVER IS READY TO OVERCOME HIS
FEARS BY FAITH. THOSE WHO REFUSE TO BELIEVE
GOD ARE LEFT TO A LIFE OF AIMLESS WONDERING.
PEOPLE OF FAITH DO NOT ALWAYS DO THE
PREDICTABLE BUT THEY DO WHAT IS PROMISED TO
THEM BY GOD. THERE ARE SOME AREAS OF OPPOR-
TUNITY FOR ALL OF US:

Overcoming
obstacles -
Character
Development

Long Range Planning
Take Vision! (Explain)

¹ EVANGELISM - THERE IS A MENTALITY IN THE
CHURCH TODAY THAT PAID PROFESSIONALS SHOULD
DO THE WORK OF JESUS CHRIST. THIS IS NOT
THE EMPHASIS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT. WHY
SHOULD ONE MAN ATTEMPT TO REACH 100 WHEN
100 CAN REACH ONE MUCH EASIER AND MORE
EFFICIENTLY. SUGGESTION: WRITE IN YOUR BIBLE
THAT THIS YEAR'S PRAYER WILL BE TO PARTICIPATE
IN WINNING ONE SOUL TO CHRIST - LET NOTHING
HINDER THAT ACT OF FAITH.

16:9

For a great door and
Effectual (to do useful work)
is open unto me... many adversaries

Team

Winston -
Loving Thanks
dinner

Vu Boach
invitation

Neh. EZRA
Jesus

-3-

Trudy - work!

(2) **BIBLE** - STOP BEING SHALLOW IN YOUR GRASP OF SCRIPTURE. READ, MEMORIZE, MEDITATE.

(3) **STEWARDSHIP** - GET SERIOUS WITH YOUR FINANCIAL RESOURCES. STOP HEDGING AND CHEATING, TIPPING GOD. **SUGGESTION:** TAKE THE AMOUNT YOU PLACED IN THE OFFERING PLATE TODAY OR ADD THE ACCUMULATED GIFTS TO OTHER PARACHURCH MINISTRIES, MULTIPLY IT BY 9 AND ASK YOURSELF IF YOU COULD LIVE ON IT BETWEEN PAY PERIODS! IF YOU HAVE NOT BEEN DOING WHAT GOD EXPECTS OF HIS PEOPLE - **START THIS YEAR.**

(4) **VOLUNTEER FOR SERVICE** - THERE IS SOME **TASK** GOD WANTS US TO DO. PERHAPS WE HAVE BEEN TOO PREOCCUPIED TO HEAR THE VOICE OF GOD. **ASK HIM** FOR A CLEAR VISION OF YOUR MINISTRY FOR HIS GLORY - THEN DO IT!

11. **INTEGRITY** - GENESIS 20:5-6

ABIMELECH MAY NOT HAVE BEEN ALL HE CLAIMED TO BE BUT HE KNEW THAT THERE IS SOMETHING IMPORTANT IN ONE'S CHARACTER CALLED INTEGRITY. **WHAT IS INTEGRITY?** IT IS "AN UNIMPAIRED STATE OF MORAL SOUNDNESS AND PURITY." FOR THE BELIEVER, INTEGRITY IS DIVIDED INTO **PERSONAL** AND **ECCLESIASTICAL** INTEGRITY. IN 1988 WARREN WIERSBE WROTE A BOOK ENTITLED: "**THE INTEGRITY CRISIS**." THE VERY TITLE SUGGESTS THAT THERE WERE AND ARE SEVERE PROBLEMS IN THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST. DR. WIERSBE WAS CORRECT FOR 1988 AND '89 WERE YEARS OF **SCANDAL** BOTH IN THE RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL WORLD. **THE BIBLE** **HEROES** SO CLEARLY DEFINED IN SCRIPTURE WERE ALL PEOPLE OF INTEGRITY - **JOB, JOSEPH, DANIEL, NEHEMIAH, RUTH, ESTHER** - **ALL PEOPLE OF INTEGRITY**. SOMETHING HAS HAPPENED IN CHURCH LIFE. THERE HAS BEEN A **COMPROMISING OF CHRISTIAN VALUES** LEADING TO A MORAL BREAKDOWN

* **Gen 39:9**

Gen 1-2 Creation
37-50 - Joseph!
13 chapters!

4chs
Pastor
Lesson
intent

Sym
Tolson

(42) -4-
Tom
Worley

Radio
Ch. TV Exile

AND FAILURE IN THE CHURCH. WE, IN THE CHURCH, BELIEVED THAT THE "NEW MORALITY" WOULDN'T EFFECT US - BUT IT HAS. THE BAKER, SWAGGERT SCANDAL IS DEEPER THAN JUST TWO HIGHLY VISIBLE PREACHERS. HOWEVER, THE DAMAGE THESE TWO HAVE DONE IS BEYOND HUMAN CALCULATION. COMMENT REGARDING GAS STATION. DR. WIERSBE SUGGESTS THAT THE DESIRE ON THE PART OF BELIEVERS TO HAVE THE WORLD'S APPROVAL HAS TURNED MANY CHURCHES INTO CENTER OF ENTERTAINMENT RATHER THAN EVANGELISM AND EDIFICATION. THE CHURCH HAS DEVELOPED A CELEBRITY OR FAN CLUB MENTALITY, SAYS WIERSBE. FAME, NOT FAITH, IS THE BIG THING IN CHURCHES TODAY. SIZE, NOT SPIRITUALITY HAS BECOME THE STANDARD FOR SUCCESS. WE GATHER ON THE LORD'S DAY NOT TO WORSHIP GOD BUT TO WATCH RELIGIOUS CELEBRITIES PERFORM TO OR AGAINST OUR LIKING. THE NEW GOSPEL IS ONE OF MATERIAL ACCUMULATION AND NOT SPIRITUAL DEPTH. THIS GOSPEL INCLUDES WEALTH, HEALTH AND SELF AS THE SPEARPOINT OF ITS MINISTRY AND SERMONS FROM THE PULPIT ARE DESIGNED TO FLATTER SINNERS AND NOT TO WARN AGAINST SIN. PERSONAL INTEGRITY MUST REACH INTO THE HOME, WORKPLACE, PAYING OF DEBTS, DEALING WITH TRUTH AND PROMISES INCLUDING PERSONAL MORALITY. MANY FUNDAMENTAL CHURCHES ARE VERY CONCERNED THAT ITS MEMBERS DON'T SMOKE, DRINK, OR MISBEHAVE REGARDING SEXUAL CONDUCT BUT ALMOST NOTHING IS EVER SAID ABOUT LYING, DISHONESTY, CHEATING, GOSSIP, A CRITICAL OR JUDGMENTAL ATTITUDE TOWARD OTHER PEOPLE - THESE SINS ARE CONVENIENTLY IGNORED. IN THE AREA OF ECCLESIASTICAL INTEGRITY THERE IS DOCTRINAL INTEGRITY (II TIM. 3:16). WHAT WE BELIEVE IS OF PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE IN A LOCAL CHURCH. IT IS THE PRIMARY THING. MUSICAL INTEGRITY - IT IS JUST AS WRONG TO SING HERESY AS IT IS TO PREACH IT. JUNK MUSIC IS LIKE JUNK FOOD -

85
paul
paul
15
min
str.

Guix

1
2

IT MAY FILL AN EMPTY SPOT IN THE LIFE BUT IT IS NOT SPIRITUALLY NUTRITIOUS.

STEWARDSHIP - ONE WOULD THINK THAT MONEY IS THE PRIMARY GOAL IN THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY. TO BE SURE, MINISTRY TAKES MONEY BUT MONEY HAS BECOME THE MINISTRY IN SOME PLACES. THE AIRWAVES ARE FILLED WITH "HOLY HUCKSTERS" AND THEIR PROGRAM IS FILLED WITH "CHRISTIAN COMMERCIALS." ONE CAN BUY ANYTHING FROM BEADS TO BIBLES BY SIMPLY SENDING A GIFT OR OFFERING TO A MINISTRY. IN THE AREA OF STEWARDSHIP ON THE PART OF THE CHURCH, THERE SHOULD BE CHECKS AND BALANCES INCLUDING AUDITS AND CONFIDENTIALITY. (SUGGESTION: GOD DOES NOT EXPECT YOU AND ME TO SUPPORT EVERYBODY WHO APPEALS TO US FOR FUNDS. SUCH SUPPORT REQUIRES GREAT CARE AND PRAYER ON THE PART OF BELIEVERS.)

INVITATION - AN AREA THAT IS GROSSLY ABUSED IN MANY FUNDAMENTAL CHURCHES WHERE GOOD INTENTIONS SOMEHOW ARE SUPPOSED TO HELP OTHERS OVERLOOK DISCOURTESY, BAD METHODS AND SO FORTH. GOD NEVER INTENDED THE INVITATION TO BE A PLACE FOR A SECOND SERMON AND THREE MORE SONGS. SOMETIMES IT DEGENERATES INTO AN EGO TRIP FOR THE SPEAKER WHERE SOMEBODY MUST DO SOMETHING BEFORE THE SERVICE CAN BE STOPPED.

