

ENDTIME WITNESSING : WINNING THE SHEEP AND WAGING THE WARFARE

PART 1

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Spiritual Famine In Israel, Hard-Hearted Corrupt Kings And Priests, Murderers Of The Prophets, Deceived By Choice When We Reject God's Word, Failure To Learn From The Past, Falling Away And Apostasy Of Our Modern World, Serious Compromise In Churches, Let Your Light Shine, Don't Be Ashamed And Preach Boldly, Willingness To Be Preachers Of The Gospel, Our Great Commission, Continuous Harvest Of Souls, Pray For Laborers, Witness On A Daily Basis Morning Till Night Throughout Year

Introduction by the WordWeaver

Greetings. What you are about to read is a major update to my 1997 article of the same name. This is the first time that I have touched this article in fifteen years, and it contains a lot of brand new information, as well as dozens of new Bible verses. If I were to give this series another name, it would probably be something like "The Christian Soldier's Handbook" or something similar. Whether you are a young Christian or a mature Christian who has been walking with the Lord for some time, if you have a sincere interest in being a witness for the Lord, this series will hopefully be a help and a blessing to you. The purpose of this series is not to teach you how to witness; that is, it does not put actual words in your mouth. After all, that is for the Lord's Holy Spirit alone to do.

What this series does do is provide you with a lot of useful information regarding different witnessing methods you can try out, reactions you can expect from the people you meet, how to deal with critics and troublemakers, setting up your own contact system, dangers and pitfalls to watch out for, and a lot of other practical tips which will help you to be an effective witness for the Lord. A lot of time, thought and effort has been invested in this series. I hope you enjoy it.

Spiritual Famine in Israel

In the Old Testament Book of Amos, we are told that a time would come in Israel when there would be a spiritual famine for hearing the words of God, as we see by this verse:

"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:"
Amos 8:11, KJV

My personal studies have led me to believe that the above prophecy may have been partially -- or perhaps even fully --

fulfilled during the few hundred years which transpired just prior to Jesus' First Century arrival on the Earth. As you may know, it has been said that in the years which ensued following the period of the Prophets who were alive at the time of the Babylonian exile and shortly thereafter, the Lord simply stopped the mouths of His Prophets due to the fact that the religious elders of Israel -- that is, the Scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees -- had become hardened of heart, and refused the Lord's correction.

Corrupt Religious and Political Leaders

This hard-heartedness and corruption of both the religious and the political leadership, as well as of the common people of Israel is made quite evident in a plethora of verses which are found throughout both the Old and the New Testaments. For example, consider some of the harsh utterances that were made by the Prophet Jeremiah prior to the Babylonian invasions:

"Yet they hearkened not unto me, nor inclined their ear, but hardened their neck: they did worse than their fathers."
Jeremiah 7:26, KJV

"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

In fact, as I point out in such articles as "The Fruits of Disobedience", from the time that the Lord delivered Israel from Egyptian bondage, they did nothing but complain and rebel against Him. Their long history is a tragic story of periods of obedience to the Lord, followed by other periods of blatant disobedience. Some kings were good leaders who strived to obey the Lord's Commandments, while other kings utterly rebelled against the Laws of the Lord and engaged in deep apostasy. The religious leadership was no different. It was in fact corrupt through and through. Thus, the Prophet Jeremiah exposed their sins with verses such as these:

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

"For they prophesy falsely unto you in my name: I have not sent them, saith the LORD."
Jeremiah 29:9, KJV

Murderers of the Prophets

Tragically, the rebellion of Israel's political and religious leadership did not end there. As the Lord Himself informs us in the Gospels, just as evil King Herod had silenced John the Baptist by having him beheaded, because John had thoroughly exposed Herod's sin of adultery -- King Herod married his brother's wife while his brother was still alive -- so too, the wicked leadership of ancient Israel also murdered God's Prophets, in their attempt to cover their sins, and silence the Word of the Lord. Consider the following harsh verses:

"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

As many of you know, within a short period after making the previous comments, Jesus Himself was also murdered by those very same unbelieving, rebellious Jews, when they handed Him over to the Roman procurator -- Pontius Pilate -- to be tried and executed on trumped up charges. Is it really any surprise then that God would choose to send a spiritual famine into the land of ancient Israel? The Jewish leadership -- as well as many of the common people -- did not want to receive God's Word; either before Jesus' arrival, or even afterwards. Thus, the Lord apparently chose to withhold it from them, as per the prophecy of the Prophet Amos. Of course, it should also be recognized that not everyone rejected Jesus. After all, if they had, then we would not have the Bible, or the knowledge of Salvation, today. Thousands did in fact come to accept the Way; and we today can be very thankful for that.

Deceived by Choice

However, it should also be noted here, that when we knowingly choose to reject God's Word; when we willfully and stubbornly choose to resist the conviction of His Holy Spirit working on our minds and hearts; we leave ourselves open to deception. Furthermore, the Scriptures inform us that if we are really that rebellious, God Himself will send the delusion, as we learn from this verse:

"I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear: but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not."
Isaiah 66:4, KJV

Failure to Learn from the Past

Many of you will be familiar with the old adage which states that if there is one thing which we learn from history, it is that we never seem to learn very much from history. In fact, both the Apostles Paul and Jude inform us that if we are truly wise, we will learn lessons from the Biblical past, and will not make the same serious mistakes which they made back then. Consider the following verses:

"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus:"
Romans 15:4, KJV

"Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted . . . Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."
1 Corinthians 10:6, 11, KJV

"Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire."
Jude 1:7, KJV

Modern Falling Away and Apostasy

Tragically, we humans seem to have a propensity for repeating our errors. As a result, the same spiritual conditions which existed in Israel several thousand years ago, not only exist in the antichrist State of Israel today, but they are present in many other countries all around the world as well. Aside from embracing atheism, there are many false religions which worship other gods, where Jesus Christ is not recognized as being the Son of God, and the only Savior of the world.

Sadly, even within our own Christian faith, there are so many people -- including a growing number of major denominations -- who have fallen away from our rich Christian heritage, as it was soundly taught by Jesus and His Apostles, and who have embraced doctrines of devils, and misguided practices which are clearly contrary to the Scriptures. I discuss this issue in more detail in other articles, so I will not belabor the point here. Suffice it to say that the Bible refers to this falling away from the Truth of God's Word as the Apostasy. This word is derived from the Greek word "apostasia".

