

## THE ONLY CREDENTIALS YOU NEED! : PART ONE

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Testimony Of A Messianic Jewess, FidoNet And BBSes, Learning Directly From God's Word, Our Superficial World, God Looks At Our Hearts, Beware Of Worldly Enticements, Religious Leaders Puffed Up With Pride And Vanity, Verses Regarding Walking In A Meek And Humble Spirit, False God Of This World, Satan Cast Down Due To Pride And Vanity, Devil Continues To Tempt People With Pride And Vanity, Lovers Of Their Own Selves And Proud Boasters, Beware Of Bringing Reproach To The Cause Of Christ, Timothy Ordained First Bishop Of Ephesus, Puffed Up With Too Much Knowledge, True Messengers Have Always Been Despised By The Religionists, Persecution Of God's Prophets, Murderers Of The Prophets, Jesus Is Rejected And Murdered By Jewish Elders

A number of years ago while reading through certain FidoNet message echoes, I came across the following humble, yet very inspiring, testimony that was written by a Messianic Jewess, which I would like to share with my readers:

----- Begin Quote -----

"When I sought out rabbis for answers and discovered they really could not answer, I learned a valuable lesson about faith: if you want to know anything, it is up to YOU to learn/discover things for yourself. There are no shortcuts -- including asking a so-called "sage" . . . I had to study on my own and draw my own conclusions . . . So, in my ignorance, I turned to a fabulous reference known as The Holy Scriptures and read them for myself -- I read my little Jewish Bible, and did so without viewing it through the "window of the Talmud" . . . I was untainted and free of all influence -- it was up to me, an atheist on my own, to decide IF I would believe, and to what degree I should believe. I believe that due to my own honesty in seeking to know the Truth, that G-d blessed and led me with His Ruakh HaKodesh (Holy Spirit), and revealed that Truth to me . . . So, I went from atheist to Messianic Jewish Believer -- and it has now been over 20 years since that time."

----- End Of Quote -----

For those of you who may not be familiar with it, FidoNet was -- and still is to a considerably smaller degree -- one of a number of global messaging networks that is utilized by PC-ANSI-based Bulletin Board Services -- or BBSes -- as a means to exchange message data packets. FidoNet and similar networks preceded the Internet and the World Wide Web. Some of us old-timers still keep our BBSes running for nostalgic reasons, as well as to demonstrate to the younger generation how computer users communicated prior to the advent of the World Wide Web. Please refer to my article entitled "The Internet: Our Final Frontier, Your Last Chance?" for a brief

Look at the history of the Endtime Prophecy Net ministry.

At any rate, wow, what a touching story! I can really relate to it. Much like myself, here is a person who did not rely upon organized religion, or the wisdom of men, to teach her the Truth. Rather, she chose to go directly to the Lord and His Word, despite what other people may have thought or said regarding her "unorthodox" method of learning. I am reminded of verses such as the following:

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

John 14:26, KJV

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

2 Timothy 2:15, KJV

To our own shame, in this world which has become so overrun with political correctness, it seems that many people have fallen into the bad habit of judging others by their physical appearance, or by how many educational degrees they possess, or by what kind of a car they drive, or by what kind of a job they hold. The people of this modern, superficial world have indeed become quite shallow and judgmental. I am reminded of what the Lord said to the Prophet Samuel about three thousand years ago when he was sent to anoint a young shepherd by the name of David as the next king of Israel. In the first Book of Samuel we read the following:

"But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart."

1 Samuel 16:7, KJV

So, as you can clearly see, while we often tend to look on a person's exterior, and judge them according to what we see, the Lord is more interested in what is on the inside. Sadly, many people today have foolishly fallen victim to the very devilish enticements which the Apostle John warns us against in his first Epistle, as we see here:

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."

1 John 2:16, KJV

While it is bad enough that secular people yield themselves to these things, tragically, these very same sins of pride and vanity afflict modern-day Christianity as well. It seems that much like the Scribes and Pharisees of old, there are certain Bible scholars, religious leaders and preachers who just love to set themselves above others through their vain boasting. The Apostle Paul cautioned us against making such comparisons in his second Epistle to the Corinthians when he wrote the following:

"For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise."  
2 Corinthians 10:12, KJV

This unhealthy attitude of bragging about our accomplishments is in direct contradiction to the Scriptures. It is a worldly attitude which has absolutely no place in the life of a true Christian. Over and over again we are repeatedly admonished to humble ourselves before the Lord, and to take the lower seat. Consider the following Scriptural examples which are found in the Old Testament:

"The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit."  
Psalms 34:18, KJV

"Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall."  
Proverbs 16:18, KJV

"Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, and before honour is humility."  
Proverbs 18:12, KJV

