

ARE YOU A BURNING EMBER FOR THE LORD? : PART ONE

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Lonely Ember Story, Ostracism, Psychological Manipulation And Political Correctness, The True Church, Exhort Daily, A 'Dead Ember' With Good Fruits?, Endtime Spiritual Famine?, The Lord's Prophetic Embers, Jewish Idolatry, Spiritual Deafness, Prophets Slain, New Testament Embers, Holy Ghost Fire, Wind Of The Spirit, Fiery Trials, Fiery Judgement Of The Wicked, Our God A Consuming Fire, The Chariots Of Fire

Recently, one of the dear members of my electronic mail ministry sent me a short story which she had been given by one of her Christian friends. This story, which was written by an unknown author, is entitled 'Lonely Ember Story'. Allow me to share it with you below:

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

"A member of a certain church, who previously had been attending services regularly, stopped going. After a few weeks, the pastor decided to visit him. It was a chilly evening. The pastor found the man at home alone, sitting before a blazing fire. Guessing the reason for his pastor's visit, the man welcomed him, led him to a big chair near the fireplace and waited. The pastor made himself comfortable but said nothing. In the grave silence, he contemplated the play of the flames around the burning logs."

"After some minutes, the pastor took the fire tongs, carefully picked up a brightly burning ember and placed it to one side of the hearth all alone. Then he sat back in his chair, still silent. The host watched all this in quiet fascination. As the one lone ember's flame diminished, there was a momentary glow, and then its fire was no more. Soon it was cold and 'dead as a doornail'. Not a word had been spoken since the initial greeting. Just before the pastor was ready to leave, he picked up the cold, dead ember and placed it back in the middle of the fire. Immediately it began to glow once more with the light and warmth of the burning coals around it."

"As the pastor reached the door to leave, his host said, 'Thank you so much for your visit; and especially for the fiery sermon. I shall be back in church next Sunday.'"

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

For those of you who personally feel the need to regularly attend weekend church services in order to sustain your spiritual life and growth, as well as to receive regular inspiration, this story will be readily welcomed, and will no doubt receive your hearty 'Amen!'; after all, this is the 'normal' and socially-acceptable form of worshipping God in Christianized nations. No one can deny that fellowship with

other Christians of like minds and beliefs is indeed a good thing; however, at the same time, I can also see how this short story could be used as a vehicle in order to apply invisible pressure to those people who have chosen, for whatever their personal reasons, not to participate in the socially-acceptable form of Christian worship. In other words, stories such as the above can be used as crafty tools in order to make people feel condemned if they don't attend a regular church service at a church building in their local community. If one chooses to worship and serve the Lord in some other way, he is labelled as being either a loner, odd, abnormal, a cult member, dangerous, a societal misfit, a recluse, or some other ostracizing word or term.

In my view, this is absolutely wrong. This is nothing more than a subtle form of psychological manipulation in order to intentionally mold societal behavior through applying group peer pressure, and enforcing political correctness. National governments are notorious for using these techniques in order to maintain control over the masses. From the time a child is born, he or she is subjected to these things by his parents, who have already been properly trained in correct thinking by the government. As I point out in other articles such as 'The Public School System And School Prayer', this process of molding our lives, our thoughts, and our daily habits, is greatly amplified in the public school system where one is given his first lessons in becoming a docile, obedient, flag-waving patriotic robot who does whatever he is told by his masters, without thinking for himself. While the public school system concentrates on the secular aspect of one's life, organized religion continues the process by working on the spiritual aspect of the same.

Additionally, I feel that the previous story conveys some things which are subtle half-truths, and in fact, even lies. The main distortion is that unless one attends a church building, he cannot possibly survive as a Christian. The implication is that he will lose his spiritual fire, and that he will eventually die after a time; just like the lonely ember in the story. This, of course, is not true for all people. Some of us, like myself, have not attended a church building in many years. Personally, as I write this, the last time that I participated as a regular member of a church congregation was some twenty-eight years ago. Some of us simply do not feel the need to attend a church building. Others follow this practice, not because they personally feel the need to do so, but simply because some legalistic religionists will throw certain verses at them, and try to make them feel like dirty sinners because they are breaking the 'Pauline Law'. I am of course referring to the following verse taken from Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews:

"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." (Hebrews 10:25)

The fact of the matter is, that those people who use this verse in this manner in order to coax others into attending their particular church building, so that they can boost their membership, and perhaps increase their revenue, fail to even understand what is truly meant by the Church as per

the pattern found in the Book of Acts and the Epistles of Paul and others. In the previous verse, Paul tells us that we are to exhort one another. Most modern Christians have interpreted this to mean that this is what people do once a week when they attend their church service; however, if we go back only seven chapters in the very same Epistle, we find out that this is not what Paul means whatsoever. He is not talking about once-a-week church service. Notice what he says:

"But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." (Hebrews 3:13)

Just adding that one verse certainly changes the meaning of Paul's words, doesn't it? How often does Paul say we are we supposed to exhort one another? Is it just once a week for one hour at a church service in some church building while we spend the rest of the week slaving away for the world and ungodly mammon? As you can see, this is obviously not the case! This is supposed to occur on a daily basis! Imagine then, what might happen if we earnestly study our Bibles in order to find other verses which will help us to further understand the true meaning of the word 'church'. If you are one who is confused by this issue, then I encourage you to read my article 'Where Are The First Century Churches?'. After reading it, I believe you may be left with a whole new perspective concerning not only what it means to be a part of the Lord's true Church, but also where that true Church is actually supposed to be located according to the Holy Scriptures; and not according to the false doctrines and traditions of modern theologians who twist the Scriptures.