Let Your Light So Shine

Taking into consideration the state of the world, as well as the present sad condition of our own faith, as I point out in the articles "Are You a Burning Ember for the Lord?", "Study, Work, and Don't Be Ashamed" and "Sluggards and Sloths: Are You Diligent and Faithful in the Affairs of God's Kingdom?", it becomes evident then how important it is that we who are God's children, and thus the Children of Light, do not hide our spiritual lights under a bushel, but rather let the flame of truth shine forth from within our beings. This Christian obligation is made evident by verses such as the following:

"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."
Matthew 5:14-16, KJV

"Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven."
Matthew 10:32-33, KJV

"Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."
Mark 8:38, KJV

"No man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it in a secret place, neither under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light. The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness. Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness. If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light."
Luke 11:33-36, KJV

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."
Romans 1:16, KJV

"That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;"
Philippians 2:15, KJV

"For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."
2 Timothy 1:12, KJV

Preach Boldly and Don't Be Ashamed

As you can see, we must not be ashamed of our faith. The Lord and the Apostles admonish us to let our lights shine brightly in this dark world. We must not surrender to fear, or bow to political correctness, as so many Christians and churches have already done. As the following verses likewise reveal, we are to boldly preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and then leave the results of our preaching up to God alone to deal with:

"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 . . . And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all BOLDNESS they may speak thy word, By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with BOLDNESS."
Acts 4:13, 29-31, KJV

"Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men."
Acts 5:29, KJV

"But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached BOLDLY at Damascus in the name of Jesus. And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem. And he spake BOLDLY in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him."
Acts 9:27-29, KJV

"Long time therefore abode they speaking BOLDLY in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands."
Acts 14:3, KJV

"And he began to speak BOLDLY in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly."
Acts 18:26, KJV

"And he went into the synagogue, and spake BOLDLY for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God."
Acts 19:8, KJV

"Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more BOLDLY unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God,"
Romans 15:15, KJV

"And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth BOLDLY, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak."
Ephesians 6:19-20, KJV

"According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all BOLDNESS, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death."
Philippians 1:20, KJV

"For his letters, say they, are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible."
2 Corinthians 10:10, KJV

"So that we may BOLDLY say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."
Hebrews 13:6, KJV

"Quench not the Spirit."
1 Thessalonians 5:19, KJV

"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart."
Hebrews 4:12, KJV

Willingly Preach the Gospel

Of course, for any of this to be possible, not only must we be filled with the Lord's Spirit, but we must likewise have a willingness in our hearts as well, to be the preachers of Salvation that God desires for us to be. We must have the vision for reaching the world -- even if it just means our small part of the world -- for Jesus Christ. We must have a vision for the Great Commission. Again, please consider the following verses:

"For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."
Philippians 2:13, KJV

"How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things . . . So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."
Romans 10:14-15, 17, KJV

"And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."
Matthew 24:14, KJV

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:"
Matthew 28:19, KJV

"And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled."

Luke 14:23, KJV

"And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

Luke 24:46-47, KJV

"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

Mark 16:15, KJV

"Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent."

John 6:29, 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

"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, KJV

"And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house."

Acts 20:20, KJV

"For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!"

1 Corinthians 9:16, KJV

"Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things."

Galatians 6:6, KJV

"Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints, For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel; Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth:"

Colossians 1:4-6, KJV

"And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."

2 Timothy 2:2, KJV

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

2 Timothy 4:2, KJV

Continuous Harvest of Souls

In the Gospel of John, the Lord emphasized to His followers that the harvest of souls was not just a future event that they should look forward to. Rather, He made it clear that it is something which is going on all the time, all around us. Not only that, but in the Gospel of Luke, the Lord also encourages us to pray for willing laborers who can be sent into the fields of the world, in order to reap the harvest of souls. This is made evident by the following verses:

"Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest."
John 4:35, KJV

"And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it."
Luke 9:23-24, KJV

These verses still apply to our modern times. In fact, it may very well be that they apply more today, than they did two thousand years ago, because there are obviously a lot more people in the world. The truth of the matter is that a new generation of souls is constantly being born which needs to be reached with the Gospel. In thinking about this harvest, the spiritual condition of our present world, the attitudes which prevail, and some of the problems we encounter as we go about being Christian witnesses, I decided to put together the following list of helpful tips and Bible verses, based on my own experiences over the past forty plus years.

Whether you witness in person on city streets, in parks or on beaches, or online via the Internet as I now do, I hope that this list will assist you in your personal ministry for the Lord as well. Allow me to suggest that, time permitting, you endeavor to read the verses surrounding the ones which I have listed here. In some cases, these verses were extracted from a discussion which dealt with another subject. However, I feel that their spiritual significance -- and the lessons which can be learned from them -- is relevant to the topic of this current series. Thus, I have presented them here. This list of helpful tips and Bible verses is by no means complete; but it should answer some of your common questions regarding the topic of witnessing, and how to avoid some of the pitfalls which can be -- and which often are -- associated with it.

Witness on a Daily Basis

One of the very first questions you may be motivated to ask concerns where and when we are supposed to be a witness of our faith. As the previous Bible verses reveal, if we are truly yielded to the Lord's Spirit, we should be willing to witness anywhere and at anytime that we have an opportunity to do so. Of course, we need to be Spirit-led as well. In fact, as the following verses clearly reveal, we should be willing to sow the Seed of God's Word's from morning until night on a daily basis, and throughout the year as well:

"In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good."

Ecclesiastes 11:6, KJV

"I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and ye took me not: but the scriptures must be fulfilled."

Mark 14:49, KJV

"And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ."

Acts 5:42, KJV

"And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily."

Acts 16:5, KJV

"Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him."

Acts 17:17, KJV

"Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears."

Acts 20:31, KJV

"For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God."

1 Thessalonians 2:9, KJV

"For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you: Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us."

2 Thessalonians 3:7-9, KJV

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

2 Timothy 4:2, KJV

"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, KJV

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

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ENDTIME WITNESSING : WINNING THE SHEEP AND WAGING THE WARFARE

PART 2

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On-Fire First Century Church Preached Anywhere At Anytime, Ask God For Wisdom And Be Spirit-Led As You Are Witnessing, Different Witnessing Methods, Acquire Vision For Internet, Passing Out Gospel Tracts, Work Of Faith, God Gives Increase Fruitfulness Of Gospel Tracts, God's Word Will Accomplish His Purpose, Brought To The Point Of Decision, Be Spirit-Led And Feed His Sheep, Keep Contact Information, Beware Of Pride And Vainglorying, We Are All Unprofitable Servants, Treasures In Heaven, Be A Good Listener, Jehovah's Witnesses, My Facebook Ministry, Be Slow To Speak, Give Them God's Answer, Beware Of Conveying Condescending Self-Righteous Attitude To Sheep, We Are All Lost Sinners Who Are Saved By The Grace Of God

Witness Anywhere Anytime But Be Spirit-Led

As I concluded in part one, the First Century Church was a very active Church insofar as preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ is concerned. It is evident from the Scriptures that the Apostles and Disciples of the Lord preached anywhere and at anytime they could, from morning until night, as well as throughout the year. They were a very on-fire Church. As much as we would like to follow in their inspiring footsteps, sadly, with so many international, national and local laws now being passed which severely restrict our proselytizing activities, it is becoming increasingly more difficult for us to let our lights freely shine. However, the Lord can still open doors if we are willing, ready and able to go wherever and whenever He tugs at our heart by His Spirit and says "Go witness to that person." However, at the same time, and as I noted earlier, it is also important that we ask God to grant us His Wisdom, and that we are Spirit-led as we engage in our witnessing activities, lest we bring hardship upon ourselves unnecessarily.

Witnessing Methods

As far as what witnessing methods to use, that is entirely up to your personal faith, and how you feel led by the Lord. Do whatever works. Do whatever bears fruit. Visit parks and other public places where people gather. Go door-to-door if you feel so inclined. Pass out Gospel tracts. If you are creative and are computer literate, you can even create your own pamphlets. This is in fact what I personally did for a number of years. You can then take your home-designed tracts to a local printer to have them printed, or even print just a small quantity at a local fast copy store. Sing Christian songs on a busy street corner if you can find a place where city authorities will allow you to do so. Start a Christian newsletter. Begin a Christian youth club. Hold puppet shows

for children. Visit hospitals, rest homes, prisons and other places where you may find a captive audience who may enjoy your company. Use your artistic abilities to uplift the Lord and preach the Message of Salvation. Create your own website. Go online and open accounts on social networking sites such as Facebook, Google+, Twitter, MySpace, etc. Visit message forums. Create a blog or two.