". . . but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word."  
Isaiah 66:2b, KJV

In the New Testament, Jesus continued to teach this very same principle of walking humbly before the Lord, as we see by the following verses:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven . . . Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth."  
Matthew 5:3, 5, KJV

"Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward . . . And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward."  
Matthew 6:1-2, 5, KJV

"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls."  
Matthew 11:29, KJV

"Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven."  
Matthew 18:4, KJV

"But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he

that shall humble himself shall be exalted."  
Matthew 23:11-12, KJV

The Lord's chosen Apostles -- such as Peter, James and Paul -- likewise promoted this very same meek and humble attitude in some of their writings, and warned the members of the Early Church to be careful that they didn't become lifted up in pride and vanity, as we see by the following verses:

"Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews:"  
Acts 20:19, KJV

"Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves."  
Philippians 2:3, KJV

". . . Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble."  
James 4:6b, KJV

"Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up."  
James 4:10, KJV

"Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble."  
1 Peter 5:5, KJV

As I have mentioned to my readers on other occasions, the truth of the matter is that the Bible has absolutely nothing positive to say about pride; not a single word. That being the case, then we must ask ourselves what spirit motivates people to be proud of their accomplishments? To be proud of their college degree? To be proud of their great job? To be proud of their brand new car? To be proud of their nice home? To boast against their fellow man? Is it possibly this one?:

"Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:"  
Ephesians 2:2, KJV

"In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."  
2 Corinthians 4:4, KJV

As I explain in such articles as "Satan: His Origin, Purpose and Future", pride was also Satan's downfall. As we read in the Book of the Prophet Isaiah, Satan -- who is also known as Lucifer, the Serpent, the Dragon and the Devil -- wanted to steal God's Throne. He wanted to rob God of His Authority. However, as a result of his pride and vanity, this is what happened to him:

"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst

weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit."  
Isaiah 14:12-15, KJV

"And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven."  
Luke 10:18, KJV

Thus, from the Book of Genesis -- telling Adam and Eve that they will be as gods -- to the Gospels -- tempting Jesus in the wilderness -- to the Book of Revelation -- inspiring the Battle of Armageddon as well as the final Battle of Gog and Magog -- Satan has repeatedly used pride and vanity in his endeavors to destroy God's highest creation -- man -- and to try to take over His Kingdom.

As I noted earlier, these very same sins of pride and vanity plague modern Christianity as well. Contrary to the previous Scriptural counsel which advises us to walk humbly and meekly before the Lord, some of these self-made religionists love to brag about their theological credentials. They boast about the theological seminaries they have attended. They boast about how many books they have written. They boast about the size of their so-called "megachurches". They boast about how many speaking tours they have taken part in. They boast about the "glorious" history of their particular church. They boast about the thousands of people who they supposedly lead to the Lord. They boast about how God has blessed them with material blessings -- including lots of money. They just boast, boast, boast; and I suspect that God must really be sick of it!

It is interesting to note that in writing about the sinful and ungodly citizens of Rome, the Apostle Paul also included the words "proud" and "boasters" in his description. Consider this verse:

"Backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,"  
Romans 1:30, KJV

In short, these kinds of people will do anything, and say anything, to try to appeal to the common man, and to impress him with their so-called "importance". They are so hung up on their own selves, and so in love with themselves, and so drunk on their own accomplishments, that all they know how to do is boast, boast, boast. It might interest you to know that in describing the Last Days, this is exactly what the Apostle Paul said would happen. Paul was obviously right on target. Consider these words that he wrote to Timothy:

"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."

## 2 Timothy 3:1-5, KJV

In particular, notice Paul's use of the words and phrases "lovers of their own selves", "proud", "boasters", "heady", "highminded" and "having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof". Some of these modern preachers and spiritual leaders certainly fit these descriptive words to the letter. It is difficult to not consider that the Lord may have shown these Endtime false prophets to the Apostle Paul two thousand years ago. Furthermore, while some of these religious leaders may appear godly on the surface, we must wonder if they truly are. How many of these false shepherds have publicly shamed our Christian faith already -- through sex scandals, money scandals, etc. -- and brought reproach to the Cause of Jesus Christ?

In describing to Timothy the qualities which were to be desired in a bishop, one of the things which Paul told him was that a bishop must not be lifted up in pride. However, what Paul also told Timothy, is that a bishop must be beyond reproach, and not yield himself to the Devil's temptations. Consider the following verses:

"Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil."

1 Timothy 3:6-7, KJV

For those of you who may not be aware of it, it is possible that one of the reasons why Paul shared this advice with Timothy, was because he was preparing Timothy to become the first bishop of Ephesus, which he did in fact become, as we see by this verse:

"The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit. Grace be with you. Amen. [The second epistle unto Timotheus, ordained the first bishop of the church of the Ephesians, was written from Rome, when Paul was brought before Nero the second time.]"