LEADERSHIP - WHETHER IT BE COUNSELING OR COMMITTEE MEETINGS THERE SHOULD BE AN ATMOSPHERE OF CONFIDENTIALITY IN THESE AREAS. SOMEONE HAS SAID THAT WHAT EVERY CHURCH NEEDS IS A "GOOD TONGUE LASHING." THAT IS, FROM THE PULPIT TO THE PEW OUR TONGUES NEED TO BE LASHED DOWN AND SILENCED INSTEAD OF LASHING OUT AND HURTING OTHERS. IN MANY CHURCHES, BELIEVERS TALK AS IF THEIR FAITH IS REAL BUT WALK AS IF IT WEREN'T! EVERYWHERE IN SCRIPTURE WE ARE ENCOURAGED TO MAKE OUR WALK AND TALK MATCH. (COL. 2:6)

Aug. 7
Requiem

Circle
of
Love
Quintessence

~~You~~
New
PASTOR

Steve
Rignett
- owner

I can't go
to my pastor
illness on
Sat. 1
Sermon

"we work with God!
" " " " -6- each other!

1 Cor
3:4

Paulites

Apollo's Promoters!

A worker's canonality!

NI. TEAMWORK - I Cor. 3:4-9

Orchestra
- Same page
needed?

David
Foster?

THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH WAS MORE INTERESTED IN DIVIDING ITS MEMBERSHIP THAN IN JOINING THEM TOGETHER IN MINISTRY. PAUL USES AN INTERESTING GREEK WORD IN THE TEXT, A COMBINATION OF SUN AND ERGON. (COMMENT REGARDING BASIC STORY IN MCGUFFY READER REGARDING STICKS, ONE BREAKS - A BUNDLE WON'T.) COMMENT REGARDING CONVERSATION WHERE A CHRISTIAN BROTHER WAS DESCRIBED AS "NOT A TEAM PLAYER, THE LONE RANGER MENTALITY." THIS WAS THE PROBLEM AT CORINTH. THERE WERE THREE MAJOR DIVISIONS, THREE LEADERS AND THREE FACTIONS. THE EMPHASIS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT IS "TOGETHER TO GATHER." THERE IS A SENSE IN WHICH THE DISCIPLES WERE JESUS' TEAM. WE UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF TEAMWORK AND PARTICIPATION IN AN ORCHESTRA. IT IS UTTERLY FOOLISH FOR A MUSICIAN TO THINK THAT HE MAY PLAY HIS OWN SCORE TO THE EXCLUSION OF EVERYONE ELSE AND STILL PRODUCE QUALITY MUSIC. HE MAY LOOK UPON HIS OWN PERSONAL FREEDOM AS MORE IMPORTANT THAN GOOD MUSIC BUT IF HE DOES, HE SHOULD GET OUT OF THE ORCHESTRA AND BECOME A SOLOIST. SOME PEOPLE ARE LIKE THE MAN WHO DRILLED A HOLE UNDER HIS BUNK ON BOARD SHIP DECLARING THAT HE HAD THAT RIGHT SINCE IT WAS UNDER HIS BUNK. LOYALTY TO A GROUP IS NOT BLIND ACCEPTANCE OF ALL THEY DO OR FREEDOM TO THINK OR SAY WHAT ONE BELIEVES WITHOUT PENALTY OR BEING EXCLUDED FROM THE GROUP. IN EVERY CHRISTIAN GROUP THERE ARE EAGLES AND SHEEP. THERE'S ROOM FOR BOTH. (COMMENT ON I CHRONICLES 12) FIND A PLACE WHERE YOU CAN SERVE ON THE TEAM AND BE LOYAL TO THAT WORK. (COMMENT REGARDING JOE WEAVER - GO START YOUR OWN CHURCH BECAUSE YOU'LL NEVER BE HAPPY UNLESS AND UNTIL YOU DO, BECAUSE NOBODY ELSE MEASURES UP TO WHAT YOU WANT.)

- ① Eagles - don't fly in flocks } Both
- ② Sheep - "Gee Someone's hard... your hater."
- Marsh
Faint

ROBERT K. SPRADLING

APRIL 7, 1985

"The Voice of Jesus"

A VOICE FROM THE DEAD

JOHN 20:15-16

Hospitals - ^{see hand}
medication
NOT
meditation!
(B. HINN)

THE FIRST APPEARANCE OF THE WORD **VOICE** IN THE BIBLE IS GENESIS 3:8: "AND THEY HEARD THE **VOICE** OF THE LORD WALKING IN THE GARDEN IN THE COOL OF THE DAY; AND ADAM AND HIS WIFE HID THEMSELVES FROM THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD AMONGST THE TREES OF THE GARDEN. AND THE LORD GOD CALLED UNTO ADAM AND SAID UNTO HIM, 'WHERE ART THOU?' THE SOUND OF GOD'S **VOICE** PROMPTED ADAM TO HIDE BECAUSE OF **GUILT** AND **FEAR**. TODAY WE WILL EXAMINE SEVERAL INCIDENTS IN THE POST-RESURRECTION MINISTRY OF CHRIST WHERE THE VOICE OF JESUS IS MENTIONED.

I. THE VOICE OF THE RISEN SAVIOUR - *In the Garden* JOHN 20:16

THE SCENE AT THE EMPTY TOMB WAS **TOUCHING**. PETER AND JOHN HAD LOOKED INSIDE HAVING OBSERVED THE STONE REMOVED AND THE GRAVE CLOTHES LAID ASIDE. HAVING SEEN THIS, THEY WENT HOME! MARY WAS NOT SO EASILY DISSUADED. IT WAS **EARLY, DARK** AND EVEN THOUGH THREE DAYS HAD PASSED SINCE THE CRUCIFIXION MARY **LINGERED STILL WEeping**, WONDERING WHO HAD STOLEN THE BODY OF JESUS. SHE CAME TO THE TOMB LOOKING FOR A DEAD **CORPSE** BUT SAW THE RISEN **CHRIST**. IN THE PRE-DAWN HOURS, SHE SAW TWO ANGELS AND THE LORD HIMSELF WHOM SHE MISTAKENLY BELIEVED TO BE A GARDENER.

(A) JESUS CALLED HER NAME

OUR LORD'S RELATIONSHIP TO HIS DISCIPLES AND TO US IS A **PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP**.

(JOHN 10:27 - THE LORD'S SHEEP RECOGNIZE THE VOICE OF THE SHEPHERD. MARY HAD HEARD THAT DISTINCTIVE VOICE ON MANY OCCASIONS. FIRST, WHEN HE SPOKE PEACE TO HER TROUBLED SOUL, AT LAZARUS' TOMB, IN PRAYER, IN TEACHING, A VOICE ONE COULD NEVER FORGET. WHEN HE SPOKE HER NAME THERE WAS INSTANT RECOGNITION.

(B) JESUS ESTABLISHED A NEW RELATIONSHIP -
VERSE 17

OUR LORD'S CONVERSATION WITH MARY WAS NOT UNFEELING BUT RATHER INSTRUCTIVE TO TEACH MARY THAT NO LONGER WOULD THEIR RELATIONSHIP BE ON THE BASIS OF SENSE PERCEPTION, THAT IS, SIGHT, TOUCH, TALK, ETC., BUT WITH ALL BELIEVERS IT WOULD NOW BE BY FAITH.

(C) MARY TOLD OTHERS WHAT SHE HAD SEEN -
VERSE 18

II. THE VOICE OF THE PERSECUTED JESUS -
ACTS 9:4 *On the Damascus Road*

THE EARLY CHURCH HAD GROWN RAPIDLY WITH THOUSANDS CONVERTED TO CHRIST. CHRISTIANITY WAS SWEEPING THE MIDDLE EAST. A YOUNG RABBI NAMED SAUL DETERMINED TO STOP THE MOVEMENT SINGLE-HANDED. AS PART OF HIS WIDE SWEEP TO STAMP OUT CHRISTIANITY, HE JOURNEYED 140 MILES FROM JERUSALEM TO DAMASCUS IN SYRIA TAKING WITH HIM DOCUMENTS AND SOLDIERS TO DEAL WITH THE CHURCH THERE. ON THAT TRIP, SOMETHING HAPPENED TO CHANGE SAUL AND THE WORLD FOREVER. HE WAS STRUCK TO THE GROUND IN A BLAZE OF GLORY LIGHT AND THE SAME VOICE THAT SPOKE TO MARY IN THE GARDEN SPOKE TO SAUL ON THE ROAD TO DAMASCUS.

(A) WHY?