According to the moral of the above story, based upon my long absence from organized religion, and thus from church buildings, I should be spiritually cold and dead by now. Let me ask you; do those of you who have read my articles on a regular basis feel that I am lifeless and spiritless? Do you honestly believe that I do not write with the inspiration of God's Spirit, maybe not in every single word that I write, but in a lot of it? Are you not personally inspired, moved and motivated by the things that I write? Are you not challenged by the truths that I speak? In the words of the Apostle Paul, do I not exhort you daily through my mail ministry and through my many articles to believe in the Lord, to follow His Word, and to do more for Him as we see the day of His Arrival fast approaching? Do you honestly believe that I am not bearing good fruit for the Lord and His Kingdom outside of organized religion? As Jesus Himself said, and as I have written in many other articles:

"Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." (Matthew 7:17-20)

If I am a 'dead ember' as the previous story indicates that I should be, then I wish to God that there were more 'dead embers' like me; and I say this with all humility. As the

Apostle Paul wrote, everything we have, even our faith to believe in Him is a gift of the Lord. I don't have anything which I have not received of the Lord. To Him belongs all of the credit, and all of the glory:

"For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith."
(Romans 12:3)

"But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." (Acts 20:24)

While I personally do not know the full effects of my ministry, I have received many heart-warming confirmations which prove that it is reaching far and wide; and that it is bearing good fruit in the lives of many people. I have been told by some of my readers, that the reason that they have chosen to participate in this ministry, is because I exalt the Lord, and His Word, much moreso than some of them have ever experienced in the churches they have attended all of their lives. What a wonderful thing to know! To realize that others feel I am being a faithful steward and guardian of God's Word truly touches my heart! I am reminded of a prophecy given to ancient Israel. In that prophecy, Amos said that the time would come when there would be a spiritual famine for hearing the Word of the Lord:

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD: And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find it. In that day shall the fair virgins and young men faint for thirst." (Amos 8:11-13)

This prophecy truly came to pass during the several hundred years prior to the arrival of Jesus Christ during the First Century. As I explain in several other articles, and as I will discuss shortly, the time arrived in Israel when all of the Lord's true Prophets had been silenced through death by the self-righteous, legalistic, false, religious system of the Jews. All that was left was an empty spiritless Temple, the dry doctrines and traditions of the spiritual hierarchy, and the lies being espoused by their politically-correct false prophets. Is it be possible that a similar situation exists in the world today? Is it possible that the voices of God's true Messengers bearing His Word have been overwhelmed by the Babylonian confusion of the lies and lying wonders of the false prophets of the Endtime? Is it possible that we too will someday soon be completely silenced? If so, perhaps you should take advantage of this ministry while it lasts.

Contrary to the implications of the 'Lonely Ember Story', the Scriptures are full of verses which indicate that the exact opposite can also occur; and that it happens quite frequently. Many verses point to the fact that it is when organized worldly religion has become cold, spiritually dead

and unfruitful, that the Lord will blow His Spirit upon one of His embers, which in His Wisdom, He has called out and separated from the main body of believers, in order to be one of His fiery messengers of Truth. Need I mention the Prophet Moses, who was called by the Lord through a burning bush in order to liberate the Hebrew children from the false religion of Egypt? Consider also how the Lord sanctified, or separated, from the Hebrew word 'qadash', the young Prophet Jeremiah for a special ministry of warning to Israel:

"Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations." (Jeremiah 1:5)

Following the Babylonian captivity in which the organized religion of Israel was either killed or taken into bonds, the Lord also raised up the Prophet Ezekiel to be another hot burning ember to convict the hearts of the children of Israel to repent of their sins, and to return to the Lord their God:

"Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul." (Ezekiel 3:17-19)

The Lord repeatedly used these hot fiery Prophets, called out from the corrupt system of their day, in order to expose the sins of the religious hierarchy of ancient Israel, which had become settled in its ways and gone awhoring after other gods and idols. I discuss this idol worship in great detail in the article 'The Fruits Of Disobedience'. Consider the following example verses:

"For they served idols, whereof the LORD had said unto them, Ye shall not do this thing." (2 Kings 17:12)

"And shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan: and the land was polluted with blood."
(Psalms 106:38)

