

The Contrast Between The Obsolete And The Restored

Dear Friends in Christ Jesus our Lord,

In recent materials we've used an hourglass image to convey the transformation you need in order to disentangle yourself from the **complacent mediocrity** of so much of Christianity that may be embedded in you by the utilitarian religious establishment. We again remind you that this *passive spiritual lethargy* has come about from centuries of unrelenting anti-Semitic teachings by Christian theologians of all varieties. Determined to rid Christianity of its Hebraic roots and of any trace of Jewish influence, these theologians downplayed and even disparaged the truths of the Torah and the Prophets — the very Scriptures from which Jesus taught (see Matthew 5:17-19). Anti-Semitic Hellenist philosophy had gained vast cultural dominance over much of the Mediterranean world during the 2nd through 4th centuries. Through the writings of such men of influence as John Chrysostom, Justin Martyr, and Origen, anti-Semitic Hellenist thought permeated Christianity. Tragically, their anti-Semitic vitriol also discarded the precious Hebraic foundations from which Jesus had brought forth His New Covenant Kingdom.

The institution of Roman Catholicism has remained anti-Semitic since its beginning, culminating in the hateful violence of the Inquisitions to root out and destroy the Jewish people. Even Martin Luther, the 16th century Reformer who turned anti-Semitic, alerted Christians to be on their guard against Jews: *"Verily a hopeless, wicked, venomous and devilish thing is the existence of these Jews, who for fourteen hundred years have been, and still are, our pest, torment, and misfortune. They are just devils, and nothing more."* Luther recommended that the following steps be taken against Jews: *Their synagogues should be set on fire; their homes should be destroyed; all Jewish holy books should be confiscated; rabbis must not teach, under threat of death; passport and travel privileges should be revoked; Jews should be forbidden to charge interest on loans; young Jewish men and women should be forced into hard manual labor.* The Reformer's writings would serve as a blueprint for Nazi atrocities centuries later.

Having read the above paragraph, are you wondering what this past history has to do with you? Maybe you can't believe that our Lord would let Christianity be dominated by distorted theology for so many centuries. But keep this truth in your mind's forefront: *our sovereign God keeps His promises.* The promise He made to Abraham stands out in particular. Abraham is far more special in our Father's sight than most Bible teachers give him credit. It was to Abraham that God promised, *"I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you"* (Genesis 12:3).

Multiple centuries of curses against the Jews have been enacted by so-called Christians. And because of God's promise to Abraham, much of institutionalized Christianity has been cursed with deception. Until Israel was reestablished as a nation in 1948 and Jerusalem given back to the Jewish people in 1967, much of Christianity's thought and practices coincided with those of Hellenism. On the surface, the various competing denominations and sects may appear different. But at the core, the Hebraic

foundations and covenants which embodied God's promises through our Lord Jesus have been eliminated.

We encourage you to ask the Holy Spirit if what we're sharing with you is true. The Spirit of truth won't let you be deceived *if you ask Him with the intent that you will do as He guides and directs you.*

"For there must be factions among you, in order that the approved among you may become manifest" (1Corinthians 11:19, literal).

For centuries the real sense of "approval" among many Christians is being comfortable in a congregation of like-minded, complacently mediocre people. Surrounded by the crowd around them in their weekly service, few ever ask if they have God's approval. How would they know if they're approved by God? They just take for granted that gathering together weekly with others satisfies what God expects of them. They have no idea that the attraction of *shared complacent mediocrity* is a powerful force in comparison to living sacrificially on behalf of the Lord they love and being determined by grace to fulfill our heavenly Father's will.

It's important to recognize that the organized Christian establishment is in a period of transition. The institution of Hellenized Christianity has been withering for several decades even while the Hebraic foundations are going forth in the manner our Lord declares His Kingdom will expand: *"To what shall I liken the Kingdom of God? It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened"* (Luke 13:20,21). The Kingdom which our Lord is establishing isn't a place or an organization. Rather, as Jesus tells you, *"For indeed, the Kingdom of God is within you"* (Luke 17:21).