JESUS WAS NOT SEEKING INFORMATION BUT RATHER CONFRONTATION, TO GET SAUL TO FACE THE PROBLEM IN HIS OWN SOUL. SAUL WAS A MAN AT WAR WITH HIMSELF AND CONSEQUENTLY AT WAR WITH THE CHURCH. OUR LORD'S QUESTION WAS WHY WAS HE FIGHTING GOD AND HURTING HIMSELF - IT WAS A HARD EXPERIENCE. IT WAS HARD FOR SAUL AND EVERY OTHER PERSON TO RESIST THE LORD'S ATTEMPT TO BRING THEM TO SAVING FAITH.

(B) WHO?

SAUL WAS CONCERNED ABOUT THE IDENTITY OF HIS CONFRONTATION. HERE WAS A JEW ARRESTED BY HIS MESSIAH. (MICROCOSM OF ISRAEL - I COR. 15:58) JESUS WAS SAUL'S SAVIOUR. THIS IS THE SINGLE MOST DRAMATIC CONVERSION IN ALL OF SCRIPTURE. THIS EXPERIENCE WAS A LIFE-CHANGING EVENT FROM WHICH SAUL WOULD NEVER RECOVER! TODAY, HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE CAN TESTIFY IN THIS CONGREGATION TO THE REALITY OF SUCH AN EXPERIENCE. PERHAPS NOT AS DRAMATIC BUT JUST AS REAL! *Applaud 7-21-78*

(C) WHAT?

FROM THIS DAY FORWARD, SAUL HAD NO OTHER MASTER BUT CHRIST. HE CAME TO CHRIST ON GOD'S TERMS IN FULL SURRENDER. HIS FIGHTING, RESISTING GOD WAS OVER. FROM NOW ON HE WAS FOR GOD. (COMPARE PAT WITHROW)

III. THE VOICE OF THE RETURNING BRIDGROOM -
I THESSALONIANS 4:16, JOHN 5:25-29

FOR THE PAST 19 CENTURIES, GOD HAS BEEN DOING SOMETHING SPECIAL IN HUMAN HISTORY.

*Preparing To Return
To Earth*

IT IS A TASK IN LARGE MEASURE UNNOTICED AND SEEMINGLY UNIMPORTANT IN THE EYES OF MANY EARTH DWELLERS. ACCORDING TO ACTS 15, DURING THIS AGE, GOD IS BUILDING HIS CHURCH. THE CHURCH IS SPOKEN OF AS A BODY, A BUILDING AND A BRIDE. SOME DAY, THAT SPECIAL GROUP CALLED THE CHURCH WILL BE COMPLETED. THE COMPLETION OF THE CHURCH IS THE NEXT MAJOR EVENT IN GOD'S PROPHETIC CALENDAR. THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH IS NEXT. (THE WORD RAPTURE IS NOT A BIBLE BUT LATIN TERM WHICH MEANS TO SEIZE, SNATCH OR CATCH UP AND DESCRIBES THE MANNER OF CHRIST'S COMING FOR HIS BRIDE. WEDDINGS ARE ALWAYS TIMES OF GREAT JOY AND TEARS. IT INVOLVES THE RE-UNITING OF FAMILIES WHO HAVE BEEN SEPARATED BY YEARS AND DISTANCE.

II THESSALONIANS 2:1 REFERS TO THE RAPTURE AS A "GATHERING TOGETHER" UNTO CHRIST. IT IS NOTHING LESS THAN A REUNION, HOMECOMING AND GATHERING TOGETHER OF ALL THE REDEEMED OF THIS DISPENSATION. THE PROOF OF THIS PASSAGE SHOULD ARREST YOUR ATTENTION BECAUSE IT MAY DIVIDE YOUR HOME! (TESTIMONY OF HERB WARE)

IV. THE VOICE OF THE KNOCKING SAVIOUR -
REVELATION 3:20

THE SCENE IS THE CENTRAL PERSON OF REVELATION, THAT IS, JESUS STANDING OUTSIDE THE LAODICEAN CHURCH KNOCKING FOR ADMISSION. THE LAODICEAN CHURCH WAS SELF-SUFFICIENT, SELF-SATISFIED AND POWERLESS WITH CHRIST ON THE OUTSIDE AND NOT IN THE CENTRAL POSITION. THE WORDS STAND AND KNOCK ARE IN A PARTICULAR TENSE THAT INDICATES REPEATED ACTION. (MOST PEOPLE MUST ADMIT THAT GOD HAS REPEATEDLY TEMPTED TO GET INTO THEIR LIVES THROUGH SERMONS, RADIO

Rem. 10:17

PROGRAMS, PERSONAL WITNESS, TIMES OF SICKNESS AND DISTRESS. GOD HAS KNOCKED AND SOUGHT ADMISSION. QUESTION: HOW DOES GOD SPEAK TO MEN? HE DOES NOT SPEAK THROUGH AN AUDIBLE VOICE BUT THE SCRIPTURE SAYS THAT HE DOES SPEAK FROM THE SKIES, THROUGH THE SCRIPTURES, AND THROUGH THE SPIRIT. THIS PASSAGE SAYS THAT A PERSON'S BODY IS A HOUSE. THE INNERMOST BEING OR HEART IS TO THE BODY WHAT A DOOR IS TO A HOUSE. THE LORD WANTS TO COME INTO OUR LIVES BUT HE DOES NOT BLAST HIS WAY IN BUT GENTLY KNOCKS IN DIVINE COURTESY. HE IS EITHER A WELCOME GUEST OR HE WILL NOT ENTER. THE LORD WANTS TO COME INTO YOUR LIFE, IN FACT HE SEEKS ADMISSION, BUT THE LATCH IS ON THE INSIDE. MANY PEOPLE WOULD LET HIM IN BUT ARE AFRAID - AFRAID OF LOSING A LIFESTYLE, AFRAID OF LOSING LOVED ONES, AFRAID OF A HUNDRED DIFFERENT THINGS. THE SIMPLE ANSWER IS THAT NONE NEED BE AFRAID OF GOD. QUESTION: WHERE IS JESUS IN YOUR LIFE? IS HE KNOCKING OR IS HE ALREADY INSIDE.

Crash
No Guest

37 years ago today
April 7, 1948

1997 = 49 yrs

ROBERT K. SPRADLING

APRIL 15, 1984

April 11 1990

MORE THAN APPLAUSE

MATTHEW 21:1-11

*"Let's give
Jesus a
hand..."
he ~~didn't~~
need it!*

A FEW YEARS AGO, A STANDING OVATION WAS GIVEN TO A PERSON FOR OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE AND WAS RARE. TODAY IT IS COMMONPLACE. OURS IS A DAY WHEN MEN EXAGGERATE THE WORTH OF THE INSIGNIFICANT. JESUS WAS NOT LOOKING FOR A STANDING OVATION BUT FOR STEADFAST OBEDIENCE ON THE PART OF HIS DISCIPLES. TODAY, AS THEN, SOME MEN ARE WILLING TO CHEER FOR JESUS ON PALM SUNDAY BUT ALSO TO CRUCIFY HIM ON GOOD FRIDAY! PALM SUNDAY WAS THE FIRST DAY OF OF THE LAST WEEK OF JESUS' LIFE. IT WAS HIS OFFICIAL PRESENTATION TO ISRAEL AS THEIR MESSIAH AND KING. FOR THREE YEARS HE HAD PRESENTED HIS CREDENTIALS TO THE NATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY. NOW IN THE FACE OF GREAT DANGER, HE APPEARED IN JERUSALEM AT THE PASSOVER TO MAKE A PUBLIC, FORMAL OFFICIAL OFFER OF MESSIAH'S KINGDOM TO ISRAEL. IT WAS A DRAMATIC WAY TO VISUALLY EMPHASIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF THAT EVENT. (FOR EXAMPLE, IN THE OLD TESTAMENT WHEN JEREMIAH SAW THE PERIL OF THE BABYLONIAN INVASION HE FASHIONED A YOKE AROUND HIS NECK AND WALKED BEFORE THE NATION IN PUBLIC TO DEMONSTRATE THE BONDAGE THAT WOULD SOON OVERCOME THEM.) (JER. 27:1-6) LET US EXAMINE THAT FIRST PALM SUNDAY AS IT RELATED TO THE APPLAUSE OF THE CROWD:

I. MANY WHO ARE WILLING TO APPLAUD CHRIST
ARE UNWILLING TO OBEY HIM - V. 1-3

THE IDENTITY OF THE DISPATCHED DISCIPLES IS NOT MENTIONED BUT SOME HAVE THOUGHT THEM TO BE THE TWO WHO SOUGHT PROMINENCE IN THE KINGDOM. THESE TWO WERE SENT ON A SACRED ERRAND TO SECURE A DONKEY AND A COLT FOR AN UNDISCLOSED PURPOSE OR REASON. JESUS GAVE NO EXPLANATION OTHER THAN IT WAS NEEDED AND THEIRS WAS SIMPLY A DIVINE DIRECTIVE. THIS EVENT COULD INVOLVE CHRIST'S OMNISCIENCE OR A PRE-ARRANGEMENT.⁽²⁾ (EXPLAIN) THESE TWO DISCIPLES DID EXACTLY AS THEY WERE TOLD EVEN IN WHAT MIGHT HAVE APPEARED TO THEM TO BE A MEANINGLESS AND INSIGNIFICANT ERRAND. HOWEVER, PERHAPS THEY KNEW THAT NOTHING JESUS ASKED HIS DISCIPLES TO DO WAS EVER MEANINGLESS AND INSIGNIFICANT. THIS PARTICULAR ERRAND WAS FULL OF MEANING. DISCIPLES ARE NOT ASKED TO ALWAYS UNDERSTAND OR APPRECIATE WHAT THE LORD ASKS THEM TO DO. THEIR RESPONSIBILITY IS TO DO HIS BIDDING, THE REASON AND EXPLANATION IS HIS. THESE DISCIPLES DID AS THEY WERE TOLD. THEY MAY HAVE WONDERED OR QUESTIONED IN THEIR MINDS BUT THEY DID WHAT HE ASKED THEM TO DO. MORRISON REMINDS US: "IN THE TRIFLES OF LIFE WE ARE WORKING OUT GOD'S PLAN. GREAT SERVICE REVEALS OUR POSSIBILITIES, SMALL SERVICE OUR CONSECRATION." THE LORD PLANS IN THE TRIFLES AS WELL AS IN THE TREMENDOUS EVENTS OF LIFE. THE LORD'S HAND IS IN THE COMMON, ORDINARY ACTIVITIES OF LIFE EVEN A MATTER AS SMALL AS LEADING A DONKEY FROM ONE CITY TO ANOTHER! OUR

TENDENCY IS TO SEEK THE LORD IN THE CRISIS OR DRAMATIC MOMENTS OF LIFE BUT MORE OFTEN THAN NOT WE WILL FIND HIS LEADING IN THE DONKEY EPISODES. IT IS EASY TO SEE THE LORD'S HAND IN PREACHING OR MISSIONARY WORK BUT THE SMALL ERRANDS OF LIFE, DONE IN HIS NAME, ARE VITAL TOO. SOME DISCIPLES MIGHT HAVE RESENTED SUCH A MENIAL OR MUNDANE TASK, AFTER ALL, THESE MEN HAD BEEN TRAINED IN THE MOST EXCLUSIVE AND SELECTIVE SCHOOL IN ALL OF HUMAN HISTORY AND SURELY ALL OF THAT TRAINING WAS NOT REQUIRED TO BECOME A MULE SKINNER! IT IS THE LORD AND NOT HIS DISCIPLES WHO DECIDES WHAT IS IMPORTANT AND NECESSARY IN HIS WORK. THE LORD USED STRAY MULES TO BRING SAUL TO SAMUEL AND TO BECOME THE ANOINTED KING OF ISRAEL. (1 SAMUEL 9). ONE MORNING A MOTHER PACKED A LUNCH FOR HER SON AND THAT INSIGNIFICANT LUNCH FED MULTIPLIED THOUSANDS BEFORE THE DAY WAS OVER. (JOHN 6) (RELATE CONVERSATION WITH PAUL SMITH - MISSIONARY TO KENYA. IN SOME AREAS OF CHRISTIAN WORK AND SERVICE A SPIRIT OF SELF-IMPORTANCE HAS SETTLED OVER THE CHURCHES. A GENERATION LOOKING FOR EXECUTIVE POSITIONS WHO BELIEVE ERRANDS ARE BENEATH THEM. THE PHRASE "THE LORD HATH NEED OF THEM," REMINDS ALL BELIEVERS THAT THE LORD WILL TAKE OUR POSSESSIONS AND USE THEM FOR HOLY PURPOSES IF WE WILL BUT TURN LOOSE OF THEM. QUESTION: LORD WHAT DO I HAVE THAT YOU HAVE NEED OF? FOR MOST OF US, THERE ARE AREAS THE LORD WOULD USE IF WE WOULD BUT YIELD THEM TO HIM. HOMES FOR BIBLE STUDY, RESOURCES, AUTOMOBILES WE DRIVE EMPTY TO CHURCH WHEN OUR NEIGHBORHOODS ARE FULL OF CHILDREN WHO NEVER DARKEN A CHURCH DOOR. IT IS INTERESTING THAT THE LORD WILL NEVER TAKE FROM US WHAT WE CANNOT AFFORD TO GIVE HIM.

II. MANY WHO APPLAUD CHRIST DO NOT UNDER-
STAND HIS PLACE IN PROPHECY - V. 4-5

500
FIVE HUNDRED YEARS BEFORE JESUS WAS BORN, ZECHARIAH PREDICTED THIS VERY EVENT IN SPECIFIC DETAIL. (ZECHARIAH 9:9-10) FOR (A MODERN COMPARISON LET US SUPPOSE THAT CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS HAD PREDICTED THE INAUGURATION OF RONALD REAGAN AS PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.) THE PASSAGE IN ZECHARIAH PREDICTS MESSIAH'S TWO COMINGS. OTHER KINGS ROSE TO POWER BY SHEAR FORCE. GOD'S MESSIAH DID NOT CAMPAIGN TO BE KING, IT WAS HIS BY BIRTHRIGHT AND THE QUALITY OF HIS REIGN IS PREDICTED IN THE PROPHECY. TERMS SUCH AS JUST REMIND THE READER THAT HIS RULE WOULD BE MORALLY CORRECT OR STRAIGHT, HE WOULD ALWAYS DO WHAT IS RIGHT. SALVATION - THIS KING'S COMING WOULD ALSO BE ISRAEL'S SAVIOUR AND POLITICAL AS WELL AS SPIRITUAL DELIVERER. LOWLY - THERE WAS NO HAUGHTY SPIRIT, NO WAR HORSE OR ARMOUR OR BANNERS OR WARRIORS, SIMPLY RIDING ON A COLT, A SYMBOL OF PEACE. AT THAT COMING, HE WAS REJECTED. BUT, ACCORDING TO VERSE 10, MESSIAH WILL COME A SECOND TIME AS CONQUERING KING. HIS DOMINION WILL BE UNIVERSAL AT THAT TIME. REVELATION 19:11-16 DESCRIBES THAT SECOND COMING. Geo. Bush

III. MANY WHO APPLAUD CHRIST MAY BE CAUGHT
UP IN THE EXCITEMENT OF THE MOMENT -
V. 8-9

ACTORS, COMEDIANS, SINGERS AND ENTERTAINERS IN GENERAL OFTEN PURSUE A MAGIC MOMENT BEFORE AN AUDIENCE. THEY ASPIRE TO A MAGIC

MOMENT WHEN THE AUDIENCE AND THE PERFORMER ARE ONE. THAT DAY, JESUS APPEARANCE IN JERUSALEM ELECTRIFIED MULTIPLIED THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE. THE EXCITEMENT WAS CONTAGIOUS. THE WORD HOSANNA MEANS SAVE NOW AND REVEALED AN AWARENESS OF THE PEOPLE REGARDING THE MESSIANIC 118 PSALM. (VERSE 25) THE CITY OF JERUSALEM HAD NOT BEEN SO STIRRED SINCE THE DAY SOLOMON WAS WELCOMED AS KING. IT WAS A TIME OF SINGING, REJOICING AND EXCITEMENT. HOWEVER, THE ATMOSPHERE WOULD COMPLETELY CHANGE IN LESS THAN A WEEK AND THE HERO OF TODAY WOULD BECOME THE VICTIM OF TOMORROW. IT IS POSSIBLE FOR A PERSON TO BE CARRIED AWAY WITH THE EXCITEMENT OF A MEETING AND YET NOT UNDERSTAND WHAT IT MEANS TO KNOW CHRIST. SITTING IN AN ENTHUSIASTIC CROWD CRYING PRAISE TO JESUS NAME IS NOT TANTAMOUNT TO SALVATION THROUGH CHRIST. * THE RICH YOUNG RULER WAS AN EXCITED, ENTHUSIASTIC SUPPORTER OF JESUS' PUBLIC MINISTRY. THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THAT YOUNG MAN WAS IMPRESSED WITH JESUS AND EAGER TO JOIN HIS GROUP. HOWEVER, WHEN FACED WITH THE CONDITIONS OF GENUINE DISCIPLESHIP HE TURNED AWAY SORROWFULLY BECAUSE HE COULD NOT BRING HIMSELF TO COMPLETE SURRENDER TO CHRIST.