2 Timothy 4:22, KJV

Returning to our topic concerning these proud boasters and false shepherds who have infiltrated the modern Christian Church, while they claim to possess such a deep knowledge of the Scriptures, these leaders expose their very ignorance of God's Word through their proud behavior. Not only did Paul shed light on this problem which even existed in his own day, but he also reveals that one of the things which contributes to this spiritual pride, is possessing too much knowledge. Consider the following verses:

"Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth. And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know."

1 Corinthians 8:1-2, KJV

"Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,"

Colossians 2:18, KJV

Imagine that! An individual can have so much knowledge of the Scriptures, that if he or she is not careful, it can actually lift them up in pride! So beware! Don't let Satan use your knowledge against you! Use it humbly for God's glory, and not to achieve your own glory or to boast of your accomplishments!

As we saw earlier in this article, as a result of their own seminary-taught theological education, their long list of impressive credentials, their pride and their vanity, and of course, their self-proclaimed importance, there are certain modern religious leaders and preachers who have a propensity for looking down on anyone who attempts to preach the Gospel, who does not also possess a background similar to their own. According to these proud boasters, such people are simply not qualified to preach the Gospel, and God could not possibly ever use them. If a person does not belong to a respectable church and denomination, these boasters would have us believe that they are even less qualified to preach the Message of Salvation. Who knows; they might even belong to a dangerous cult; at least so say the religionists.

The truth of the matter is that this attitude is nothing new. As I explain in other articles, God's true, chosen servants and mouthpieces have been despised for thousands of years; and quite often, this reproach is unjustifiably heaped upon them by those people who claim to be the Lord's "authorized" representatives.

No doubt Noah must have been viewed as a crazy, old fool by the unbelievers of his day. When Moses chose to forsake the riches of Egypt and became a humble shepherd, his Egyptian friends must have thought he had taken leave of his senses. Powerful Samson was fooled by beautiful Delilah, and scoffed at and blinded by his enemies; but the Lord still gave him the last laugh when he brought down the temple of Dagon and slew thousands of his Philistine enemies. The mighty Prophet Elijah called down fire from the sky and stopped the rain; yet he fled from the face of evil Queen Jezebel. Goliath of Gath may have laughed at and scorned little David, but in the end, a small stone sunk into his forehead and that giant dropped dead.

The Prophet Jeremiah was accused of treason, thrown into prison, and eventually cast into a deep pit full of mud by his own Jewish brethren; but in the end, his words proved to be true, and Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed by the forces of Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar. God's Word informs us that many of the other Old Testament Prophets were also rejected, persecuted and killed by the very people they were sent to warn and save -- their own Jewish brethren. When the Lord rebuked the Jewish religious Elders in the Gospels, He accused them of this very same thing. Consider the following verses:

"Because they have not hearkened to my words, saith the LORD, which I sent unto them by my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them; but ye would not hear, saith the LORD."  
Jeremiah 29:19, KJV

"I have sent also unto you all my servants the prophets,

rising up early and sending them, saying, Return ye now every man from his evil way, and amend your doings, and go not after other gods to serve them, and ye shall dwell in the land which I have given to you and to your fathers: but ye have not inclined your ear, nor hearkened unto me."  
Jeremiah 35:15, KJV

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

Matthew 23:29-39, KJV

"And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy."

Revelation 16:5-6, KJV

"Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her. And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived. And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth."

Revelation 18:20-24, KJV

Of course, as we also know, Jesus was despised by, rejected by, ridiculed by, persecuted by, falsely accused by, and in the end eventually murdered by, the self-righteous religious scholars of His own day, who in their foolish pride, thought



that they understood the Scriptures better than the Lord Himself. The Bible makes it quite plain that they were the true murderers of the Son of God, as we see by the following verses:

"He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not."  
Isaiah 53:3, KJV

"Then assembled together the CHIEF PRIESTS, AND THE SCRIBES, and the ELDERS OF THE PEOPLE, unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, And consulted that they might TAKE JESUS BY SUBTILTY, AND KILL HIM. But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people."  
Matthew 26:3-5, KJV

"But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house."  
Mark 6:4, KJV

"Then began he to speak to the people this parable; A certain man planted a vineyard, and let it forth to husbandmen, and went into a far country for a long time. And at the season he sent a servant to the husbandmen, that they should give him of the fruit of the vineyard: but the husbandmen beat him, and sent him away empty. And again he sent another servant: and they beat him also, and entreated him shamefully, and sent him away empty. And again he sent a third: and they wounded him also, and cast him out. Then said the lord of the vineyard, What shall I do? I will send my beloved son: it may be they will reverence him when they see him. But when the husbandmen saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, This is the heir: come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours. So they cast him out of the vineyard, and killed him. What therefore shall the lord of the vineyard do unto them? He shall come and destroy these husbandmen, and shall give the vineyard to others. And when they heard it, they said, God forbid. And he beheld them, and said, What is this then that is written, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner? Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. And the chief priests and the scribes the same hour sought to lay hands on him; and they feared the people: for they perceived that he had spoken this parable against them."  
Luke 20:9-19, KJV

"Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover. And the CHIEF PRIESTS AND SCRIBES SOUGHT HOW THEY MIGHT KILL HIM; for they feared the people."  
Luke 22:1,2, KJV

"He came unto his own, and his own received him not."  
John 1:11, KJV

"And therefore did the JEWS PERSECUTE JESUS, AND SOUGHT TO SLAY HIM, because he had done these things on the sabbath day. But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto,

and I work. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God."  
John 5:16-18, KJV

"After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the JEWS SOUGHT TO KILL HIM . . . Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? WHY GO YE ABOUT TO KILL ME? The people answered and said, Thou hast a devil: who GOETH ABOUT TO KILL THEE? . . . Then said some of them of Jerusalem, IS NOT THIS HE, WHOM THEY SEEK TO KILL?"  
John 7:1, 19-20, 25, KJV

"I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but YE SEEK TO KILL ME, because my word hath no place in you. I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father. They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now YE SEEK TO KILL ME, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham."  
John 8:37-40, KJV

"Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee? Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore HE THAT DELIVERED ME UNTO THEE HATH THE GREATER SIN. And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar."  
John 19:10-12, KJV

". . . My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be DELIVERED TO THE JEWS: but now is my kingdom not from hence."  
John 18:36b, KJV

"And when they had brought them, they set them before the council: and the high priest asked them, Saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us. Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, WHOM YE SLEW AND HANGED ON A TREE."  
Acts 5:27-30, KJV

Please go to part two for the continuation of this series.

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THE ONLY CREDENTIALS YOU NEED! : PART TWO

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Jews' False Accusations Against Jesus, Roman Governor Pontius Pilate Was Pressured By Jewish Elders Into Crucifying Jesus, Disciples Persecuted And Killed: Stephen Stoned, James Killed With The Sword, Peter Is Imprisoned, Paul Beheaded, Jerusalem Church Is Persecuted And Scattered, Apostle Paul's Sufferings, Modern Jealous Christian Accusers Of God's Faithful Servants, Enemies Question Our Right And Authority To Preach The Gospel, Only By The Grace Spirit And Power Of God, Rivers Of Living Water, Knowledge Puffeth Up, Humble Yourself Before The Lord, Clay In The Potter's Hands, End Of Self Means To Die Daily, The Lord Lord Group, Relying Upon The Holy Spirit To Teach Us, Feed God's Sheep, Men Of Scant Education, John The Baptist

Continuing our discussion from part one, as we have seen, the proud, self-righteous, Jewish religionists foolishly rejected their very own Savior. They accused Jesus of being a drunk, a gluttonous man, a deceiver, a blasphemer, a liar, a devil, a false prophet, and a law breaker; and then they pressured the Roman governor -- Pontius Pilate -- into crucifying Jesus by means of mob rule, even though Pilate deemed Jesus innocent, and not worthy of death, as we see by the following verses:

"And when they had bound him, they led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor . . . And Jesus stood before the governor: and the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest. And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing. Then said Pilate unto him, Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee? And he answered him to never a word; insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly. Now at that feast the governor was wont to release unto the people a prisoner, whom they would. And they had then a notable prisoner, called Barabbas. Therefore when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ? For he knew that for envy they had delivered him. When he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him. But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus. The governor answered and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas. Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified. And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified. When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it. Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children."

Matthew 27:2, 11-25, KJV

In fulfillment of Jesus' own words, following His own Death, Jesus' followers received the very same negative treatment from the very people they were trying to save. You can read all about these events in the Book of Acts, as well as in a number of the Epistles. A great persecution arose against the Church in Jerusalem. As a result, some of the Apostles and Disciples were imprisoned, while others were murdered in cold blood. Stephen was stoned to death by the Jews. James was killed with the sword by King Herod. Peter was sent to prison on several occasions, but escaped. The Apostle Paul was accused of being a ringleader of the dangerous sect of the Nazarenes, and was eventually beheaded by the order of mad Emperor Nero. These are just a few examples of the stiff persecution that was experienced by the First Century Church. Consider the following verses:

"But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake. And it shall turn to you for a testimony. Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer: For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist. And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. But there shall not an hair of your head perish. In your patience possess ye your souls."