"And say, Ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord GOD; Thus saith the Lord GOD to the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys; Behold, I, even I, will bring a sword upon you, and I will destroy your high places. And your altars shall be desolate, and your images shall be broken: and I will cast down your slain men before your idols. And I will lay the dead carcasses of the children of Israel before their idols; and I will scatter your bones round about your altars. In all your dwellingplaces the cities shall be laid waste, and the high places shall be desolate; that your altars may be laid waste and made desolate, and your idols may be broken and cease, and your images may be cut down, and your works may be abolished. And

the slain shall fall in the midst of you, and ye shall know that I am the LORD. Yet will I leave a remnant, that ye may have some that shall escape the sword among the nations, when ye shall be scattered through the countries. And they that escape of you shall remember me among the nations whither they shall be carried captives, because I am broken with their whorish heart, which hath departed from me, and with their eyes, which go a whoring after their idols: and they shall lothe themselves for the evils which they have committed in all their abominations." (Ezekiel 6:3-9)

"Then said I unto them, Cast ye away every man the abominations of his eyes, and defile not yourselves with the idols of Egypt: I am the LORD your God. But they rebelled against me, and would not hearken unto me: they did not every man cast away the abominations of their eyes, neither did they forsake the idols of Egypt: then I said, I will pour out my fury upon them, to accomplish my anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt."
(Ezekiel 20:7-8)

"The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?" (Jeremiah 5:31)

It is when organized religion stagnates and becomes cold, dead and unfruitful, just like the ember in our story, that the Lord must raise up His fiery Prophets and Messengers in order to convict and inspire the people, and their leaders, to repent; but sadly, as with ancient Israel, many people today are failing to heed the call of the Lord's beacons of Truth. They are turning a deaf ear to the warnings of the Lord through His Prophets and Messengers. Unfortunately, it appears that it may be too late, as the Lord's chastisements have already begun to fall on different nations around the world. We hear and read of these things on our daily news. Sadly, most of these harsh judgments are attributed by an unbelieving world to natural causes, and not to an angry God. Consider the following examples of spiritual deafness found in the Old Testament:

"And they left the house of the LORD God of their fathers, and served groves and idols: and wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem for this their trespass. Yet he sent prophets to them, to bring them again unto the LORD; and they testified against them: but they would not give ear."
(2 Chronicles 24:18-19)

"And now, because ye have done all these works, saith the LORD, and I spake unto you, rising up early and speaking, but ye heard not; and I called you, but ye answered not;...Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day I have even sent unto you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them:" (Jeremiah 7:13, 25)

"To hearken to the words of my servants the prophets, whom I sent unto you, both rising up early, and sending them, but ye have not hearkened;" (Jeremiah 26:5)

"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)

"And they have turned unto me the back, and not the face: though I taught them, rising up early and teaching them, yet they have not hearkened to receive instruction."
(Jeremiah 32:33)

"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)

Worse yet, as I point out in other articles, not only do the hard-hearted and self-satisfied religionists totally reject the warning message and call to repentance of the Lord's true Prophets, but as in the case of ancient backslidden Israel, together with their political structure, they also ridicule, persecute and kill the Lord's fiery Messengers, as is demonstrated by these verses:

"And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away." (1 Kings 19:14)

"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)

I discuss the murder of the Lord's true Prophets in much more detail in the two-part article 'Revelation's Babylon The Great Whore'. By the time of the New Testament era, the spiritual situation in Israel had deteriorated even further; thus again the Lord had to send the fiery Prophet, John the

Baptist, in order to expose the sins of the Jewish spiritual hierarchy; and to stir up the dead coals, by convicting the people to repent of their sins. This occurred in preparation for the arrival of their very own Saviour, Jesus Christ. Of John the Baptist, the Lord Himself said:

"Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth. But I receive not testimony from man: but these things I say, that ye might be saved. He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light. But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me." (John 5:33-36)

This idea of being a burning light, or fire, was also employed by John the Baptist when he described the coming Ministry of Jesus Christ. Following the cue from the Old Testament Prophets, in the Gospel of Matthew, the Preacher of the Jordan River Valley proclaimed the following to the unbelieving Jews:

"And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." (Matthew 3:10-12)

As can be seen, the element of fire is used to describe the Power of God's Spirit which rests upon those whom the Lord wills; that is, upon His burning embers of Truth. All that the Lord has to do is to gently blow upon them with His Spirit, and they come alive and begin to glow brilliantly; emanating both His Light and Truth. Consider the following interesting verse found towards the end of the Gospel of John:

"And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost:" (John 20:22)

After the Lord had returned to Heaven, when He passed on the Spiritual Anointing to the Disciples in Jerusalem, it was also represented by cloven tongues as of fire. Notice again that the embers of the Lord came alive when the Wind of the Lord's Spirit blew upon them:

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them." (Acts 2:1-3)

Aren't these parallels with blowing upon embers absolutely amazing? Fire is also used in the Scriptures to describe our Earthly trials and tribulations which are purposely designed by the Lord to purge and purify us, and to make us better

vessels fit for the Master's use. I discuss this topic more in depth in some of my chastisement and spiritual warfare article; however, for now, consider the following verses:

"Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." (1 Corinthians 3:13-15)

"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy."
(1 Peter 4:12-13)

"I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see."
(Revelation 3:18)

"And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand." (Daniel 12:9-10)

We also know that from one end of the Bible to the other, the symbols of light and fire are used to describe the exposure of sin, and the coming destruction of the wicked and the ungodly world. Throughout His Ministry, the Lord used both of these in many of His parables and admonitions, too many to mention here; but consider what will be the end result when the Lord finally does return to set His house in order, climaxing in the Great White Throne Judgment which will occur sometime after the Millenium:

"And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:"
(2 Thessalonians 1:7-8)

"And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:" (2 Thessalonians 2:8)

"But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men...Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?" (2 Peter 3:7, 12)

"And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that

worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone." (Revelation 19:20)

"And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."
(Revelation 20:9-10)

"And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."
(Revelation 20:14-15)

"But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."
(Revelation 21:8)

Exactly why will all of these things happen? Aside from the fact that it is because of the sinful rebellious nature of the majority of humanity, it is also because we are clearly told in the Scriptures that our God is indeed a consuming fire. Not only that, but just as the Prophets Elijah, Elisha and Ezekiel experienced the Fiery Chariots of the Lord, we are also told that when the Lord returns, He will also mete out His revenge upon a wicked world with His Chariots of Fire:

"See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven: Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire." (Hebrews 12:25-29)

"His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire;"
(Revelation 1:14)

"And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass;"
(Revelation 2:18)

"His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself." (Revelation 19:12)

"And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by

a whirlwind into heaven." (2 Kings 2:11)

"For, behold, the LORD will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire." (Isaiah 66:15)

"And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the colour of amber, out of the midst of the fire."
(Ezekiel 1:4)

Truly, the previous verses represent one of the deepest mysteries found in the entire Bible. Exactly what were these Chariots of Fire, or bright glowing clouds with enfolding fire which spun like whirlwinds and had amber-colored light emanating from within? I have some of my own ideas which I discuss in other articles; but for now, I will leave them to your imagination to decipher. In the second half of this article, I will be discussing such topics as modern idolatry and the Lord's true temples, the Jewish rejection of the Gospel message, the evangelization of the Gentile nations, the letters to the seven Churches and the First Century compromise, spiritual clones and modern Pharisees, spiritual laziness and worldliness, returning to the Lord, dutiful church attendance and thriving in the Word, and much more. I hope that you will join me.

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ARE YOU A BURNING EMBER FOR THE LORD? : PART TWO

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Modern Idol And Building Worship, God's True Temples, Temple Destroyed, Buddha, Dead Coals Of Judaism, Ashes Under Our Feet, Gospel To The Jews, Jesus In The Temple, Christ Rejected, Apostles In The Temple, Apostles Rejected, Cold Coals And Hot Embers, Persecution, Gospel To The Gentiles, First Century Compromise, Letters To Seven Churches, Dying Flames, Deceptive Spirits, Pockets Of The Spirit, Spiritual Clones, Modern Pharisees, Spiritual Laziness and Worldliness, Return To The Lord, Weaker Brethren, Rebels, My Personal Ministry, Dutiful Presence Or Thriving In The Word?, Shine!

From all of the verses I have shared thus far in this article, it should be clear to you that just because one happens to be outside of acceptable, politically-correct, organized religion, does not necessarily mean that he is a cold and spiritually-dead ember. Quite to the contrary; it can mean that he still has a lot of spiritual life left in him; in fact, much moreso than the self-satisfied, fruitless Gospel-denying, modern, religious corpse from which he has escaped. While in the following verses, the Apostle Paul is referring to the idol-worshipping heathen of his day, is it possible that they could also be applied to religions in the world today, both Christian and non-Christian alike, which have set up their own idols; through either actual physical icons and images, or possibly through the worship of certain spiritual leaders, or even through the worship of their own false doctrines and traditions of men which contradict the Holy Scriptures? Might some of these modern-day religions be guilty of all of these things?:

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

(2 Corinthians 6:14-18)

"Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry."

(1 Corinthians 10:14)

As these verses make perfectly clear, and as I explain in such articles as 'Where Are The First Century Churches?' and 'Is God A Racist?', we 'are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.' That is why

the Apostle Paul then tells us to come out from among them; that is, out from among their false worship of buildings, temples, churches, false idols, and the traditions of men. As the Apostles Peter and Paul also wrote:

"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."
(1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

"Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 2:5)

"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)

What I find particularly interesting about these verses, is that they were probably written only a few short years prior to the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem by Roman General Titus, the son of Emperor Vespasian, in the year 70 A.D. Is that merely a coincidence? I doubt it. Perhaps this is why the Apostles worked so hard to make sure prior to their martyrdoms, that the First Century Disciples had their eyes on Jesus Christ, the Author and the Finisher of their faith, and not on physical Temple worship. They knew exactly what was coming; so they wanted to make sure that the Disciples fully understood that they were the real Temple; and not some glorious man-made structure in Jerusalem. Consider the following verses:

"And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."
(Matthew 24:1-2)

"Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets." (Amos 3:7)

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

Despite all of these stern warnings found throughout the Bible concerning the worship of idols or statues of false gods, cold dead religions housed in spiritless temples, etc., modern man, as intelligent as he claims to be with all of his awesome scientific technology, still insists upon worshipping and preserving his false religions. Consider the following news clip which was distributed by the Cable News Network, (CNN), in the United States of America:

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

Scientists Hope To Preserve China's Giant Buddha

International scientists are working to preserve the world's largest Buddha statue, which is facing threats to its more than 1,000-year existence. The 234.3-foot Grand Buddha is

facing threats both natural and manmade. Rain seeping into the back of the stone statue is causing erosion while previous repairs used different materials, badly damaging the statue, said Huang Kezhong, vice director of China's Institute of Cultural Property.