In short, the way that you choose to be a witness of your faith depends a lot on your personal talents and motivations. In my case, now that I am no longer young and have developed a number of health issues, my primary witnessing activities are achieved via my online writing ministry which reaches a wide range of people all around the world on a daily basis. If you would like to acquire a vision for witnessing via the Internet, please consider reading my article entitled "The Internet: Our Final Frontier; Your Last Chance?".

Pass Out Gospel Tracts

As I mentioned a moment ago, in former years when I was doing a lot more public witnessing while I was out and about, I had a regular practice of carrying a supply of Gospel tracts in my waist pouch. These tracts were created on my computer, and contained a simple Salvation message -- which was expanded at a later date and became my Salvation article entitled "Message to the World" -- along with a sample prayer at the end of it which a person could pray, as well as contact information that changed over time as my witnessing methods changed. In fact, I believe I may still have the originals -- possibly in MS Word format -- if anyone reading this series is interested. I would be happy to email copies to you, if you wish to print out your own. They are simple black and white tracts with no pictures. All you would have to do is print out a sheet, back-to-back, and then cut it in half, being as there are two tracts on the sheet.

I passed out my Gospel tracts at stores, at bus stops while waiting for the bus, on many street corners, while walking on sidewalks, etc. When I was really bold, I would even pass out a few tracts inside the devil's strongholds like government buildings. I do advise caution in doing something like this though. After all, the last thing that you want to do is to cut your ministry short by doing something foolish. As the Apostle James writes in his Epistle:

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."
James 1:5, KJV

While I really do not like using the term, in a way, passing out Gospel tracts is a machine gun type witnessing method. This is because one really has to trust the Lord to bear the fruit that He alone desires. In fact, it is quite possible that you may never even see the fruit of your labors. As both Jesus and the Apostle Paul inform us, you may plant the seed of the Word in someone's heart. Maybe sometime later someone else will come along and water that young plant, or soul. It may not be until quite a while alter, that yet another person will come along, and help to reap the harvest:

"And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth. I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours."
John 4:36-38, KJV

"I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase."
1 Corinthians 3:6-7, KJV

There is a very important lesson that you can learn from the previous verses. Suppose that while out witnessing, you meet someone who is very receptive to the Gospel message. So, you spend some serious time with them, answering their questions and showing them verses from the Bible. Despite all of this, while that person may be close to accepting the Lord, they just aren't quite ready to do it yet, and so you go on your way. Now, does this mean that you failed? Of course not! It just isn't their time yet. God used you to plant the seed of faith in that person's heart; but perhaps He has designated someone else to bring them to the point of Salvation. You did exactly what God wanted you to do. Now trust Him, and leave it up to Him to do the rest. Remember; it is God that giveth the increase; not you.

When it comes to passing out Gospel tracts, you fire into the enemy's territory, and spray your "spiritual bullets", just hoping that some of your tracts will find receptive hearts. It is really a work of faith, because you never really know where those tracts may end up. Some will surely be tossed in the trash can, or clutter a street curb -- I hope you do take the time to pick them up -- but you may give one to someone who may read it, and then leave it in a place where another person will find and read it. Perhaps that first person will ignore its contents, but that second person will accept the Lord. Who knows; you may even give one to somebody who will take it home, and twenty members of their family may end up reading it and accepting the Lord.

Fruitfulness of Gospel Tracts

As I said, when it comes to passing out Gospel tracts -- or Salvation tracts, if you prefer -- one never knows what plans God may have for them, or where they may end up. Neither do we really know what kind of fruit our endeavors may bear in the long run. However, as I explain in the series entitled "Parable of the Sower: Salvation and Service", the Lord most certainly knows exactly what kind of fruit, as well as how much fruit, our witnessing and seed-planting endeavors will bear. He has it all under control. Consider what Jesus says in that particular Parable:

"But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."
Matthew 13:23, KJV

God's Word Will Accomplish Its Purpose

So the lesson is clear. We should never underestimate the power of the written word. Not only may our Gospel tracts end up in many places where we could never go in person, but they may accomplish things -- and bear positive fruit -- in ways which we never imagined. The one thing of which we can be certain, is that the Word which we include in our tracts will accomplish the purpose, as well as bear the fruit for which it has been designed. After all, as the Lord informs us in the Scriptures:

"So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

Isaiah 55:11, KJV

If we stop to think about it, even if a hard-hearted person just decides to throw that tract in the trash, it has still accomplished a purpose. Why? Because regardless of whether or not they accept the message that is contained within it, the tract has provided them with the knowledge of Salvation that they need to know, and it has brought them to the point of decision. Someday, unless they repent of their unbelief, God will be able to point to that moment in their life when they cast that Gospel tract to the ground, and say "See; in my Mercy, I gave you the knowledge of the Truth. I sent that faithful tract passer to you on that day, but look what you did. In that tract I told you about the Sacrifice of my Son; but you foolishly rejected Him. In fact, you continued to reject Him as I gave you other opportunities to repent of your unbelief throughout your mortal life."

While the previous conversation is obviously my own invention, I hope it helps you to realize that your tract-passing efforts are not in vain. On a related note, some people hold the view that passing out Gospel tracts is not as effective a means of witnessing as other methods, because it does not allow one to engage in a deep conversation with a person. While this may be true sometimes, I can personally attest to the fact that there have been many occasions over the years where I have met very hungry sheep while passing out tracts, and I have spent hours answering their questions and sharing God's Word with them. In some cases, this has resulted in them accepting the Lord. What it really boils down to is being Spirit-led, so that when the Lord does send that special person your way, you recognize the situation as being one of His witnessing setups, and you take the time to minister to and feed that person accordingly.

Keep Contact Information

In addition to including some form of contact information somewhere on your Gospel tracts -- usually on the bottom of the final page -- you will also want to set up some kind of system where you can record and store information regarding the special sheep that you meet. Naturally, many people will not be very willing to provide such personal information to you, unless they really are a hungry sheep who has a sincere

interest in learning more about the Lord. If you are computer literate, then the obvious place to store the information is in a program or file on your computer. There is a wide range of applications which can be used for this purpose.

Concerning what kind of information to keep, it is entirely up to you. It can include some or all of the following: name, telephone number, cell number, residential address, mailing address, email address, place and date where you first met, whether or not they have accepted Christ, birth date, and any other facts which you would like to remember about them. If they happen to be very receptive, you may want to ask them for a small picture of themselves which you can keep with their record, and use as a prayer reminder.

It is not necessary to ask them for all of this information the first time that you meet them. After all, not only could it make them suspicious of you, but it could drive them away entirely. Simply gather the information a little at a time as you get to know each other. You may also want to record the dates and places of any future meetings, along with important details, such as any progress they are making in their walk with the Lord.

Being as computer hard drives often fail, it would be wise to have a parallel backup system, such as a plastic box full of three by five index cards where you keep the same information.