Luke 21:12-19, KJV

"If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me."

John 15:18-21, KJV

"Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation, And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison."

Acts 5:17-18, KJV

"When they [the Jews] heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him [Stephen] with their teeth. But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down,

and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep. And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles. And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him. As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison."  
Acts 7:54-8:1-3, KJV

"Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.) And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people."  
Acts 12:1-4, KJV

"And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew them into the marketplace unto the rulers, And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans. And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them. And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely: Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks."  
Acts 16:19-24, KJV

"For we have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes:"  
Acts 24:5, KJV

"I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities."  
Acts 26:9-11, KJV

"But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings;"  
2 Corinthians 6:4-5, KJV

"Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a

night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness."  
2 Corinthians 11:23-27, KJV

"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."  
2 Timothy 3:12, KJV

It is my understanding that eventually, most of the First Century Apostles -- as well as many of the Disciples that they won to the Lord -- suffered martyrs' deaths at the hands of their accusers; similar to their Old Testament counterparts. While a large part of this was the result of severe Roman persecution, as the previous verses reveal, in the early years prior to the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, much of it stemmed from the unbelieving Jews as well. So again, the very people who needed saving, rebelled against the Lord, and persecuted and killed His servants in the First Century.

Ironically, the very same accusations that were made almost two thousand years ago by the Jewish religionists, are still being made today against the Lord's servants. Tragically, to their shame, these modern accusers are not just atheists, or the unbelieving Jews, or even people of other non-Christian religions. They also include certain Christian leaders who seem to be afraid that they may lose some of their followers, or perhaps some of their financial support. Modern evangelism is a highly competitive field, even though it shouldn't be.

Much like the Jewish Elders of old, some of these Christian leaders ask in an accusatory tone "By what right and by what authority do you preach the Gospel? How dare you to say that you hear from God! Which seminary did you attend? Where is your theological degree? Are you even ordained? Shame on you for even teaching those things! According to our church's beliefs, you are promoting false doctrines! You are a false prophet! We are commanded to rebuke people like you! You no doubt belong to a dangerous cult! You need to repent! You are going to hell!" On and on they go, whining and hissing with their snake-like tongues, and gnashing with their viper-like fangs. Is it a coincidence that we find some of these very same accusations in the Gospels and in the Book of Acts? Consider the following verses:

"And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?"  
Matthew 21:23, KJV

"And Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem. And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?"  
Acts 4:6-7, KJV

"And when they had brought them, they set them before the council: and the high priest asked them, Saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us."  
Acts 5:27-28, KJV

"This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush."  
Acts 7:35, KJV

I am quite familiar with this devilish, accusatory attitude. Over the years I have encountered a number of people who do not like -- and perhaps even hate -- what I preach, because it exposes their sins and hypocrisy, or else it contradicts what they want to believe, particularly when their beliefs do not align with the Scriptures, and cannot stand up to Scriptural scrutiny. As Jesus said of His own self-righteous Jewish accusers:

"If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin."  
John 15:22, KJV

Thankfully, I have acquired enough Spiritual Discernment over the years to see right through these wolves in sheep's clothing, false shepherds, and blind leaders of the blind. I can differentiate between a sincere sheep who is hungry for the truth of God's Word, and an argumentative goat who only wants to waste my precious time by engaging in doctrinal debates. Isn't this precisely what the Jewish Elders tried to do with Jesus? If you are interested in learning more about this topic, please consider reading such articles as "Exposing the Tactics of the Enemy" and "Should Christians Engage in Doctrinal Debates?".

While many of these high-profile preachers and Christian leaders can boast of an impressive résumé and a long list of credentials to woo their audiences, in contrast, I only possess a high school diploma which I acquired quite a few decades ago. I cannot boast of having a theological degree from some prestigious seminary. Neither do I lead or belong to some big megachurch. I've done my share of jobs over the years, but none of them have been particularly outstanding. I am definitely not an eloquent speaker, and even standing in front of a crowd makes me nervous. The honest truth of the matter is that it is only by the Grace of God, and the Power of His Spirit, that I am able to accomplish anything. I am reminded of the message that the Angelic Messenger gave to the Prophet Zechariah to share with Zerubbabel:

"Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts."  
Zechariah 4:6, KJV

In reality, I am a rather shy, soft-spoken, private person. It is only when I get to talking about the Bible that the Spirit begins to bubble up within me and overflow. In fact,

this is precisely what Jesus said would happen to those who believe in Him. Consider this verse:

"He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."  
John 7:38, KJV

So while I can be quite the preacher with the written word when God's Spirit moves me, in my normal state, I tend to be a rather nondescript person. In fact, based on the standards of the world, many people would no doubt view me as a nobody, a failure and a loser. But does it really matter what they think?