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

This is precisely why the Lord must blow His Spirit upon His hot embers in order to stir them up, and to use them to warn the wicked to repent and to turn from their wicked ways. The Prophets of old were burning embers to the false religious system of their day. John the Baptist was a burning ember to the hypocritical system of the Scribes and the Pharisees of the New Testament. Jesus Christ, who is the Consuming Fire in Person, was a burning ember to the same. Unlike the story which inspired this article, the coals of organized religion were cold and dead, while the Prophets of the Lord who were sent to warn them were alive and burning with the Spirit of the Living God! As I point out in other articles, Jesus told those false religionists, the false coals, that they were the children of hell, liars, hypocrites, the blind leaders of the blind, and the false children of Abraham:

"Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch."
(Matthew 15:14)

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves. Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor!...Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel." (Matthew 23:15-16, 24)

"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...Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it...He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God."
(John 8:39, 44, 47)

The Scribes and the Pharisees were spiritually cold and dead; despite the fact that they were huddled together in their Temple and in their synagogues trying to create false heat and false light. Like many Christian preachers and teachers today, they were the false ministers of light who had exchanged Light for Darkness. There was no spiritual warmth or Truth coming from them. They were cold dead coals which would soon be ground to powder, or ashes, only meant to be walked upon. Consider these powerful verses:

"Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" (Isaiah 5:20)

"For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works."
(2 Corinthians 11:13-15)

"And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder."
(Matthew 21:44)

"And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrhah in the day of judgment, than for that city." (Mark 6:11)

"And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen." (Romans 16:20)

While some of you may have a difficult time understanding why I am so vehement regarding my rejection of organized religion, and why I have no interest in participating in it, perhaps the information I have now presented will help you to see that, like those hot embers of old who rebelled against the religious hypocrisy of their day, I too simply do not fit in with the churchianity system of our modern day. My ideas and doctrines are simply too radical for most people to handle. I would not last in any church for any appreciable amount of time. I would either be kicked out, or else I would soon leave of my own accord; simply because I know what the Holy Scriptures really say concerning the Doctrine of Christ, and the pattern of the Early Church. I believe that the Lord is using me much more, and that I am being a more effective witness of the Truth through this current ministry.

If you still have difficulty with my position, perhaps the following Scriptural examples will help you to understand a little better. As we all know, when the Lord arrived on Earth during the First Century, He first took the Gospel of Salvation to His own people; that is, to the flesh Jews. The Lord had to start His spiritual Kingdom of born again sons and daughters of God somewhere; and thus it was only fitting that He should begin with those to whom had been trusted the very oracles of God:

"Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God." (Romans 3:2)

"Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."
(Acts 13:46)

This being the case, the Lord taught openly in their Temple, and in their synagogues, on many occasions. While the common

people heard Him gladly, the religious Elders didn't receive Him, or His message, at all. Consider the following verses:

"And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath." (Luke 13:10)

"And Jesus entered into Jerusalem, and into the temple: and when he had looked round about upon all things, and now the eventide was come, he went out unto Bethany with the twelve." (Mark 11:11)

"And Jesus answered and said, while he taught in the temple, How say the scribes that Christ is the Son of David?" (Mark 12:35)

"Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee." (John 5:14)

"Now about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught...Then cried Jesus in the temple as he taught, saying, Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am: and I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not." (John 7:14, 28)

"These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as he taught in the temple: and no man laid hands on him; for his hour was not yet come." (John 8:20)

"And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch." (John 10:23)

"Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing." (John 18:20)

"...And the common people heard him gladly." (Mark 12:37b)

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

"Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by." (John 8:59)

"And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read...And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong." (Luke 4:16, 28-29)

"In that same hour said Jesus to the multitudes, Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves for to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me." (Matthew 26:55)

"Then Jesus said unto the chief priests, and captains of the

temple, and the elders, which were come to him, Be ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and staves?" (Luke 22:52)

"And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved." (John 3:19-20)

After the Lord's Ascension, His followers continued in His footsteps as burning embers which devoured the lies of the hypocritical false Jews. At first, exactly as Jesus had done, they tried to reach their own Jewish brethren by working from within the established religious system; that is, from within the very Temple itself. This can easily be seen by the following verses:

"These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (Matthew 10:5-6)

"And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart," (Acts 2:46)

"Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour. And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple; Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms...And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God" (Acts 3:3:1-3, 8)

"And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them, Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day: for it was now eventide." (Acts 4:1-3)

"But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said, Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life. And when they heard that, they entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught...Then came one and told them, saying, Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people." (Acts 5:19-21a, 25)

"Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them. And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him, Crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the law, and this place: and further

brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place. (For they had seen before with him in the city Trophimus an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.) And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut."
(Acts 21:26-30)