IV. MANY WHO APPLAUD CHRIST ARE STIRRED BY HIS PRESENCE YET PUZZLED BY HIS PERSON - V. 10

THE WORD MOVED IS TRANSLATED STIRRED IN THE A.S.V. THE GREEK WORD IS SEISMIC OR A WORD THAT IS ASSOCIATED WITH MEASURING THE INTENSITY OF EARTHQUAKES. WHEN JESUS APPEARED IN JERUSALEM ON PALM SUNDAY, THERE

WAS A GROUND SWELL OF FEELING AND EMOTION IN HIS BEHALF. THE TOWN WAS LITERALLY SHAKEN WITH THE IMPACT OF HIS PRESENCE. IT WAS NOT EASY TO SHAKE A CITY SO USED TO GREAT RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS AS JERUSALEM. THE CITY HAD NEVER SEEN SUCH A RESPONSE FROM ITS PEOPLE AND TO LAY A CARPET OF CLOTHES AND BRANCHES BEFORE JESUS WAS AN ACT OF HOMAGE TO HIM AS KING. IN LUKE 19:41-42, JESUS REFERS TO THAT SIGNIFICANT DAY AS ISRAEL'S GREAT OPPORTUNITY - "THY DAY." THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO WHEN BROUGHT INTO THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST ARE STIRRED AND SHAKEN. TWO

ILLUSTRATIONS: (1) ACTS 16:29-31 THE PHILIPPIAN JAILER WAS SHAKEN BY WHAT HE HAD WITNESSED. THE MAGNITUDE OF THOSE EVENTS BROUGHT HIM TO A SAVING FAITH IN CHRIST.

(2) ACTS 24:25 FELIX WAS SHAKEN BY PAUL'S MESSAGE. THE TEXT SAYS: "FELIX TREMBLED AND ANSWERED, GO THY WAY FOR THIS TIME; WHEN I HAVE A CONVENIENT SEASON, I WILL CALL FOR THEE." FELIX SIMPLY PUT OUT OF HIS MIND THE IMPACT OF PAUL'S PREACHING SAYING THAT HE WOULD WAIT FOR A MORE CONVENIENT TIME, THAT TIME NEVER CAME! FOR THAT REASON, THIS IS ONE OF THE SAD STORIES OF THE BIBLE. FELIX WAS SHAKEN AND STIRRED AND KNEW THAT HE SHOULD MAKE A DECISION FOR CHRIST BUT HE WANTED IT TO BE AT A MORE CONVENIENT TIME BUT THERE IS NEVER A MORE CONVENIENT DAY THAN TODAY.

AS A PASTOR, I HAVE SEEN PEOPLE CRY, TREMBLE, TURN PALE UNDER THE CONVICTING POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. THE URGE TO MAKE THE RIGHT DECISION CONCERNING CHRIST WAS BEFORE THEM. JESUS DOES NOT WANT OUR APPLAUSE - HE WANTS OUR ALLEGIANCE AND ACCEPTANCE. DON'T GIVE JESUS A HAND, GIVE HIM YOUR HEART. (JOHN 1:12)

1

The Palm Sunday Prophecy

Mt. 21:1-11

Palm Sunday = the 1st day of the last week of Jesus' earthly life.

30 yrs. of Silence - 3 yrs. of Ministry

1/2 of Gospel of Jn. deals with the last week of His life - ^{in 7 days!!!} culm. on His Death!

Schedule: Sunday - Enter. Jn. as King

Monday - Cleansed Temple ^{Curse} ^{Fig Tree}

Tues. - Olivet Discourse (Mt 24-25)

Wed - Rested

Thurs - Last Supper / Gethsemane ^{Arrested}

Friday - Crucified

Sat - Tomb

Sunday - Resurrection.

This ~~was~~ His Schedule - last week.

Question:

1.

(What would you do if - 1 week to live? Vacation / Best Hospital / Affairs in order? (Wesley - App. Book - do as Scheduled))

This Day = His Official presentation / offer to Israel as their Messiah. Passover - Jn.

full of pilgrims - 2m - Singing with people.

②

I. The Command of Jesus To The Two Disciples - v.1-3

Observation: The village is not named here, nor are the disciples (although Mk. 11:1 suggests it could have been Bethany) — the names are not the emphases — the mission is the focus!

A. It was a Clear Command

What? The word send ^{"sent once"} (ἀποστέλλω)

go ye (Father to Son - go)

To the pharmacist tell him I

has sent you. ^{Pick up my prescription.} Blank stare —

what part of go or send don't you understand? — ^{these} did!!!

Where? — "village" — they knew it well!
Bethany — M.M. Doe.

③

this "trivial task" part of God's eternal plan.
(EST. 6:1) In today's world: "hard work are teachers, leaders, rabbis" - not male shepherds - let someone else do the donkey work!

Why? "The Lord hath need..."

Mary's instruction fits —

"Whatever He saith unto you, do!"

Everything Jesus Commands we should heed: Matt. 11:28 / Matt. 28:19

"He that hath my commandment and (Jn. 14:21) ^{Not the 10!} "I have commanded you"

B. I Was AN Urgent Command - v.2

"Straightway" = at once, immediately or get going right now!!

"the gospel of action"

— (Mark 1:10-43 - 9 times (EUBUS))

v. 10, 18, 20, 21, 29, 30, 31, 42, 43

Zacchaeus — "Make haste... today"
JESUS — "Follow me" — Now!

C. I Was A Purposeful Command - v.4

The timing of the prophecy of Zech. 9:9. It was time to do this, Some other time wait do! God's purpose for Israel — your king is here — now!

Question

#2

what do I have that He also need it?

(4)

"the book has need of it" = enough!

"A divine directive does not always

Gen. 22 have a divine explanation." No

part of His Comments are insignificant or meaningless. A small task = part of a big plan!

II. The Credentials of the King (1.4-5)

~~IF~~ Someone could get on T.V.

And claim to be royalty - but that doesn't make it so - wearing a crown doesn't make one a king. Jesus's claim to be Israel's king based on valid credentials: (1) Miracles - Jn. 2. (2) Teaching (3) Senseless Death & life (4) Forgiving Sins (5) accepting worship.

500 years before Jesus was

③

Peace = peace giver not a caller ^{President} of peace conferences!

born, Zech. had predicted how Israel's Messiah would present Himself. (Zech. 9:9-10)

Jesus was Received like a king for Jews Expected Messiah to establish a theocratic kgd^m. & ~~left~~ the Roman yoke. But Zech. saw two Comings of Messiah.

III The Crowd that Witnessed this Event - (v. 8-10) ^{v. 8. multitude =} 10x10s crowd!

They recognized & identified Someone Special & a Special occasion!

Actors, Singers, Comedians, Speakers all speak of a "magic moment" when people respond with ~~shout~~ shouts.

Susan
~~Boyd~~
Boyd

⑥

applause, whistles, ready toward the speaker or group. That moment may pass never to return.

Not since the days of Solomon had Jerusalem been so stirred, excited. "moved" = ^{"seismic"} (6E161105)

"a ground swell of feeling"

"Even Jerusalem, frozen with religion was stirred with popular enthusiasm... as by an earthquake." (F. F. Bruce)

The crowd was carried away ~~with~~ the "red carpet treatment" of Germans & French. However, ^{Politics & religion} the authorities squelched the atmosphere and 4 days later - "Circify him"

⑦

Same or different group—
we do not know.

Treated as a criminal
not a king— his crown
a crown of thorns!

Point

Follow the wrong crowd
and lead ^{you} to the wrong direction.
(Matt ~~27~~ 27: 13-14)

Jews do not want your
appliance. Them want you.
These folk messed the moment.
They rejected instead of receiving
their king.

(NVL - family - now too late
Hospital - too long, too late
Bill Brown's mother
Choir Director It's time to think about
Easter (dead) Jesus!

*the Counsel of Killers:*GET ~~THE~~ RID OF JESUS(MATT. 27:1)

GOOD PEOPLE ARE NOT ALWAYS WELCOME IN THIS WORLD. (JOHN 1:11) DURING HIS PUBLIC MINISTRY, JESUS WAS REJECTED ON MORE THAN ONE OCCASION. FOR EXAMPLE, IN MARK 5 HE HEALED THE MANIAC OF GADARA WHO WAS TERRORIZING A TOWN AND TERRITORY. INSTEAD OF BEING GRATEFUL, THE MERCHANTS OF THE AREA BEGGED JESUS TO LEAVE - ~~PLEASE~~ GO AWAY! HE WAS BAD FOR BUSINESS. WHEN IT CAME TO MONEY OR MORALS, MONEY WAS KING. GETTING RID OF JESUS BECAME THE NUMBER ONE GOAL OF THE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY IN JERUSALEM. THEY CONSPIRED TO KILL HIM AND IN SO DOING BELIEVED THEY WOULD BE RID OF JESUS FOREVER. LET US EXAMINE THE STEPS IN THEIR QUEST TO KILL: *How?*

I. STEP NO. 1: BETRAY HIM - MATT. 26:2,
14-16, 21-24, 47-50, 27:3

IN THEIR WILDEST DREAMS AND SCHEMES, THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS WOULD NEVER HAVE BELIEVED IT POSSIBLE TO INFILTRATE OR PENETRATE THE CORE OF JESUS' DISCIPLE BAND. HOWEVER, SATAN GAVE THEM READY ASSISTANCE. THE PLOT BEGAN WITH THE DEFECTION OF JUDAS. FINDING AN ENEMY INSIDE THE CAMP WAS MORE THAN THEY COULD HOPE FOR. A CAREFUL STUDY OF JUDAS' LIFE AS RECORDED IN THE GOSPELS REVEALS HIM AS A SELF-SEEKING, GREEDY, THIEF POSSESSED AND CONTROLLED ULTIMATELY BY SATAN HIMSELF. JUDAS WAS AN ENEMY OF CHRIST WHO CARED NEITHER FOR CHRIST OR HIS CAUSE - ONLY FOR HIMSELF. HE USED HIS SPECIAL PRIVILEGE AND POSITION FOR PERSONAL GAIN. (SOUNDS LIKE POLITICS AND BUSINESS IN AMERICA IN THE 1990's!) IRONY: JUDAS NEVER

"To what purpose then waste?" worship = waste!