Give God the Glory

In a way, Gospel tract-passing is a quieter, more humble way of witnessing compared to being a fiery pulpit preacher or a famous televangelist. There is really no glory in it; and as we will see later on in this series, it can even be rather dangerous at times. However, if we are only seeking glory for ourselves, can we honestly say that our hearts are right with the Lord? Sadly, when it comes to preaching, witnessing and being a testimony of our faith, there are certain Christians who -- motivated by their pride -- are simply interested in showing off their spirituality, or bragging about how many Bible verses they have memorized. This is not really genuine, heartfelt witnessing. This is what the Scriptures refer to as vainglorying. This attitude is not really that much different from what the Scribes and the Pharisees were doing in Jesus' day. If there is one thing that the Scriptures teach us, it is that the glory belongs to the Lord alone. Consider the following verses and be warned:

"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 6:5, KJV

"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. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto

us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

1 Corinthians 1:27-31, KJV

"Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours;"

1 Corinthians 3:21, KJV

"And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another. For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?"

1 Corinthians 4:6-7, KJV

"For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!"

1 Corinthians 9:16, KJV

"But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth . . . Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

1 Corinthians 10:17-18, 31, KJV

"For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake."

2 Corinthians 4:5, KJV

"But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

2 Corinthians 10:17, KJV

"Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities. For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth: but now I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me."

2 Corinthians 12:5-6, KJV

"Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another."

Galatians 5:26, KJV

"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

Galatians 6:14, KJV

"Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ."

1 Thessalonians 2:6, 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

Clearly then, we should not glory in the works we accomplish for the Lord. Rather, we should realize that, as Jesus said in the Gospels, no matter what we do, we nevertheless still remain unprofitable servants who have done that which is our duty to do. Furthermore, while those flashy pulpit preachers and televangelists may get their moment of fame and glory on the Earth, we should be content with knowing that our rewards are laid up for us in Heaven alone. Consider the truth that is revealed in the following verses:

"So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do."
Luke 17:10, KJV

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."
Matthew 6:19-21, KJV

Be a Good Listener

Part of being a good witness is being a good listener. In this day and age, it seems that many of us have acquired the bad habit of being rude and cutting in when another person is speaking. Sometimes, in our own zeal to witness, or possibly because of our own pride, and because we think that we know so much, all we want to do is rattle off a list of verses we have memorized, or which we have marked in our Bible. Now, if you really want to know how not to witness, just look at the Jehovah's Witnesses. I can hear the groans from here. Sadly, those people are not good listeners. They are so convinced of their doctrines, and so convinced that they alone possess the truth, that they rarely let a person get a word in edgewise.

The fact is that there are occasions where people really do feel a need to talk to us. I have even found this to be true with my online Facebook ministry. On a regular basis, people send me private messages in which they pour out their heart and their problems to me because they are in need of answers. Either that, or they will ask me Bible-related questions. As busy as I am here, I try to attend to everyone's needs, but it is a challenge to divide my time between writing articles, drawing new graphics for my timeline, responding to messages in private chat, responding to new friend requests, answering email, and everything else that I try to accomplish on a daily basis. For a man my age who possesses limited energy, it isn't always easy, but I continue by God's Grace.

Be Slow to Speak

At any rate, as I was saying, instead of allowing people to share their hearts with us, sometimes we are in such a hurry to just push our program across on them. When it comes to witnessing, in order to be able to help someone, we have to know where they are coming from first. Sometimes it can be difficult to sit patiently while a person pours their heart

out to us, but sometimes this is what we are called to do. If we want to be good witnesses of our faith, and if we really want to be able to help people, then we simply need to learn to be quick to hear, and slow to speak. We don't want to be like the Jehovah's Witnesses, or other groups, who in their own pride, resort to very aggressive witnessing tactics, and bombard the sheep, so that they are turned off to the Lord, instead of falling in love with Him and His Word. Consider the truth that is revealed in the following Bible verses:

"In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise."
Proverbs 10:19, KJV

"Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few."
Ecclesiastes 5:2, KJV

"He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him."
Proverbs 18:13, KJV

"A fool uttereth all his mind: but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards."
Proverbs 29:11, KJV

"For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."
Matthew 12:37, 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

"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:"
James 1:19, KJV

Give Them God's Answers / Study God's Word

Once we have heard them out, then we must rely, not upon our own strength or carnal wisdom, but rather upon God's Spirit to provide us with the Scriptural answers that they need. We must be familiar with the Scriptures so that we are able to provide them with God's answers, and not our own, in a spirit of meekness and love. Of course, to be able to do this, it is imperative that we immerse ourselves in God's Word on a daily or regular basis. No surgeon can properly and safely perform an operation, unless he has been thoroughly trained in the field of human physiology, and knows how to correctly use his scalpel and other instruments.

As I explain in the article entitled "Study, Work and Don't Be Ashamed", in similar fashion, we must study God's Word -- which is the Sword of the Spirit -- and learn how to use it skillfully when witnessing to others. Obviously, this is not something that happens overnight. In fact, it requires years of faithful study in order to establish a firm foundation in the Scriptures. I am still making new discoveries at my age.

However, armed with just a few dozen verses of Scripture -- such as those which I share in the article entitled "A Verse a Day to Keep the Doubts Away" -- even a young Christian can still be an effective witness for the Lord; so please don't be discouraged. Consider the following verses:

"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:"
1 Peter 3:15, 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

"And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so."
Acts 17:10-11, KJV

"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."
Hebrews 4:12, KJV

Witness in Love / Beware of a Condescending Attitude

What we need to remember is that we should witness with God's wisdom, and in love, rather than with a proud, self-righteous, condescending attitude. We need to be very serious about what we do, because we are in fact living in very serious times. After all, the Salvation of a soul may be at stake. However, conveying a self-righteous, condescending attitude is one of the quickest ways to ruin an effective witness. As I noted a moment ago, it is a very serious problem with many Jehovah's Witnesses. If a person detects that we are looking down on them, they will just harden their heart and quickly classify us as "just another hard-selling Bible thumper". Please do not forget that we are all sinners; every last one of us. We are all saved only by the Grace of God, and not because of something that we did to deserve it. Please consider the following verses:

"Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me."
Psalms 51:5, KJV

"As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one . . . For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;"
Romans 3:10, 23, KJV

"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:"
Romans 5:12, KJV

"And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins . . . But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."
Ephesians 2:1, 4-9, KJV

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;"
Titus 3:5, KJV

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

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ENDTIME WITNESSING : WINNING THE SHEEP AND WAGING THE WARFARE

PART 3

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We Are To Be Known By Our Love For God And For Each Other, Have A Burden For Lost Souls, Tested As You Are Witnessing, Endure Hardness, Resist Temptation To Become Angry, Extent of God's Mercy And Longsuffering, You Cannot Save A Single Soul, Your Fruit Or God's Saved Soul, God Alone Gives The Increase, Door-To-Door Witnessing Tips, Entire Families Can Be Saved: Lydia And Prison Keeper In Philippi And Cornelius

Known by Our Love For God and Each Other

As I explain in such articles as "The Royal Law: Thou Shalt Love", in their teachings, Jesus and the Apostles emphasized the fact that as His followers, we should be known by our love; not only by our love towards God and each other, but also by our love towards others as well; even towards those people who hate us, abuse us and persecute us in different ways. Consider the following verses which verify this point:

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them

that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?"
Matthew 5:43-46, KJV

"Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, Saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The Son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?"
Matthew 22:35-45, KJV

"And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all? And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these."
Mark 12:28-31, KJV

"But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you. And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloke forbid not to take thy coat also. Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again. And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise. For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven:"
Luke 6:27-37, KJV

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."
John 13:35, KJV

"Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law."
Romans 13:8-10, KJV

"And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."
1 Corinthians 13:13, KJV

"For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."
Galatians 5:13-14, KJV

"If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well:"
James 2:8, KJV

"He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love."
1 John 4:8, KJV

Have a Burden for Lost Souls

From my personal experiences as a public street preacher and Gospel tract passer for many years, I can tell you firsthand that unless you have a genuine love for lost souls, a burden for lost souls, and in fact weep in your spirit for all the lost souls, you will probably not endure for very long as a street preacher, Gospel tract passer, or in any other manner as a witness for Jesus Christ. That Jesus Himself and the early Apostles had this love for the lost, and that they in fact wept for the lost, is revealed in such verses as the following:

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

"Jesus wept."
John 11:35, KJV

"And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, 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: And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house, Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ . . . Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears."

Acts 20:18-21, 31, KJV

"For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you."

2 Corinthians 2:4, KJV

Tested As You Witness / Endure Hardness

As a soldier of Jesus Christ, one very important lesson that you are going to have to learn early, is that if you decide to invade Satan's territory by becoming a faithful witness for the Lord, do not think for a minute that Satan will just sit back and take it lightly. Quite to the contrary, he will most definitely raise up some of his children to verbally -- and perhaps even physically -- persecute you. You can be sure of it, so it would be wise to prepare yourself for it. As you will no doubt discover for yourself, such encounters with the enemy will test your mettle, and reveal the true motivations of your heart. They will allow you to check yourself, so that you can determine if you are witnessing for the right reasons. At the same time, you can take comfort in the fact that you are not alone in the afflictions you face on the battlefield of the world. Consider the following verses:

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world."

1 Peter 5:8-9, KJV

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

1 Corinthians 10:13, KJV

"Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."

2 Timothy 2:3, KJV

We will return to this issue regarding persecution later on this same series.

God's Mercy and Longsuffering (Patience)

As I noted a moment ago, when you encounter adversity on the witnessing battlefield, you will find yourself faced with a decision. If your heart is ruled by God's love, then you will pity those people who ridicule, abuse and persecute you. If on the other hand you are not motivated by love, then you will probably just harden your heart against the very ones who you are endeavoring to reach with the Gospel. Witnessing that is motivated by hate, contempt and a condescending attitude will simply not work. Not only will you be miserable, but you will probably be a poor example of God's Love and Mercy as well.

During such times when you are persecuted for being an active

witness of your faith, more than ever, it is so important to remember that Jesus did not come to our world to condemn and to destroy, but rather to save that which is lost. Not only that, but because of His great Mercy and Longsuffering -- or patience -- our Heavenly Father's desire is that all people repent of their unbelief, and be spiritually healed. Being mindful of your own previous state as an unsaved sinner can also help you to maintain a soft heart towards the lost. In short, you need to resist the temptation to become angry at the people you are trying to reach; even when they show very little appreciation for your witnessing efforts. Maintaining this frame of mind in such a hard, cold, unbelieving world requires a Divine Love which surpasses human love. Consider the following verses which confirm these points:

"And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,"
Exodus 34:6, KJV

"The LORD is longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation."
Numbers 14:18, KJV

"But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth."
Psalms 86:15, KJV

"Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?"
Ezekiel 33:11, KJV

"It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness . . . For the Lord will not cast off for ever: But though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies. For he doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men."
Lamentations 3:22-23, 31-33, KJV

"Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven. For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost. How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray. Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish."
Matthew 18:10-14, KJV

"And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem, And sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make

ready for him. And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem. And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village."
Luke 9:51-56, KJV

"For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."
Luke 19:10, KJV

"So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep."
John 21:15-17, KJV

"Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?"
Romans 2:4, KJV

"What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?"
Romans 9:22-24, KJV

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."
2 Peter 3:9, KJV

"And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them

which are exercised thereby. Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed."
Hebrews 12:5-13, KJV

You Can't Save a Single Soul

Another important point which is worth remembering is that we cannot lead a single person to the Lord, no matter how much talking we do. It really annoys me when I hear certain proud, self-righteous Christians boasting about how many souls they supposedly saved. "Oh, I saved twenty-five souls last week." "Yeah, I saved this guy the other day and . . ." And on and on they go in their foolish delusion. Oh, so you saved that person? Really now? Well aren't you just proud of yourself! God help you! I discuss this issue, as well as the dangerous practice of keeping statistics, more at length in the series entitled "Elijah: Where Are the True Prophets of God?".

The simple truth of the matter is that all of our talking will accomplish nothing if the Lord's Spirit is not behind it. In fact, it may interest you to know that in some rare cases, some people will actually go along with you, and even say a Salvation prayer with you, just to shut you up and get rid of you; even if they really do not believe in what they are doing. If you make the mistake of engaging in aggressive witnessing tactics, so that people feel forced and pressured into praying with you, then don't be the least bit surprised if sometime down the road, you discover that the person you thought you had led to the Lord, is thinking, behaving and living in the very same manner as before their so-called "Salvation experience" had occurred. Could this be because they are your fruit, and not really a soul who was saved by the Lord?

God Saves Souls and Gives the Increase

Do you get my point? Instead of working so hard in our own strength to bring someone to Christ, maybe some of us need to learn to trust the Lord more. After all, He is the only one who can cause our efforts to result in spiritual fruit -- that is, saved souls -- and not us. Unless a person is truly convicted by God's Holy Spirit in their heart; unless they honestly recognize their sinful condition; unless they truthfully acknowledge their need for a Savior; unless they understand that faith in the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ is the manner which has been chosen by God Himself to redeem humanity, and to save us from the penalty of sin -- which is eternal death -- then saying a robotic Salvation prayer will in effect be absolutely meaningless.

So as I mentioned earlier, it is totally impossible for you, or for me, to save a soul. It is entirely up to God alone to convict a person's heart. It must be a work of His Spirit, and not a work of our fleshly endeavors. Carefully consider the following verses, and notice how we are told that it is the Lord who added to the Church daily, and that it is God alone who gives the increase:

"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, Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."
Acts 2:46-47, KJV

"I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase."
1 Corinthians 3:6-7, KJV

Clearly then, unless it is the Lord who touches the heart of the sinner, and convicts them to repent of their unbelief and sin, our efforts are in vain. Please do not ever forget this. On a related note, I also discuss the topic of prayer -- both Salvation prayers and repetitive prayers -- in the article entitled "To Pray or Not to Pray? That is the Question".