"And they neither found me in the temple disputing with any man, neither raising up the people, neither in the synagogues, nor in the city:...For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill me."
(Acts 24:12, 26:21)

As can be seen, there is a very clear pattern here which has repeated itself over and over again in Jewish history. Just as with the Prophets of old, just as with the Lord Himself, the cold dead coals of Judaism did not want to have anything to do with these live hot embers within their midst. They absolutely hated the Love, the Light, the Truth and the spiritual warmth of the Disciples of the Lord. They didn't want anyone disturbing their neat little legalistic religion of self-righteous works and adherence to the Mosaic Law. The Scribes and the Pharisees had worked for hundreds of years to perfect their religion of works following their silencing of the Prophets of the Lord. These glowing hot embers full of Truth came from the outside, and not from the inside. Most, if not all of them, were from the Galilee region of northern Israel, far away from the pinnacle of spiritual power in Jerusalem. As far as we know, the only one who was an insider to the spiritually-cold world of the Pharisees, was the Apostle Paul himself; and look what it took before the Lord was able to use him in the ministry.

Eventually, as the Lord in His Wisdom had foreseen, the time arrived in which He directed His followers by the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to alter their course. As we know, the rejection by the Jewish Elders resulted in such strong persecution, that many of the Disciples were forced to flee from Jerusalem. As I explain in 'Biblical Cafeteria Or The Whole Course?' and other articles, it was at this time that the Apostles and early Disciples turned their attention to the more receptive Gentile nations outside of Israel; all led of course by the Apostle Paul. All of these events occurred outside of the established religious order of their day. Beginning with the Book of Acts, the Lord began to fan the fire which had been ignited in Jerusalem, so that it spread first to the North African and Mediterranean nations, and eventually all around the world:

"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." (Mark 16:15)

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

"And the apostles and brethren that were in Judaea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God."
(Acts 11:1)

"And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean." (Acts 10:28)

"I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a trance I saw a vision, A certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me: Upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And I heard a voice saying unto me, Arise, Peter; slay and eat. But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth. But the voice answered me again from heaven, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. And this was done three times: and all were drawn up again into heaven...Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God? When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life." (Acts 11:5-10, 17-18)

"Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles." (Acts 13:46)

"For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:" (Romans 11:13)

"Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity." (1 Timothy 2:7)

"Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles." (2 Timothy 1:11)

Sadly, despite this powerful burst of spiritual light, heat and energy which emanated from Jerusalem, it didn't take long before the creeping paralysis of compromise which leads to death, crept into the Early Church. While it is indeed true that the problem grew considerably worse during the third and fourth centuries when the Roman Catholic and the Eastern Orthodox churches began to establish their roots, the truth of the matter is, that it only took a few decades before the original hot embers had died, primarily through martyrdom, and their followers began to lose the Heavenly Vision first established by the Lord.

Even before the Apostle John had breathed his last breath towards the end of the First Century, we find him and some of the other Apostles issuing stern warnings to the wayward Early Church. Aside from the admonitions which were issued in the Epistles by Peter, Paul and others, which I amply discuss in other articles, consider the Lord's warnings to the seven churches in Asia Minor, recorded by John in the second and the third chapters of the Book of Revelation:

"Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; ... Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love." (Revelation 2:1, 4)

"And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges; I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth. But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication." (Revelation 2:12-14)

"And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass; I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first. Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols." (Revelation 2:18-20)

"And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead." (Revelation 3:1)

"And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:" (Revelation 3:14-17)

Notice that in the above verses we already see the Early Christians beginning to lose their love for the Lord, His Word and lost souls. We also see the beginnings of false prophecies, false doctrine, fornication, idolatry, spiritual death, compromise, lukewarmness and worldly materialism; only a few decades after the deaths of the Apostles. If all it took was perhaps thirty years before the Original Flames began to die out due to serious compromise with the enemy, what does that tell us about Christianity today? Some nineteen hundred years have passed since those lines were written. Satan has had all of this time to wreak further havoc upon the Lord's virgin Bride. Can anyone seriously doubt that he has been successful? Can anyone doubt that Christianity today is in serious trouble?

If you are one who truly knows and understands the Word of

the Lord, then you cannot deny this truth. If you look at what is currently happening within many churches which form a part of organized religion, and then compare those things with the Original Pattern, you cannot possibly deny that the situation has grown much worse in our modern day. Just like cold dead Judaism of two thousand years ago, much of modern Christianity is simply going through the motions without the true Spirit thereof. Many modern churches are cold dead corpses which still appear to have life, because there are still a few jerky twitches left to them, even though God's Spirit has already departed from them.

As I explain in some of my other articles such as 'Have You Been Slain In The Spirit?', 'Are The Gifts Of The Spirit For Today?' and 'Lying Wonders Of The Endtime', what I believe is so dangerous about this situation, is that once God's true Holy Spirit departs due to disobedience to God's Word, a false deceptive spirit can come in which imitates the true Spirit of God so that the coals still seem to be alive. Most common church-goers have so little spiritual discernment, and understand so little of the Word of God, that they can't seem to tell the difference; and thus, sometimes unbeknownst to them, they fall under the strong delusion of the Endtime. If you would like to better understand these things, I encourage you to read the aforementioned articles.