Having said that, it might surprise you to learn that there was a time in my life -- when I was a lot younger -- during which I was very proud, and very self-righteous, about some things. I thought that I was such a Saint. I thought I had such a great understanding of things. The Lord had to break me and humble me, and let me make a few mistakes in my life, so that I could finally recognize what a clod I really am. He also had to show me how little I know. As we saw in part one, knowledge tends to lift us up in our pride, if we are not careful, and that was one of my problems. As the Apostle Paul wrote:

". . . Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth. And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know."  
1 Corinthians 8:1b-2, KJV

As I point out in such articles as "Are You Crucified With Christ?" and "So You Really Think You Are So Humble?" it is only when we come to the end of ourselves, and realize our miserable condition, when we stop boasting about ourselves and start uplifting the Lord in our lives, and submitting to His Will for our lives, that He can truly begin to use us in any measurable way. In short, as Jesus and the Apostles Peter and James all said, we must simply forsake our pride, and humble ourselves before the Lord, as we see by these verses:

"For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."  
Luke 14:11, KJV

"Submit yourselves therefore to God . . . Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up."  
James 4:7a, 10, KJV

"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:"  
1 Peter 5:6, KJV

The bottom line is that we must always remember that God is our Potter, and we are supposed to be the malleable clay in His Hands, which He can do with as He pleases. The Lord can fashion us for whatever purpose He deems most appropriate, and who are we to say otherwise? Consider these verses:

"Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee . . ."



Jeremiah 1:5a, KJV

"For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them."

Psalms 139:13-16, KJV

"And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."

Genesis 2:7, KJV

"Surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter's clay: for shall the work say of him that made it, He made me not? or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, He had no understanding?"

Isaiah 29:16, KJV

"But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand."

Isaiah 64:8, KJV

"O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel."

Jeremiah 18:6, KJV

"Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?"

Romans 9:20, KJV

As long as we remain full of ourselves and our own personal accomplishments, we cannot be full of the Lord, or even be fully used by the Lord. There simply is not room enough for both. It is either Jesus working in us and through us, or else it is ourselves working in our strength according to our own wisdom. One has to die in order to make room for the other. As the Apostle Paul writes "I die daily":

"I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily."

1 Corinthians 15:31, KJV

We need to stop trying to be somebody, and just be what God wants us to be. As we saw earlier, that is the problem with some of these modern preachers and Church leaders. They are so full of themselves, so full of their pride, so full of their seminary degrees, so full of their impressive list of credentials, so concerned with their public image, so drunk on the praises of men, so busy filling up their church pews and raking in the money, that there is really little room left for Jesus. Oh, they may think that they are faithfully serving the Lord, and they may think that the Lord will be pleased, but let me remind you of something very important that is heavily emphasized in the Gospels:

"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."  
Matthew 7:21-23, KJV

"Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not."  
Matthew 23:1-3, KJV

"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."  
Matthew 25:31-46, KJV

"And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"  
Luke 6:46, KJV

"Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are: Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and

thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God. And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last."  
Luke 13:24-30, KJV

"Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."  
Matthew 15:7-9, KJV

Returning to my personal situation, being as I do not have an impressive theological background from some established seminary -- much like the Messianic Jewess who I quoted at the beginning of this series -- I have to rely solely upon the Lord's Spirit to teach me; and I am convinced that He has. Because of my hunger and thirst for the Truth, because I have tried to remain open to whatever He desires to show me, I believe that the Lord has blessed me over the years with so many precious jewels from His Word, which I have been more than happy to share with my readers. Of course, Jesus promised us that this is how it would be; that is, that we would each be taught by revelation of the Holy Spirit. Consider the following verses:

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."  
John 14:26, KJV

"But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."  
Galatians 1:11-12, KJV

"That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:"  
Ephesians 1:17, KJV

"How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words,"  
Ephesians 3:3, KJV

While there are some people who view my work as junk -- I have sometimes been the target of some very hurtful remarks -- nevertheless I press on; because in my heart I know that I have been a blessing to others, because they tell me so. That in itself is a great reward, and provides me with a lot of personal satisfaction, because quite frankly, there is nothing that I enjoy more than feeding God's Sheep with His Word, and that's what my articles are all about. That brings to mind the following verse:

"He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."  
Psalms 126:6, KJV

While a major portion of this series has been dedicated to revealing what kind of people the Lord finds it difficult -- if not impossible -- to use, we are now going to take a few moments to examine some additional verses which will show us what kind of people the Lord not only can use, but in fact, likes to use, and prefers to use. Depending upon your own personal background, you may possibly be surprised by what the Scriptures reveal concerning this issue.