It is the anti-Semitic/Hellenist Christianity that is in the process of passing away. And the Hebraic foundations are quietly expanding around the world similar to how the Mosaic covenant was replaced by the New Covenant: *"In that He says, 'a New Covenant,' He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away"* (Hebrews 8:13).

What is becoming obsolete?

Perhaps you're a product of a form of Christianity in which your family's religious institution determined your view of God. That particular creedal expression most likely emphasized particular parts of God's Word and discounted or neglected other parts. You may have been heavily influenced by your denomination's own specific added-on documents, traditions, practices and books which interpreted Scripture according to their own distinctive line of theology. And whether voiced or not, the practices and beliefs of other denominations and sects were regarded as inferior in some ways to yours. For centuries this disunity has been the bane of Christianity — theological divisions created by men who relied solely on their intellect, with each taking a different and often contrary view of God's Word.

Out of this continuing grave error of dismembering the Body of Christ have arisen the multitude of various utilitarian (efficiently operated) religious establishments. Yet all too many of these diverse religious belief systems focus on placating and pleasing their constituents rather than on insisting on ongoing repentance and sacrificial service under the Lordship of Jesus. All that a utilitarian religious establishment needs is people who are committed to keeping their particular system operating. As diverse as these systems are, there's a striking similarity in their weekly agenda. They gather at a pre-arranged time and place, participate in a pre-orchestrated service, and leave at a designated time having had little if any meaningful conversation with others. Few will make any significant connection during the week. And sadly, for too many, Jesus will be boxed within their spiritual framework as "Savior" but have no role as Lord of their daily life.

There's a certain "comfort level" that's shared among people who are content with complacent mediocrity in their spiritual lives. It feels comfortable to "fellowship" with other like-minded attendees who have similar values and lifestyle. The spiritual **high point** each

You Must Keep The Religious Establishment Out Of The Way

Religious Establishment

- Jesus limited to being Savior
- anti-Semitic/utilitarian
- unity by demonic strongholds
- not Holy Spirit/rhema dependent
- spiritually powerless
- produces complacent mediocrity

Jesus Your Lord

two way interaction
through the Spirit





week for most is when they gather together for their service. But the invisible element which is holding them together in their shared spiritual lethargy **is the same demonic stronghold(s)** which makes them feel comfortable with each other. (“He/she is just like me. I must be OK with God!”). The miracles of Lord Jesus and the power of His Spirit are historical facts which they believe took place two millennia ago. But today, in their midst, is He still at work with miracles, divine interventions and timing that only He could have orchestrated? No way! At least not in their own daily lives. As long as they can read their Bible and get together with others on Sunday morning and go on making their own decisions and pursuing their own goals without any thought of Father’s will, they’re content. But their “form of godliness” is no different than that of people whose religion has nothing to do with Jesus. Holding to their own self-pleasing, self-serving way of spending Sunday morning, the complacently mediocre could be described as those who *“have a form of godliness but deny its power.”* But rather than seeking to join with them, Paul warns, *“Have nothing to do with such people”* (2Timothy 3:5).

What happened to the spiritual power that Jesus promised His own for all time? Consider this sad reality. Anti-Semitic theologians over the centuries have declared that the spiritual power of Pentecost was intended only for the earliest believers. They say that the presence and power of the Holy Spirit disappeared when the last Apostle died. So in the absence of spiritual power and joyful testimonies to the wondrous work of our Lord Jesus, the religious establishment has elevated Bible instruction in an academic environment to be a believer’s contact point with God’s will. The sorry fruit of this powerless academic approach has been passive listeners who may find encouragement from God’s Word but have not been held accountable to actually put it into practice. And without the power of the Holy Spirit at work in and around and through them, they aren’t prepared to sacrifice themselves to bring glory to our Lord (Luke 9:23-26; 14:27).