It is for these reasons that I, and others like me, prefer to have nothing to do with organized religion. While some of their proud self-righteous leaders and members accuse us of being the outsiders; while they accuse us of being lost and backslidden from the Lord; while they tell blatant lies by claiming that we will die spiritually without them; we are proving by our very existence, and by our very love for and dedication to the Lord, His Word and lost souls, that they are absolutely wrong! It is just like Satan to twist and pervert the Truth, and to turn it completely around. It is just like Satan to condemn us for the very things of which he and his cold dead system of organized religion are guilty themselves. We are live hot embers burning brightly for the Lord, while they are the cold dead coals who are trying to deceive people with their false heat and light. It is my personal observation that many Christians today simply 'play church'. In other words, as Jesus said of the Jews of His day:

"...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." (Mark 7:6b)

Of course, there is a balance to be found in everything that I say and teach. While my words will undoubtedly seem harsh and offensive to some people, particularly to those who do participate in organized religion, please know that they are not meant to be taken as a blanket statement. I don't like to speak in generalities. While it is my view that modern Christianity, or churchianity, is for the most part a dead, corrupt system, this does not necessarily mean that every single church is dead. Neither does it mean that all of its members are wicked, evil and hopelessly lost. I am sure that there are pockets of the Spirit scattered here and there. I am sure that there are some churches and church leaders who

are honestly trying to obey the Scriptures to the best of their knowledge and ability.

Over the years, and even now, I have known some very sincere Christians who participate in organized religion; however, I feel that these people are the exception to the rule. After a certain period of strong indoctrination, most people tend to become just like their pharisaical spiritual elders. I have seen this with certain Roman Catholics, Baptists, and others. It is very difficult to resist this spirit. Before long, one is parroting the beliefs and attitudes of his spiritual elders, for good or for evil. They are spiritual clones just like everyone else in their church. It slowly and subtly overcomes one before he can become aware of it. It is like a gradual spiritual blindness. As the Apostles Peter and Paul wrote in their Epistles:

"While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage." (2 Peter 2:19)

"This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:" (Ephesians 4:17-18)

Some of these people have self-righteously judged me because I don't attend a church building, while others have actually had the audacity to stop me on the street and ask me with what authority I pass out my Gospel tracts! These people are nothing but modern Pharisees. You may recall that the Jewish Pharisees of old also asked Jesus by what authority He did the things that He did:

"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)

Of course, within Christian circles, the people who have challenged me the most concerning my preaching of the Gospel of the Jesus Christ, have more often than not been Roman Catholics who have been brainwashed by their clergy into believing that no one has the right to preach or teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ except the 'holy mother church'. The sad thing about this, is that the Roman Catholic Church seems to know very little about the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They appear to be more interested in teaching the doctrines and traditions of their 'church fathers' which are quite often contrary to the true message of the Gospel. I discuss this topic more thoroughly in other articles.

In some cases, these people have been deceived by their church leadership due to spiritual laziness on their part. If they would take the time to study the Scriptures on their own, instead of trusting in their priest, minister, pastor or Sunday school teacher to spoonfeed them their poison on weekends, perhaps they would wake up to the Truth. Sadly, quite a few modern Christians have forsaken their first

love, just like the church at Ephesus; and instead prefer to watch their evening sitcoms, or to attend some sporting event, or to go see the latest movie, or to waste time with video games, or to go to a loud rock concert, or to do whatever it is that Satan has used to cause them to waste their time on silly, meaningless, worldly delusions. In other words, they prefer to spiritually fornicate with the world. Peter goes on to tell us in his second Epistle:

"For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning."

(2 Peter 2:20)

Sadly, while all of these things are going on in their lives, the Lord's Spirit is pulling at their hearts, as He pleads with them saying:

"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you," (2 Corinthians 6:17)

"I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee." (Isaiah 44:22)

"Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion:"

(Jeremiah 3:14)

"...Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the LORD of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return?"

(Malachi 3:7b)

To add a final degree of balance to my previous statements, allow me to also state that there are some people who have left organized religion who, because that is all that they have ever known, cannot survive spiritually without it. They are indeed embers which fade and die when separated from the coals, assuming of course that those coals are still alive. Perhaps these people are spiritually handicapped. They need the crutch of organized religion because they haven't grown and matured spiritually; and thus don't know how to be fed by the Lord directly through His Word. They are similar to the weaker brethren that the Apostle Paul wrote about in some of his Epistles:

"Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs...It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak." (Romans 14:1-2, 21)

"We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification."