While modern Christianity has placed considerable emphasis on attending a theological seminary and obtaining a Th.B, a Th.D or Th.M -- that is, a Bachelor of Theology degree, a Doctor of Theology degree or a Master of Theology degree -- a study of the Scriptures reveals that the Lord seems to prefer men who are of scant education. I suspect that this may possibly be because such men's minds haven't been filled yet with the knowledge of the world. Because they are not full of their own pride and wisdom, perhaps God can mold them more easily according to His needs. One prime example is obviously John the Baptist. To some people, John was no doubt considered a wild man in the wilderness who ate locusts and wild honey, as we see by these verses:

"And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey."  
Matthew 3:4, KJV

"And John was clothed with camel's hair, and with a girdle of a skin about his loins; and he did eat locusts and wild honey;"  
Mark 1:6, KJV

Please go to part three for the conclusion of this series.

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THE ONLY CREDENTIALS YOU NEED! : PART THREE

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Wise Men Or Men Of Scant Education, John The Baptist, Isaiah And Malachi Prophecy Concerning John, God Knows His Men, God Chooses Weak Despised People And Social Outcasts, Doctrines And Traditions Of Scribes And Pharisees, Guidance Of The Holy Spirit Is All We Need, Profundity Of God's Word, Purged Of

The Old Leaven And The Old Wine, New Wine Can't Be Put In Old Bottles, Apostle Paul: Pharisee Of The Pharisees, Transformed And Renewed In Our Minds, Dump The Doctrinal Junk And Forsake All, The Only Credentials You Need Are God's Word, Here Am I Send Me, Faithful In The Least, Preach The Gospel, Conclusion

As we concluded in part two, while the world -- including the world of organized religion -- places much emphasis on obtaining an education, and accumulating an impressive list of credentials, from the evidence that we find in the Bible, it seems that God enjoys going to the opposite extreme. In other words, He seems to prefer choosing men who possess scant education. Such may have been the case with John the Baptist. While some people viewed him as a wild, crazy man of the wilderness who ate locusts and wild honey, the truth of the matter -- as I explain in such series as "Elijah: Where Are the True Prophets?" -- is that John the Baptist was the prophesied messenger who preceded and announced the arrival of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. As the Prophets Isaiah and Malachi wrote:

"The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it."  
Isaiah 40:3-5, KJV

"Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts."  
Malachi 3:1, KJV

If there is any doubt in your mind that the previous verses are referring to John the Baptist, then please consider how even Jesus referred back to the Old Testament prophecies in order to let people know that John was indeed the Messenger for whom they had been waiting:

"For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight."  
Matthew 3:3, KJV

"But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come."  
Matthew 11:9-14, KJV

Obviously, God certainly knows how to choose His men; even if the religious hierarchy of the day -- the Sanhedrin -- was expecting someone quite different. No doubt the Scribes and the Pharisees were expecting the Messenger to arise from within their own ranks; that is, a man of respectability and thoroughly educated in the Torah and the Prophets. John most certainly did not meet their expectations any more than Jesus met their expectations as the anticipated Messiah. In fact, that is one of the reasons why they murdered Jesus. He was viewed as an impostor and a false messiah by the blind religionists of the day who were unable to recognize Him for who He is. Following are some verses which clearly reveal God's propensity for choosing men of scant education:

"And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?"  
John 7:15, KJV

"Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus."  
Acts 4:13, KJV

"For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence."  
1 Corinthians 1:26-29, KJV

"And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."  
1 Corinthians 2:4-5, KJV

"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."  
Colossians 2:8, KJV

Not only does God seem to prefer to choose men who have not been polluted and corrupted by the knowledge of the world, but He also tends to choose societal outcasts who are often despised and rejected by the rest of the world. He chooses the weak things, the foolish things, the nobodies, and the little people to do His Work in order that His Power and His Greatness might be made manifest. This way, when something good happens, He alone receives all of the glory and all of the credit. Here are a few additional verses for your consideration:

"Being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day."  
1 Corinthians 4:13, KJV

"And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for

my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong. I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing."

2 Corinthians 12:9-11, KJV

"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you."

John 15:16, KJV

So to reiterate, God chooses who He will, and His criteria are very different from the criteria of the world, and even different from that of some modern religionists who boast of their seminary degrees and their impressive credentials, and who love the praises of men. They may impress other men, and they may impress some of the sheep, but they certainly don't seem to impress God very much. In fact, as we have seen, He even has a difficult time using such men, because they are so filled with their own ways, their own ideas and their own doctrines, just like the Scribes and the Pharisees of old. Consider what Jesus had to say regarding the doctrines and traditions of the Jewish Elders:

"In the mean time, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trode one upon another, he began to say unto his disciples first of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy."

Luke 12:1, KJV

"Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have taken no bread. Which when Jesus perceived, he said unto them, O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread? Do ye not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees? Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees."