ENJOYED ONE PENNEY OF THE BLOOD MONEY. THE CRY OF HIS CONSCIENCE WAS SOMETHING HE HAND'T FIGURED ON. HIS SUICIDE WAS NOT THE SOLUTION. MONEY, NOT MINISTRY, WAS HIS INTEREST AND DOWNFALL. (COMMENT REGARDING HESBURG'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND THE SUICIDE OF TWO CAMPUS REBELS)

II. STEP NO. 2: BIND HIM - MATT. 27:2

+ this week ... Atlanta - deal with prisoners!
THE OPPONENTS OF JESUS FEARED AN UNARMED CARPENTER/TEACHER WHO HAD NO SOLDIERS, WEAPONS, OR INTENTIONS OF FIGHTING OR HARMING THEM IN ANY WAY. THE SOLDIERS AND TEMPLE POLICE FORCE THEY BROUGHT TO ARREST JESUS WERE TOTALLY UNNECESSARY. THEY BOUND JESUS AS THEY WOULD A COMMON CRIMINAL. ALL HE HAD EVER DONE WITH HIS HANDS WAS TO WORK, HELP AND HEAL NEEDY MANKIND, NEVER TO HURT. THERE MUST BE A SYMBOLISM IN THIS ACT. IT IS THE PICTURE OF MEN TRYING TO BIND THE HANDS OF GOD - AS INCREDIBLE AS IT IS IMPOSSIBLE. BY BINDING JESUS THEY THOUGHT THEY COULD CONTROL HIM AND ULTIMATELY STOP HIS LIFE AND MINISTRY. POINT: WHAT THEY DID NOT, DO NOT UNDERSTAND IS THAT JESUS CANNOT BE DISMISSED THAT EASILY. ALSO, HE ENTERS OUR LIVES BY INVITATION ONLY - NEVER BY FORCE. (REV. 3:20)

III. STEP NO. 3: BUFFET HIM -

MATT. 27:26-30

SCOURGING WAS RESERVED FOR CRIMINALS. IT WAS A PRELUDE TO CRUCIFIXION. IT WAS CRUEL BEYOND WORDS. THE CROWD WAS UNMOVED AND UNSYMPATHETIC AFTER HIS BEATING. WHERE WAS ROMAN JUSTICE THAT DAY? IN THE ANNALS OF JURISPRUDENCE THIS IS THE CLASSIC MISCARRIAGE OF JUSTICE. NOT A VOICE WAS RAISED IN

*13,320,000 - one swift action!!!
whole of Israel!*

JESUS' DEFENSE. (IF YOU WERE INCENSED BY THE BEATING OF THE MAN IN L.A. BY POLICEMEN THINK HOW THIS TYPE OF BEATING SHOULD HAVE CAUSED A SYMPATHETIC REACTION FROM THE CROWD AND RELIGIOUS LEADERS - BUT IT DIDN'T!) THE SOLDIERS ADMINISTERED THE SCOURGING. TO THEM IT WAS PART OF SPORT, HORSEPLAY. THE GESTURES OF THE SOLDIERS IN BOWING TO JESUS WAS ONE OF RIDICULE AND MOCKERY. HE CLAIMED TO BE A KING SO THEY TREATED HIM AS A KING - KING OF NOTHING! IT WAS ALL A JOKE, A WAY OF MAKING FUN OF A POOR MISGUIDED JEW. THEIR MOCK WORSHIP INCLUDED A CROWN, A ROBE AND A SCEPTER. TO CAP OFF THEIR FUN THEY BOWED BEFORE HIM IN MOCK WORSHIP. THEY LOOKED UPON JESUS AS A POOR IMPOSTER, A HELPLESS, WEAK VICTIM SO THEY ATTEMPTED TO STRIP HIM OF ANY DIGNITY WHATSOEVER. IT IS IRONIC THAT LATER ON ONE SOLDIER DID RECOGNIZE HIS DIETY.

IV. STEP NO. 4: BLASPHEME HIM - MATT. 27:39

THE WORD REVEILED WHICH IS ALSO TRANSLATED RAILED IN LUKE 23:39 IS A WORD THAT MEANS TO BLASPHEME OR SPEAK EVIL OF. IT WAS USED OF IRREVERENT SPEECH AGAINST GOD. WE DO NOT USE THE WORD BLASPHEME IN DAILY CONVERSATIONS BUT TO A JEW IT MEANT TO SPEAK IRREVERENTLY OF GOD AND WAS A PUNISHABLE OFFENSE. THE ONE MAN IN ALL OF HUMAN HISTORY WHO NEVER SPOKE EVIL OF ANYONE, ESPECIALLY TO GOD, WAS BEING ACCUSED OF SO SPEAKING. BY THE WAY, IT IS MY CONTENTION THAT THE WAY MEN SPEAK ABOUT GOD IS PROOF OF THE DOCTRINE OF DEPRAVITY. IT IS UNEXPLAINABLE THAT MEN SHOULD SPEAK IN PROFANITY ABOUT GOD - WHY? MEN SWEAR

1 Tim. 1:3 ... "who was before a blasphemer" ... !

AT ONE ANOTHER USING THE NAME OF GOD. THE FACT THAT MEN SWEAR IN GOD'S NAME INDICATES AN INATE AND PERHAPS SUBCONSCIOUS AWARENESS AND FEAR THAT ONE DAY THEY MUST STAND BEFORE HIM AGAINST WHOM THEY REBEL. THE BLASPHEMY TOOK THE FORM OF MOCKERY WHEN THEY TAUNTED HIM TO "COME DOWN FROM THE CROSS." THEY REMEMBERED WHAT HE HAD SAID IN THE EARLY DAYS OF HIS MINISTRY ABOUT THE TEMPLE. IF THESE BLASPHEMERS ONLY KNEW THAT IF HE DID COME DOWN FROM THE CROSS THERE WOULD BE NO HOPE FOR THEM OR ANY OTHER HUMAN BEING EVER. HIS CROSS WAS THEIR ONLY HOPE FOR FORGIVENESS - THERE IS NO OTHER.

1 Cor.
1:18-
21

V. STEP NO. 5: BLINDFOLD HIM - LUKE 22:64

THE TEXT DOES NOT SAY WHY THIS PROCEDURE TOOK PLACE. IT MAY HAVE BEEN A WAY TO DEAL WITH THE PRISONERS IN ORDER TO RENDER THEM HELPLESS, DEFENSELESS, DISORIENTED. WHEN IT WAS ACCOMPLISHED THEY ASKED HIM TO DO TRICKS OR MAGIC SUCH AS MINDREADING TO DEMONSTRATE ANY SUPERNATURAL POWERS HE CLAIMED TO HAVE. HOWEVER, IT MAY HAVE BEEN THAT THEY WERE CONSCIOUS-SMITTEN TO LOOK INTO THE EYES OF THE SON OF GOD AND DID NOT WANT HIM TO LOOK UPON THEM - THEY COULD NOT STAND IN THE LIGHT OF HIS GAZE. IN EVERY GENERATION, MEN ATTEMPT TO HIDE THEIR DEEDS FROM THE EYES OF GOD. THERE'S SINS AND CRIMES THAT ARE OFTEN COMMITTED IN SECRECY OR AT NIGHT BELIEVING THAT NEITHER MAN NOR GOD WILL SEE THE EVIL THAT IS DONE. WHAT MEN FAIL TO UNDERSTAND IS THAT EVEN THOUGHT CHRIST WAS BLINDFOLDED, HE WAS NOT BLINDED! PARADOXICALLY, WE ARE THE ONES WEARING THE BLINDFOLD - NOT JESUS.