Door-to-Door Witnessing

As we learned earlier in this series, there are many ways in which a dedicated Christian can be a faithful witness for the Lord. Door-to-door witnessing is one of such ways. Up until a few decades ago, in addition to street witnessing, I engaged in this form of witnessing for many years, all across my own country of the USA, throughout Mexico, in Japan, and in my current locale as well. One reality which makes door-to-door witnessing a lot different from street witnessing is that you are at a disadvantage. That is because there is a door -- and perhaps even several doors -- which separates you from the person you wish to minister to. Whereas on a city street you can directly encounter the people you wish to reach with the Gospel of Salvation, this is obviously not the case when it comes to door-to-door witnessing. It is entirely up to that person to decide whether or not they even want to open the door for you; assuming, of course, that they are even home.

Because of this fact, door-to-door witnessing can be a more trying experience. Not only does one have to arrive when the occupants are home, but he must also hope that they will be willing to open their door. Then, of course, there are also guard dogs, broken doorbells, and other issues that one must contend with. If you do happen to engage in a door-to-door ministry, what may eventually happen to you is that a person will offer you a donation -- many people automatically seem to assume that this is why you are at their doorstep -- not because they really believe in your cause, but just to get you out of their face so that they can return to whatever is they were doing before you knocked on their door. In other words, it is their way of bribing you so that you will go away quickly and leave them alone.

As I said, just getting past the front door can be the most difficult aspect of door-to-door witnessing. Due to the fact that there are now so many different churches and groups who engage in this type of witnessing, a lot of people have in effect become hardened against it. To be honest, given some of the tactics that are used by some of these groups, I can't say that I blame people for acting in this manner. I myself grew tired of the Mormons and the Jehovah's Witnesses coming

to my door years ago. As such, I no longer even respond to them when they come knocking. In the case of the Jehovah's Witnesses, it would just lead to doctrinal disputes and a lot of wasted time anyway; that is, when they even let a person talk.

On a related note, there are some individuals who are so very set in their religious beliefs -- or maybe their lack thereof -- that they will even go so far as to place a wooden plaque on their door, so that any would-be door-to-door missionaries will know that they should stay away. In my own experiences, Roman Catholics appear to do this a lot. Perhaps we should be thankful. Who wants to engage in an encounter with a staunch member of the so-called "one true faith"? Excuse my sarcasm.

To balance out my previous statements, let me also state that door-to-door witnessing can be a very rewarding experience as well. While you will obviously encounter some reprobates and goats, you will also meet a lot of very sweet people as well who will be very happy to let you into their home in order to learn more about what you have to share with them. Sometimes these people will even invite you to a drink or a meal, which is always a blessing when you are hard at work on the mission field of the world. If there happens to be inclement weather at the time that you engage in your door-to-door activities, coming in from the rain, cold or snow for a short while is likewise a blessing.

Entire Families Saved

Another positive aspect of door-to-door witnessing is that sometimes there will be more than one member of the family at home at the same time. Now, if the head of the household is receptive to your message, they may even call out other family members to listen to you as well. Thus, you can reach multiple people at the same time. We find a number of clear examples in the Scriptures where entire families were saved all at the same time. For example, in the sixteenth chapter of the Book of Acts, we read about an incident that occurred in the city of Philippi, which involved a Thyatiran woman by the name of Lydia. Consider the following verses:

"And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony: and we were in that city abiding certain days. And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither. And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us."
Acts 16:12-15, KJV

Only a few verses later in the same chapter, we find another example with the unnamed prison keeper. As we have seen, if we choose to become a bold witness for the Lord, we must also expect that the Devil will not take our advances into his own territory lying down. It should not come as a surprise to us

then that Paul and Silas eventually ran into trouble in the city of Philippi, and were in fact whipped, as well as thrown into prison. However, even this was the Lord's setup, as we discover by what happened next. Consider the following verses:

"And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed. And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here. Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house."
Acts 16:25-34, KJV

Allow me to share with you a final Scriptural example where an entire household receives the Lord at the same time. Many of you will already be familiar with the special vision that God gave to the Apostle Peter in Acts chapter ten. The main purpose of the vision was to signal to Peter that it was now time to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles as well. Shortly thereafter, Peter -- who was residing in the city of Joppa at the time -- accompanied some men to the city of Caesarea, where he met the Roman centurion Cornelius and his family. After some fiery preaching was conducted by Peter, consider what happened next:

"And as he [Peter] talked with him [Cornelius], he went in, and found many that were come together . . . While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days."
Acts 10:27, 44-48, KJV

As you can see, not only did Cornelius and his family accept the Lord, but in gratitude -- and no doubt because they were eager to learn more about the Lord -- they invited Peter and his traveling companions to remain with them for some time. While leading entire families to the Lord at the same time may be rare, it can and does happen sometimes; even in our modern day. When it does, it can be such a boost to your personal faith.

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

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ENDTIME WITNESSING : WINNING THE SHEEP AND WAGING THE WARFARE

PART 4

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Remain Faithful Despite Reactions, Your Personal Disposition,
Just Be Happy, God Doesn't Judge Us By Our Numbers But By Our
Faithfulness, Don't Be A Fair-Weather Christian, Tank Up On
God's Word Before You Go Out Witnessing, Virtue Is Spiritual
Healing Power, Spirit Without Measure, Power Of Holy Ghost,
Seek Out the Hungry Sheep, The Foolishness Of Using Pressure
Tactics, Avoid Goats Dogs And Yabbutts, Our Spiritual Warfare

Remain Faithful Despite Reactions

Over time, you will learn that people react in all kinds of different ways when it comes to hearing the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Some of them will be sheep, and will thus react in a positive manner. Others may adopt a "neutral" attitude with a "whatever-you-want-to-believe-dude" response. Yet others will be absolute goats, devils and reprobates. The more that you engage in witnessing, the more you will become familiar with these different reactions and attitudes. Regardless of how people choose to react to the message which we bear, as I explain in some of the aforementioned articles, we need to remember that as stewards of God's Word, our duty is simply to remain faithful messengers. Please consider this verse:

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

1 Corinthians 4:2, KJV

As we learned earlier, God, by His Spirit, is responsible for the outcome of our witnessing endeavors. He alone can touch a person's mind and heart so that they will be convicted of sin in their life, repent of their sins, and accept Christ as the only means of Atonement for their sins. However, in order for that to happen, God relies upon us to faithfully deliver the Word to them first. Allow me to again share some verses with you from part one:

"How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is

written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things . . . So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

Romans 10:14-15, 17, KJV

Your Personal Disposition / Be Happy

Whatever you do, do not fall into the trap of allowing your spiritual, mental and emotional attitude to be determined or affected by the outcome or fruit of your labors; because if you do, you will constantly be bouncing from one end of the emotional spectrum to the other on a regular basis. In other words, regardless of whether many souls come to Christ as a result of your endeavors, or only a few, treat it all the same. To reiterate, the Lord does not judge you by the numbers, He judges you according to your faithfulness.

As I explain in other articles, if the Lord were to judge all of His servants by the numbers alone, then many would no doubt be viewed as failures. Noah preached to the world for one hundred and twenty years, and yet only eight souls were save, those being his very own family. The Prophet Elijah had to confront the four hundred and fifty false prophets of Baal, and he complained that he was the last Prophet left in Israel. The Prophet Jeremiah faithfully preached for forty years in Israel, yet we only hear of one friend who came to his aid in his time of need. Consider the following verses:

"Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water."