(Romans 15:1-2)

"Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men." (1 Thessalonians 5:14)

Perhaps they leave organized religion because they are totally disillusioned with it, but then they don't look for, or else they simply can't find something better with which to replace it. They may look for a time, but eventually they end up drifting into a spiritual 'no man's land'. Sometimes they become spiritually weak and end up backsliding all the way. Other people don't leave churchianity in order to serve the Lord better; they leave it so that they don't have to serve Him at all! These people are spiritual rebels. They simply want the freedom to live their lives as they please without being plagued by feelings of guilt. They want to escape the responsibility of having to answer to the Lord. Of course, this is a ridiculous notion, because eventually, we are all going to have to appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ:

"But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ." (Romans 14:10)

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (2 Corinthians 5:10)

Finally, there are those, like myself, who seem to thrive spiritually outside of organized religion. Please don't misunderstand me; I have my trials and temptations just like everyone else; but by God's Grace, I overcome them. There are times when I become extremely depressed because of my own sins, failures, and human limitations. Other times I will feel like all of my work is just a waste of time, and that nobody is really listening; or at least not enough people are listening. In some cases, Satan will tell me that I have no right to tell anyone anything because I am such a total mess myself; and I don't deny it. There have been times in my life when I have really gone back on the Lord. I am not saying that I denied Him as my Saviour; I don't think I would ever do that; but I have become very involved in the things of the world. I have gotten sidetracked in acting and talking like other worldly people, wanting to earn lots of money, desiring the things of the world, or wasting my time with television and other such things. In other words, I haven't always been a faithful Christian witness.

Thank the Lord I believe that those days are behind me now. The Lord has given me a real spirit of sobriety and urgency concerning my current work for Him. He has given me the strength and the vision to perform this ministry faithfully on a daily basis. I look forward to it every day and every night; whenever He has me work. I never know what He is going to have me write; and sometimes I work on projects which I would have never have had the faith to write on my own. As I have mentioned before, I am only a high school graduate. I don't possess any fancy diplomas or degrees from some renowned university, or from some theological seminary. Some people have told me that I shouldn't even be doing this

kind of a ministry since I don't possess such 'important documents'. Well, I suppose the Lord knows better, for as the Apostle Paul wrote in his Epistle to the Corinthians:

"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 1:27-29)

If you would like to learn more concerning this topic, I encourage you to read such articles as 'The Only Credentials You Need!' and 'The Wisdom Of God vs The Philosophy Of Men'.

Before concluding this article, I would like to stress a few important points. First of all, you can survive spiritually outside of organized religion. Throughout this article we have seen that when cold organized religion died, it was from the outside that the Lord ignited His hot embers in order to bring new life. As I have pointed out in many of my articles, the key to your spiritual survival is not just in your physically gathering together in some church building or anywhere else, just so you can say that you have obeyed the 'Pauline Law', but rather it is in continually studying and dwelling upon His Word. This is where the true Spiritual Power resides. It is only from His Word that we derive our spiritual fortitude and stamina to fight our daily battles for the Lord. If that church doesn't even emphasize the pure Word of God, then you are much better off staying home and reading it for yourself; for as Jesus said in the sixth chapter of the Gospel of John, His words are Spirit, and they are life:

"It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." (John 6:63)

Dutifully bowing to pressure by assembling in a local church building is not the key source of your spiritual life; His Word is. God's Spirit is not bound by the four walls of a church building. His Spirit dwells in our hearts. That is the true Temple. Let me remind you again of Jesus' own words to the woman of Samaria found in the fourth chapter of the Gospel of John:

"Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."
(John 4:21-24)

If you are the Lord's child who is filled with His Holy Spirit, then He will touch your lips with His hot ember, so that you too will be purified in His sight, and will speak His pure language of Truth. If you are continually reading,

studying and memorizing His Word, you will emanate the white-hot heat of His Love, and the brilliant Light of His Truth no matter where you are; even if that cold dead church down the street criticizes and condemns you for not joining their little club. If you fill your heart and your mind with His Word, this is what will come out of you when you open your mouth; for as Jesus said, it is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaketh. It is out of our hearts that we draw treasures new and old; and those treasures are the wonderful treasures of His Word which we have hidden there. Consider the following verses:

"Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts. Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged." (Isaiah 6:5-7)

"Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." (Psalms 119:11)

"Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart:" (Proverbs 3:3)

"Keep my commandments, and live; and my law as the apple of thine eye. Bind them upon thy fingers, write them upon the table of thine heart." (Proverbs 7:2-3)

"O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things." (Matthew 12:34-35)

"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)

For more information on this topic, I encourage you to read the article 'Speak The Pure Language of Truth'.

Whether you choose to worship and serve the Lord inside or outside of organized religion is entirely up to you. It must be according to your faith, and not mine. If you have found a church or fellowship where the Lord and His Word are being exalted and obeyed, then perhaps you should remain where you are; however, if this is not the case, then perhaps you should begin to look elsewhere. If you are not knowledgeable of the qualities which should be present in a good church or fellowship, then I again encourage you to read such articles as 'Where Are The First Century Churches?', as well as the list of questions found at the end of part four of 'Have You Been Slain In The Spirit?'. Collectively, I believe that these will give you a solid basis upon which to determine the Scriptural purity of your church or fellowship. Wherever and however you decide to worship, I pray that you too will

be a burning ember who will shine forth His Love, Light and Truth. Don't ever allow anyone to quench the fire of His Spirit which burns in your heart. Continue to be a burning ember for the Lord:

"Quench not the Spirit." (1 Thessalonians 5:19)

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."
(Matthew 5:16)

With these final verses, I am going to bring this lesson to a close. I pray that this article has been a blessing and an inspiration in your life.

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