VI. STEP NO. 6: BURY HIM - MATT. 27:59-60

THE CRUCIFIXION WAS OVER. JESUS WAS DEAD AND HIS DISCIPLES WERE DETERMINED TO GIVE HIM A PROPER BURIAL. THERE WOULD BE NO POTTER'S FIELD FOR JESUS AS THERE HAD BEEN FOR JUDAS. THE ENEMIES OF JESUS BELIEVED THAT EVERYTHING CONCERNING HIS MOVEMENT WAS FINISHED. THE CEMETERY IS THE LAST STOP, EVERYBODY KNOWS THAT. THERE WAS NO TRIUMPH OVER THE TOMB, SO THEY THOUGHT, SO THEY WERE WRONG. THEY COULD NOT GET RID OF JESUS THAT EASILY. WHAT THEY AND ALL MEN FAIL TO RECOGNIZE IS THAT THOSE WHO WILL NOT DEAL WITH JESUS AS SAVIOUR ARE DESTINED TO DEAL WITH HIM AS SOVEREIGN. FACE HIM NOW, FACE HIM LATER, FACE HIM WE MUST. ONCE AGAIN, PILATE'S QUESTION ARISES: "WHAT SHALL I DO WITH JESUS WHICH IS CALLED CHRIST?" THERE ARE THREE BASIC ATTITUDES:

options

(1) I WILL DO NOTHING. THE ATTITUDE TO IGNORE AND PAY NO ATTENTION TO JESUS IS ATTEMPTED BY MANY. IF HE CONFRONTS THEM AT CHURCH, THEY SIMPLY STAY AWAY FROM CHURCH. IF HE SPEAKS TO THEM WHILE THEY ARE ALONE, THEY DETERMINE NEVER TO BE ALONE BUT ALWAYS WITH OTHERS. IF HE CROSSES THEIR PATH THROUGH THE WITNESS OF A CHRISTIAN THEY ATTEMPT TO AVOID SUCH COMPANY AT ALL COSTS. THEY ATTEMPT TO BAR EVERY WINDOW, CLOSE EVERY DOOR AND REFUSE CHRIST'S ADMITTANCE.

seems

(2) I WILL BE NEUTRAL. IT'S NICE TO BE NEUTRAL BECAUSE IT REQUIRES NO ACCOUNTABILITY, NO DECISION, NO GUILT. IT IS THE IDEA OF NOT GETTING INVOLVED WITH JESUS. THEY ARE NEITHER FOR OR AGAINST HIM. HOWEVER, THEY FAIL TO REALIZE THAT WHEN IT COMES TO CHRIST THERE IS NO NEUTRAL GROUND.

Matt 12:30

(508)

*"I don't
do funerals"
Matt
ok*

IN DECISION MAKING CONCERNING CHRIST IT IS EITHER POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE - NOT NEUTRALITY.

(3) I WILL TRUST HIM NOW. THE OPPORTUNITY TO KNOW CHRIST AS SAVIOUR WILL ~~NEVER BE NEARER THAN NOW~~. FOR SOME IT IS NOW OR NEVER. (II COR. 6:2, PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11)

ROBERT K. SPRADLING

APRIL 8, 1984

THE COUNCIL OF KILLERS

MATTHEW 27:1

WHEN ~~TWO~~ TERRORISTS WOUNDED ALMOST 50 PEOPLE IN THE STREETS OF JERUSALEM, THIS PAST WEEK, YOU AND I WERE NOT SURPRISED. THROWING HAND GRENADES INTO CROWDED BUSES, HIDING BOMBS IN DEPARTMENT STORES, CAR BOMBS INVOLVED IN KILLING INNOCENT BY-STANDERS IS THE WAY OF THUGS AND TERRORISTS. IT IS THE WAY THEY OPERATE AND SEEMS TO BE INCREASING IN INTENSITY EACH YEAR. HOWEVER, WE DO NOT EXPECT SUCH ACTIVITIES TO TAKE PLACE UNDER THE SUPERVISION AND WITH THE SANCTION OF RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS. THE TEXT BEFORE US DESCRIBES THE SCHEMING OF THE JEWISH LEADERSHIP IN ISRAEL, 2000 YEARS AGO, TO GET RID OF JESUS. THE SCHEME OR PLOT INVOLVED THE CHIEF PRIEST, ELDERS, AND THE ENTIRE SANHEDRIN. (MATTHEW 26:59) THIS GROUP WAS DRIVEN BY THE OBSESSION TO RID ISRAEL OF JESUS ONCE FOR ALL. THEY RESORTED TO PAYING FALSE WITNESSES TO LIE ABOUT JESUS, ANYTHING AND ANYWAY TO GET HIM OFF THE SCENE. THESE LEADERS WERE UPSET BECAUSE JESUS WAS CAPTURING THEIR AUDIENCE. THEY WERE FILLED WITH ENVY AND HATE BECAUSE THEY CONSIDERED JESUS A THREAT TO THEIR EXISTENCE. THEREFORE, THEY DEVISED A SCHEME TO MURDER HIM. JEWISH LAW PROHIBITED A DEATH SENTENCE BEING PASSED AT NIGHT, SO THESE CONSPIRATORS ROSE EARLY IN THE MORNING TO CONTINUE THEIR WORK OF PREPARING A CASE TO PRESENT TO PILATE. THEY WERE CAREFUL TO CLOSE ALL LOOPHOLES SO THERE WOULD BE NO ESCAPE FOR JESUS. THESE MEN BELONG TO A CLASS OF PEOPLE WHO FOR MANY CENTURIES HAVE TRIED TO GET RID OF JESUS.

highest Jewish Court,
the number, high priest
(President) =
final Court of appeal

Math 26:59
(6468 plov)

FROM ROMAN RULERS OF ANCIENT TIMES TO THE RABID ATHEISTS OF OUR TIMES, MEN HAVE SOUGHT TO GET RID OF HIM BECAUSE THEY CONSIDER JESUS A THREAT TO THEIR GODLESS SYSTEM WHICH IN MANY INSTANCES SEEKS TO ENLIST AND ENSLAVE THE MASSES TO THEIR PHILOSOPHY. LET US CONSIDER WHAT THESE MEN DID TO HIM.

I. THEY BOUND HIM - MATTHEW 27:2

A STUDY OF THE GOSPELS WOULD INDICATE THAT THIS IS A ~~REPETITION~~ OF SOMETHING THAT BEGAN IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE. (JOHN 18:12) HOW LITTLE THESE PEOPLE KNEW JESUS. HE HAD NO REASON TO FLEE FOR HE WAS GUILTY OF NO CRIME AND HE HAD NO FEAR OF THE CROWDS OR THE COURTS. HIS WAS AN ILLEGAL ARREST AND TRIAL BUT THEY WERE STILL MISTAKEN, HE WOULD NOT RUN AWAY AND HIDE AND THE BINDING WAS SIMPLY UNNECESSARY. THESE WERE THE HANDS THAT TOILED AS A CARPENTER, THAT TOUCHED THE SICK AND THE MAIMED AND THAT TURNED BACK THE FORCES OF NATURE AND DEMONS. THESE PEOPLE VIEWED JESUS AS A COMMON CRIMINAL AND LIKE PILATE MADE THE WRONG DECISION ABOUT HIM AND THE BINDING OF HIS HANDS REVEALED THE BINDING OF THEIR HEARTS. THERE IS A SYMBOLISM IN THIS PICTURE THAT IS STAGGERING - MEN BINDING OR TYING THE HANDS OF GOD - AN INCREDIBLE IDEA! IN THIS PICTURE WE LEARN SOMETHING ABOUT THE SELF-LIMITATION OF A SOVEREIGN GOD. THERE IS A SENSE IN WHICH GOD PERMITS FINITE MEN TO BIND THE MOVEMENT OF AN INFINITE GOD! THESE RELIGIOUS LEADERS SPEAK OF A BROAD CLASS OF PEOPLE WHO

Isa 53-1 and

ATTEMPT TO BIND THE HANDS OF JESUS. THEY SAY, KEEP YOUR HANDS OFF MY LIFE, LET ME ALONE. I DO NOT WISH TO BE DISTURBED NOW AND POSSIBLY NEVER. WHAT MEN FAIL TO UNDERSTAND IS IF THEY SAY TO JESUS - LEAVE ME ALONE, THAT IS EXACTLY WHAT HE WILL DO. HE ENTERS OUR LIFE AND EXPERIENCE BY INVITATION ONLY! (REVELATION 3:20)