1 Peter 3:20, KJV

"And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah? And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for 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 19:9-10, KJV

"Now when Ebedmelech the Ethiopian, one of the eunuchs which was in the king's house, heard that they had put Jeremiah in the dungeon; the king then sitting in the gate of Benjamin; Ebedmelech went forth out of the king's house, and spake to the king, saying, My lord the king, these men have done evil in all that they have done to Jeremiah the prophet, whom they have cast into the dungeon; and he is like to die for hunger in the place where he is: for there is no more bread in the city. Then the king commanded Ebedmelech the Ethiopian, saying, Take from hence thirty men with thee, and take up Jeremiah the prophet out of the dungeon, before he die. So Ebedmelech took the men with him, and went into the house of the king under the treasury, and took thence old cast clouts and old rotten rags, and let them down by cords into the dungeon to Jeremiah. And Ebedmelech the Ethiopian said unto Jeremiah, Put now these old cast clouts and rotten rags under thine armholes under the cords. And Jeremiah did

so. So they drew up Jeremiah with cords, and took him up out of the dungeon: and Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison."

Jeremiah 38:7-13, KJV

In a word, we cannot just be God's fair-weather friends. We cannot be fair-weather Christians. We cannot be fair-weather witnesses for the Lord. Regardless of what may be going on around us, and no matter what kind of results our witnessing endeavors may bear, for the sake of those people who we are trying to reach with the Gospel, we need to present a happy, joyful countenance that radiates the Spirit and Love of the Lord. The world knows enough pain, sorrow and heartache. What they need to see is a little bit of happiness and Heaven in our faces. They need to see that we have something which they do not possess, and that we are more than willing to share it with them as well. What say ye?

Tank Up on God's Word

One good way to ensure that you are in the right spirit and attitude before you go out witnessing is simply by spending some quiet time with the Lord, studying His Word. Doing so will strengthen and inspire you spiritually. After all, being a public witness for the Lord does drain one of both physical and spiritual energy. It is somewhat similar to when Jesus performed miracles of healing. When these incidents occurred, we are told that "virtue" left His body. This word is derived from the Greek word "dunamis". This word signifies strength, power or ability. In other words, spiritual power or energy emanated from Jesus' body when He performed said miracles. It is obvious then that "virtue" is actually the creative power of the Holy Spirit which proceeds from our Heavenly Father Himself. Consider the following verses:

"And Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes?"

Mark 5:30, KJV

"And the whole multitude sought to touch him: for there went virtue out of him, and healed them all."

Luke 6:19, KJV

"And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me."

Luke 8:46, KJV

As I point out in other articles, the reason why the Lord was able to do this repeatedly, is because He was provided with the Spirit of His Father without measure. Consider the following verses:

"For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him."

John 3:34, KJV

"For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

Colossians 2:9, KJV

Holy Ghost Power

In contrast, as I point out in such articles as "A Treasure in Earthen Vessels: God's Promise of the Spirit", we humans do not possess the Holy Spirit without measure. We in fact possess just a small dose of it compared to what Jesus had. Thus, it is imperative that we constantly spiritually renew ourselves, and recharge our batteries so-to-speak, if we are going to be active witnesses for the Lord on a regular basis. As you can see by the following verses, it is in fact this "treasure" -- that is, the Holy Ghost -- which empowers us as we engage in our witnessing activities:

"But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."
2 Corinthians 4:7, KJV

"But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost."
Mark 13:11, KJV

"And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."
Luke 1:35, KJV

"And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about."
Luke 4:14, KJV

"And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high."
Luke 24:49, KJV

"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, KJV

"Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost."
Acts 8:19, KJV

"How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him."
Acts 10:38, KJV

"And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:"
Romans 1:4, KJV

"Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost . . . Through mighty signs and wonders, by

the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ."

Romans 15:13, 19, 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

"For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake."

1 Thessalonians 1:5, KJV

Seek Out the Hungry Sheep

At this point in our discussion, we are going to examine some verses which explain exactly who we are to try to reach with the Gospel. As we have already seen, different people react to the Gospel message in different ways. As the verses below reveal, because we want to invest our time wisely, and not waste our time with unreceptive souls, we should endeavor to seek out the lost -- that is, those people who realize that they are lost -- and those people who are really hungry for the Truth of God's Word. In other words, we need to find the Lord's sheep in the great harvest fields of the world:

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled."

Matthew 5:6, KJV

"But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

Matthew 9:13, KJV

"But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

Matthew 10:6, KJV

"But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

Matthew 15:24, KJV

"For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost. How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray. Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish."

Matthew 18:11-14, KJV

"When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

Mark 2:17, KJV

"I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."
Luke 5:32, KJV

"What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance . . . Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth . . . For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry."
Luke 15:4-7, 10, 24, KJV

"And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."
Luke 18:9-14, KJV

"For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."
Luke 19:10, KJV

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:"
John 10:27, KJV

"And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely."
Revelation 21:6, KJV

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."
Revelation 22:17, KJV

Pressure Tactics

As I noted in part three, pressure tactics simply don't work. If there is one thing which I have personally learned during the course of my life, it is that we cannot shove the Gospel down the throat of someone who does not want to hear it. As occurred with the Pharaoh of Egypt during the time of Moses, it is evident that the more that we try to convince someone

who really does not want to be convinced, the harder and more rebellious they will simply become. As I mentioned earlier in this series, as long as an individual believes that they are alright; as long as they think that they are doing okay; as long as they fail to realize their sinful condition, and the dangerous position that it puts them in with the Lord; we are going to get nowhere with them. We simply cannot force anyone to believe if they do not wish to believe. It is just wasted time and energy on our part, so forget the pressure tactics.

It is my personal belief that the Lord has an appointed time for everyone. As I point out in such articles as "Free Will and Personal Choice", "All Are Given a Chance, But . . .", "Is the Message of Salvation Meant for All Men?", "Do You Want Love and Light, or Rod and Wrath?" and "Not Everyone is a Child of God", Salvation is a matter of free choice. While it is true that God has made Salvation available to everyone, that does not mean that everyone is going to accept His free Gift. In fact, it is quite evident from Jesus' own teachings that most people will not choose the Way of Salvation. This is made rather plain by the following verses:

"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."
Matthew 7:13-14, KJV

Taking into consideration the truth that is revealed in the previous verses, to what end do pressure tactics serve? It is obvious that the answer is "none". God's Word appears to indicate that only in very rare instances does the Lord ever strongly and directly intervene in someone's life; and if He does choose to intervene, it must be for a very good reason. In most cases, God's Holy Spirit slowly works on a person's mind and heart, to bring them to the point of Salvation. God is like a master surgeon who slowly and carefully cuts away tissue in order to reveal the sin which inhabits our wicked hearts. Once He reveals the problem to us, and we are able to see it, then He offers us His solution in the form of Jesus Christ.

As I have mentioned on a number of other occasions, one good example where the Lord decided to take a more direct approach concerns the former Christian hater and persecutor, Saul of Tarsus. Obviously, God was not happy with the man at all. As a result, as many of you will already know, Saul -- who later became known as the Apostle Paul -- was violently knocked off of his horse, and blinded for three days, as he traveled on the road to Damascus. Saul's intentions were to persecute the Christian brethren in that city, but Jesus was determined to stop him in his tracks, which He most certainly did. Saul was clearly placed in the Lord's vise grip, and the pressure was applied firmly until Saul cried "Uncle!". You will find the full story discussed in Acts chapter ten.