Characteristics of the Kingdom that is advancing:

The genuine called-out ones of Christ, both among His earliest followers and in those today who are devoted to Jesus and serving in His Kingdom, are resolutely committed to His Lordship in their lives as they fulfill His Father’s will and seek His glory. These are glorious life purposes, and to be a part of bringing them about they live repentantly out of love for their Lord and for one another. They understand how crucial *communal righteousness* is to their fellowship family so that our Father will hear their prayers and receive from their lives the praise that’s commensurate with His glory (Ephesians 1:6,12,14). Each person knows that he or she is on a spiritual journey that is intentional in both seeking the *rhema* of our Lord’s Spirit to guide them and being used in His power through the gift(s) He has apportioned them.

The love that the Holy Spirit produces and grows in their lives together as extended spiritual family in Jesus is buoyed as they daily encourage and exhort each another (Hebrews 3:13; 10:24,25). As part of their mutual commitment to uphold communal righteousness, these brothers and sisters exercise loving correction and rebuke when unChrist-like actions and words and attitudes are evident among them (Matthew 18:15; 1Thessalonians 5:14,15; 2Timothy 2:14; Titus 3:10). The **high point** of their faith walk is representing our Lord Jesus to the unbelieving world around them in love, in words and

in actions. They gather together as extended spiritual family in each other's homes so they can readily take part in what's being shared face to face. And because the Holy Spirit is present within each person, each one is able to bring with them an expression of the Spirit which will build up the others (1Corinthians 14:26).

These Kingdom-devoted sons and daughters of our Father willingly and gladly live under the rule of our Lord Jesus in their lives. As their Savior when they were born again by His Spirit, Jesus made this way of life possible for them — to have a daily living experience with Him under His Lordship as they're conscious to represent Him in any way possible to the people they encounter. The Kingdom-devoted are joined together in loving (*agape*) unity by the Spirit of our Lord Jesus even though they have different life experiences and varying levels of spiritual maturity. Joyful testimonies of the miraculous, of divine encounters, and of amazing interventions are theirs so that together they can praise their Lord and mutually encourage each other. This way of life is possible because they have chosen to *trust our Lord's promises* rather than believe the distortions of anti-Semitic theology.

Our Lord Jesus: *"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth"* (Acts 1:8).

Peter: *"Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off — for all whom the Lord our God will call"* (Acts 2:38,39).

There's a tremendous *synergy* (two or more doing far more for their Lord than any can alone) in the fellowship of the repentant as each person is used by the Holy Spirit (Romans 12:4-8; Ephesians 4:16). God's Word assures us of this. To not want with your whole being to be fully available for the Spirit to use is a sure sign that either His Spirit isn't in you or that you're choosing your own self-will over that of your Father. We encourage you to go back and tag first base: be born from above into union with Jesus, and fully submit to Father's will! If indeed the Holy Spirit is indwelling you, please don't quench or grieve Him by living in mediocre complacency.

Mike & Sue

P.S. We frequently walk the trails at Pinelaw Park and Conference Center which our friends Ron and Nicki have given us permission to use. This is where so much of the Holy Spirit's *rhema* is revealed, directing us what to write next. During one of these recent prayer walks the Holy Spirit reminded us of two key events from our past. First, numerous people on retreats would comment about revelations and transformations in their lives that took place as they walked the forest trails at the retreat center we taught/administered from 1983-93. Something spiritually happened to them during these walks, whether alone or as they walked and talked with someone else.

Second, as we were finishing our time in Israel having been given what we were to

return to the US to share, we went to the vicinity of Emmaus for three days. We wanted to confirm with our Lord that we understood everything He wanted us to know at that point (Luke 24:13-32).

After a recent walk at Pinelaw we emailed Ron and Nicki this sign which reflects what their trails mean to us.