II. THEY BETRAYED HIM - VERSE 3

TECHNICALLY, JUDAS WAS NOT PART OF THIS GROUP BUT HE DID FALL INTO THEIR SCHEME OR PLAN AND EVEN THOUGH HE WAS NOT AN ACTIVE PARTICIPANT WITH THEM HE CERTAINLY WAS INVOLVED AS A CONSPIRATOR AND WAS RESPONSIBLE AND GUILTY - PART OF THE TOTAL SCHEME. HE SOUGHT THEM OUT AND TOOK THEIR MONEY TO BETRAY JESUS. THEREFORE, JUDAS' NAME HAS BEEN RECORDED IN INFAMY AS REPRESENTATIVE OF ALL WHO ARE TRAITORS AND BETRAY FRIENDS. HIS NAME IS SYNONYMOUS WITH TREACHERY. AS YOU KNOW, JUDAS WAS THE TREASURER OF THE DISCIPLES. A STUDY OF THE GOSPELS WILL REVEAL THAT HE WAS GREEDY, CRITICAL OF GENEROSITY, MEASURED EVERYTHING IN TERMS OF MONEY BUT WAS IN FACT A THIEF FOR HE WAS STEALING OUT OF THE COMMON TREASURY ACCORDING TO JOHN 12:6. JUDAS BETRAYED JESUS FOR APPROXIMATELY \$50 IN AMERICAN MONEY. HE USED HIS PRIVILEGED POSITION AND HIS SPECIAL KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS' INNERMOST WORKINGS TO BETRAY THE SON OF GOD. THE VERY MONEY HE SCHEMED TO SECURE BROUGHT NO PLEASURE TO HIS TORTURED CONSCIENCE AND HAVING GIVEN IT BACK HE COMMITTED SUICIDE. HE ENJOYED NOT ONE PENNY OF THE BLOOD MONEY. SIMPLY STATED, JUDAS WAS PREOCCUPIED

WITH MONEY WHEN HE SHOULD HAVE BEEN PRE-
OCCUPIED WITH MINISTRY. BEFORE YOU AND I
BECOME TOO SELF-RIGHTEOUS ONE MIGHT ASK
HIMSELF HOW MUCH WOULD IT TAKE FOR YOU
AND ME TO BETRAY CHRIST. IN MANY INSTANCES
IT IS SIMPLY THE AMOUNT! BRUCE DUNN ONCE
SAID IN A CONFERENCE HERE THAT MOST OF US
WOULD NOT BETRAY THE LORD FOR \$50 BUT WE
MIGHT FOR \$50 AN HOUR! (ARTISTS HAVE
DRAWN SYMBOLS REPRESENTING THE LIVES OF
THE APOSTLES. FOR EXAMPLE, PETER IS
REPRESENTED WITH 2 KEYS AND AN UPSIDE
DOWN CROSS. JUDAS IS REPRESENTED BY A
BAG WITH A HOLE IN IT AND COINS FALLING
OUT THE BOTTOM.) JUDAS WAS A MAN WHO
SAID GOODBYE TO JESUS, GOODBYE TO PRINCIPLES
WHEN FACED WITH THE GREED OF HAVING MORE
MONEY.

III. THEY BOWED BEFORE HIM - VERSE 29

ONCE AGAIN, THE SANHEDRIN IS NOT IN VIEW
BUT THE SOLDIERS. HOWEVER, THEY ARE PART
OF THE OVERALL SCHEME. THE GESTURE OF THE
SOLDIERS IS ONE OF RIDICULE AND MOCKERY.
HE CLAIMED TO BE A KING SO THEY TREATED
HIM AS A KING - KING OF NOTHING! IT IS
ALL A JOKE, A WAY OF MAKING FUN OF A
MISGUIDED JEW. THEIR MOCK WORSHIP INVOLVED
A CROWN, A ROBE AND A SCEPTER. TO CAP OFF
THEIR FUN OR SPORT THEY BOWED BEFORE JESUS
IN MOCK WORSHIP. THEY CONTINUED THEIR
HORSEPLAY BY SMITING HIM AND SPITTING UPON
HIM. THEY LOOKED UPON JESUS AS AN IMPOSTER,
A HELPLESS, WEAK VICTIM SO THEY ATTEMPTED
TO STRIP HIM OF HIS SELF-IMPOSED DIETY
AND DIGNITY. THIS SCENE OF MOCKERY WILL
ONE DAY BE FULLY AND COMPLETELY VINDICATED
ACCORDING TO PHILIPPIANS 2:9-11.

Every - yours too!

IV. THEY BLASPHEMED HIM - VERSE 39

THE WORD REVILED IS ALSO TRANSLATED RAILED IN LUKE 23:39 BUT THE GREEK WORD IS BLASPHEME OR TO SPEAK EVIL OF. IT WAS USED OF IRREVERENT SPEECH AGAINST GOD. WE DO NOT USE THE WORD BLASPHEME MUCH IN EVERY DAY CONVERSATION BUT TO A JEW IT MEANT TO SPEAK IRREVERENTLY OF GOD AND IT WAS A PUNISHABLE OFFENSE. THE ONE MAN IN ALL OF HUMAN HISTORY ~~that~~ ^{who} NEVER SPOKE EVIL OF ANYONE, THEY ARE ACCUSING OF SPEAKING EVIL AGAINST GOD! (BY THE WAY, IT IS MY CONTENTION THAT THE WAY MEN SPEAK ABOUT GOD IS A PROOF OF DEPRAVITY. IT IS ABSOLUTELY UNEXPLAINABLE THAT MEN WOULD SPEAK IN PROFANITY ABOUT GOD. MEN SWARE AT GOD AND ONE ANOTHER IN THE NAME OF GOD. THE FACT THAT MEN SWEAR IN GOD'S NAME INDICATE AN INNATE FEAR AND PERHAPS A SUBCONSCIOUS AWARENESS THAT ONE DAY THEY MUST STAND BEFORE HIM AND THE REBELLION OF A SINFUL HEART FINDS ITS EXPRESSION THROUGH PROFANITY AND BLASPHEMY OF GOD'S NAME.)

V. THEY BLINDFOLDED HIM - LUKE 22:64

WE CANNOT KNOW FOR SURE WHY THIS PROCEDURE TOOK PLACE. IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN A WAY OF DEALING WITH PRISONERS IN ORDER TO RENDER THEM HELPLESS AND DEFENSELESS. WHEN IT WAS ACCOMPLISHED, THEY ASKED HIM TO DO TRICKS OF MAGIC AND MIND-READING TO REVEAL WHO WAS SMITING HIM WHILE HE WAS BLINDFOLDED. HOWEVER, IT MAY HAVE BEEN THAT THEY COULD NOT LOOK UPON THE SON OF GOD AND DID WANT HIM TO LOOK UPON

THEM - THEY COULD NOT STAND THE GAZE OF GOD. IN EVERY GENERATION, MEN ATTEMPT TO HIDE THEIR DEEDS FROM THE EYES OF GOD. THEIR SINS AND CRIMES ARE COMMITTED AT NIGHT AND IN SECRECY BELIEVING THAT MAN OR GOD DOES NOT SEE. WHAT THEY FAIL TO UNDERSTAND WAS THAT EVEN THOUGH HE WAS BLINDFOLDED HE WAS NOT BLINDED. THEY WERE UNWILLING AND AFRAID TO LOOK INTO THE EYES OF JESUS AND THAT SAME FEELING IS REFLECTED BY MEN TODAY - THEY DO NOT CARE TO LOOK AT HIM OR HAVE HIM LOOK AT THEM. WE HAVE CONSIDERED 5 WORDS INVOLVED IN THE PLOT OF SCHEME TO KILL JESUS. THERE IS ANOTHER WORD THAT BEGINS WITH THE LETTER "B" THAT IS AT THE HEART OF THE MESSAGE OF CHRIST. PILATE ASKED THE MOST PENETRATING QUESTION WHEN HE SAID TO THE CROWD "WHAT SHALL I DO WITH JESUS WHICH IS CALLED CHRIST?" (MATTHEW 27:22) PILATE'S A PROPER QUESTION. MEN ARE ASKING THE WRONG QUESTION TODAY. THE QUESTION IS NOT IS THERE A GOD OR IS HE ABLE TO HELP ME? THE QUESTION IS ACTS 16:32 - THAT IS THE QUESTION YOU SHOULD BE ASKING! THE ANSWERS TO PILATE'S QUESTION ARE BASICALLY THREE:

(1) I WILL DO NOTHING. THIS ATTITUDE IS TO IGNORE, PAY NO ATTENTION TO CHRIST. IF HE CONFRONTS ME AT CHURCH I WILL STAY AWAY FROM CHURCH. IF HE SPEAKS WHEN I AM ALONE I WILL DETERMINE TO BE WITH OTHERS ALWAYS. IF HE CROSSES MY PATH WITH WITNESSING CHRISTIANS THEN I SHALL AVOID THEIR COMPANY. I WILL BAR EVERY WINDOW AND DOOR OF MY LIFE AND SIMPLY REFUSE TO LET CHRIST IN.

< Not Deciding
is Deciding

(2) I WILL BE NEUTRAL. IF I MAKE NO DECISION THEN NO ACCOUNTABILITY OF RESPONSIBILITY CAN BE LAID UPON ME. I WILL NOT GET INVOLVED. I WILL NEITHER BE FOR OR AGAINST CHRIST. JESUS SAID THIS CANNOT BE DONE, MEN ARE EITHER FOR OR AGAINST HIM, THERE IS NO MIDDLE GROUND.

(3) I WILL TRUST HIM NOW. THE OPPORTUNITY TO KNOW CHRIST AS SAVIOR WILL NEVER BE NEARER THAN RIGHT NOW. (II COR. 6:2)
FOR SOME, IT MAY BE NOW OR NEVER.