Matthew 16:6-12, KJV

"Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying, Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread. But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be

profited by me; And honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition."  
Matthew 15:1-6, KJV

"He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death: But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free. And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother; Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye."  
Mark 7:6-13, KJV

It should be clear to you by now that what is most important to the Lord is not that we are full of the wisdom of men, or that we have received years of theological training and are brainwashed with the doctrines and traditions of men, but rather that we have open minds and hearts, and are filled with God's Holy Spirit; because if we have the Lord's Spirit, then we have everything that we need in order to be effective witnesses for Him. The Lord can -- and will -- teach each one of us directly from His Word, precisely as He has done with me for many years now. He will give us revelations from His Word which will astound and amaze us, and we will wonder why we never saw it before. God's Ways -- and His Word -- are just that profound, as we see by the following verses:

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."  
Isaiah 55:8-9, KJV

"Which doeth great things past finding out; yea, and wonders without number."  
Job 9:10, KJV

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"  
Romans 11:33, KJV

"Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old."  
Matthew 13:52, KJV

As I mentioned earlier, all of this wisdom of men with their particular seminary doctrines and church traditions can be a hindrance which inhibits our being used by the Lord. Before



God -- by His Holy Spirit -- can teach us the Truth of His Word, He has to throw out all of the junk which has cluttered our minds and poisoned our spirits for so many years. He has to purge us of the old leaven and the old wine, in order to make room for the new. As we learn in the Gospels, that was precisely the problem with the Jewish religious hierarchy of the First Century. They were so full of the old leaven and the old wine -- their doctrines and traditions -- that they were unable to accept the new wine which Jesus offered to them. Thus Jesus said of them the following:

"No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment, for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse. Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved."  
Matthew 9:16-17, KJV

As a former Pharisee himself who had been brought up under strict adherence to the Mosaic Law, and who had in fact been mentored by Gamaliel, the Apostle Paul -- who viewed himself as a Pharisee of the Pharisees -- knew exactly what he was talking about when he wrote that we need to have our minds transformed and renewed, and that we have to put on the mind of Christ. Why? Because Paul also had to reach a point in his life where he viewed everything that he had experienced and learned as a Pharisee, as dung, compared to the new life that he was given in Christ. Consider the following verses:

"Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,"  
Philippians 3:4-8, KJV

"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."  
Romans 12:2, KJV

"For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ."  
1 Corinthians 2:16, KJV

The same still holds true today. As long as we are unwilling to dump -- and totally forsake -- all of the doctrinal junk and poisonous garbage which has been pumped into our brains over the years by the world, and by our particular church or organization, the Lord may never be able to use us as much or as effectively as He would like, and He may never be able to reveal to us the Truth of His Word. Why? Because until we are willing to forsake these things, we will continue to see everything through filtered glasses with a particular bias; that is, a doctrinal bias. When we come to Jesus, we need to

forsake all, as we see by this verse:

"So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple"

Luke 14:33, KJV

Forsaking physical things is easy. It is forsaking things that are in our minds and hearts that is the most difficult.

In conclusion, if someone approaches you and questions your right to preach the Gospel, my counsel to you would be this: Just say "Here are my credentials", and then share with them some of the verses which you find in this series. Tell them that you can go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature, because the Lord has chosen you, taught you and sent you by the Power and Anointing of His Spirit. That is the only Authority and Permission that you really need. You don't need a theological degree from a seminary; and you most certainly don't need a set of impressive credentials. The only credentials that you need are found right there in your Bible. As the Prophet Isaiah said to the Lord:

"Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me."

Isaiah 6:8, KJV

Now, if they don't like your Scriptural response, then don't worry about, and don't waste your valuable time arguing with them, because it will get you nowhere. And please remember that you are in good company, because many of God's faithful messengers before you were also rejected by the world, and by the religionists. As the Scriptures clearly inform us, our job is simply to remain faithful to the tasks which God has given us to do, as we see by these verses:

"Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?"

Matthew 24:45, KJV

"His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord."

Matthew 25:21, KJV

"He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?"

Luke 16:10-12, KJV

"And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities."

Luke 19:17, KJV

"Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."

1 Corinthians 4:2, KJV

As far as everything else is concerned, just trust the Lord, and leave it in His hands. Don't worry about what people may think of you, or what they may say about you. You will never be able to please them all, or win their support anyway, so why even waste your time trying? Just be obedient and preach the Gospel, as the Apostle Paul admonishes us to do in the following verse:

"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine."

2 Timothy 4:2, KJV

You already have all of the credentials that you need, so will you now get to work? With these thoughts I will bring another series to a close. I trust that it has been a blessing and an inspiration in your life.

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