Goats, Dogs and Yabbutts

Normally speaking however, we should not waste our time with the stubborn goats and spiritual "dogs" who only resist the

conviction of God's Spirit, and who reject the Truth of God's Holy Word. As Jesus Himself states in the Gospel of Matthew"

"Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you."

Matthew 7:6, KJV

The Apostle Paul basically adopted the very same attitude in the Book of Acts when he became so disgusted with his proud, unbelieving Jewish brethren, that he decided to turn to the Gentiles instead. Consider this verse:

"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, KJV

Wow! What a symbolic slap in the face to those old goats! In my series "Exposing the Tactics of the Enemy!", I refer to these kinds of people as "yabbuts". These unreceptive souls have a very peculiar habit which you will no doubt soon come to recognize, once you begin to actively engage in public witnessing. They are very easy to identify, because when you try to share the Truth of God's Word with them, they usually respond by making such comments as the following:

"Yeah, I believe in what you are saying . . . but!"

"Yeah, that may be perfectly true . . . but!"

"Yeah, that makes a lot of sense . . . but!"

No matter what you say to them, such people never seem to fully agree with you on one single issue, or at least not with very many of them. They are always butting, just like stubborn old goats. They are "yabbuts" who butt, butt, butt. Sadly, while some of them may have deceived themselves into believing that there is actually a place reserved for them in the Kingdom of God, as Jesus points out in two of the Gospels, someday they may be totally shocked when they find themselves butted right out of Heaven, as we see by these verses:

"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

"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

To reiterate, the truth of the matter is that there are so many hungry sheep in the harvest fields of the world who earnestly desire to hear the Truth of God's Word, and to be freed from the bondage of sin and death, that there is really no need for us to have to waste our time with the goats, dogs and proud "yabbutts". As a general rule, as long as someone is still listening to your words, there is hope. It is when they stop listening, start arguing, turn away, or close the door, that it is time to bring your witness to a close. Be polite; be nice; shine for Jesus; but walk away. If you fail to do this, then don't be surprised when they start to gnash on you in self-defense.

Our Spiritual Warfare

From everything we have discussed thus far in this series, it should be rather evident to you that as soldiers of the Lord, we are involved in very real spiritual warfare. As I pointed out earlier, when you are out witnessing, it is very similar to being on a battlefield. You are in fact invading Satan's territory, and he does not like it one bit! As a result, the minute that you decide to stick your head out of the trench, and go on the offensive, he is going to start firing at you. It is imperative then that you make certain that you have properly prepared yourself for your upcoming battle. As we discussed earlier, one way in which you can do this is by immersing yourself in God's Word. Second, make sure that you have the right attitude before you go out the door. Here are a few more verses which discuss the spiritual nature of our warfare. I encourage you to read Ephesians chapter six in its entirety:

"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;"
2 Corinthians 10:3-5, KJV

"Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses."
1 Timothy 6:12, KJV

"Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier."
2 Timothy 2:3-4, KJV

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:"
2 Timothy 4:7, KJV

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."
Ephesians 6:10-13, KJV

"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart."
Hebrews 4:12, KJV

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

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ENDTIME WITNESSING : WINNING THE SHEEP AND WAGING THE WARFARE

PART 5

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Choose Your Battles Wisely, People Divided By The Word Of God, Persecuted For Our Faith, Scriptural Examples, God's Care And Protection, Don't Purposely Go Looking For Trouble, Don't Play The Martyr, Agree With Thine Adversary Quickly

Choose Your Battles Wisely

Being as we are clearly involved in spiritual warfare, it is very important that we choose our battles carefully. Stated another way, do not start a battle unless you are sure that you can win it, or at least that you are prepared to suffer the consequences if you should happen to lose it. You need to count the cost of your actions, just as Jesus advises us to do in the following verses:

"For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace."
Luke 14:28-32, KJV

During the many years that I was an active street preacher, I was harassed by policemen, by store owners or managers, by the officials of a few foreign governments, by communists in Mexico, by atheists, by close-minded religionists and others. As we discussed earlier, whether you are witnessing on the street, or going door-to-door, or witnessing online, or being a light for the Lord in any other fashion, you really need to be thick-skinned. Active witnessing is not an occupation for spiritual babes who barely know the Lord, and who are barely grounded in God's Word. Train them first and provide them with a strong foundation in the Scriptures before you send them out to be chewed up by the wolves and butted by the goats of the world!

While we should most certainly not compromise our message or bow to political correctness, there are times when we should exercise a little wisdom, and tread a little lighter, if it will help us to last a little longer in a certain witnessing field. Believe me when I say that sooner or later, the time will arrive when the enemies of the Gospel will finally get tired of you, and will give you the boot, or at least make it impossible for you to continue your witnessing activities in that particular locale. This happened to me many times over the years. Even if you are not looking for trouble, trouble will find you. If you are on-fire for the Lord, it invariably happens that Satan will send along one or more troublemakers who will heckle, harass and ridicule you, and try to interfere with your public witness; so get used to it, and don't let it bother you too much.

So again, choose your battles wisely. Know when it is time to fight, when it is time to exercise patience, and when it is time to quit and go elsewhere. This is exactly what Jesus did. On one occasion, after having performed the miracle of the fishes and the loaves, certain people wanted to make Him their king. Obviously, it was not the Lord's intention to be a king of this current world. Thus, rather than acquiesce to their demands, Jesus departed into a mountain by Himself. On another occasion, after He had preached at the synagogue in his boyhood town of Nazareth -- during which He read from the Book of Isaiah and boldly stated that He was the fulfillment of those particular Scriptures -- his listeners became very offended and upset. As a result, they tried to throw Him over the edge of a hill, but the Lord escaped out of their hands. Consider the following verses:

"When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone."
John 6:15, KJV

"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. But he passing through the midst of them went his way,"
Luke 4:28-30, KJV

Divided by the Word of God

Earlier, we discussed how different people will react to the Gospel message in different ways. This is precisely what we see happening in the previous verses. Some people wanted to kill Jesus, while others wanted to make Him their king. You should expect the same kind of variety in reactions when you preach the Gospel publicly. Your audience will almost always be divided, because that is exactly what God's Word does; that is, it divides the sheep from the goats. Consider the following verses which clearly prove this point:

"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.

And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me."
Matthew 10:34-38, KJV

"Now the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved."
Mark 13:12-13, KJV

"Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division: For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother in law against her daughter in law, and the daughter in law against her mother in law."
Luke 12:51-53, KJV

"Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the Prophet. Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee? Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was? So there was a division among the people because of him."
John 7:40-43, KJV

"Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them."
John 9:16, KJV

"There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings. And many of them said, He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him? Others said, These are not the words of him that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?"
John 10:19-21, KJV

"And it came to pass in Iconium, that they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake, that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed. But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil affected against the brethren. Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands. But the multitude of the city was divided: and part held with the Jews, and part with the apostles."
Acts 14:1-4, KJV

"But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question. And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the

Pharisees and the Sadducees: and the multitude was divided. For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both."
Acts 23:6-8, KJV

Persecuted for Our Faith

As I point out in other articles such as "Civil Disobedience and Christian Persecution", being persecuted for our faith -- whether it is just verbal persecution, or actual physical persecution -- is a fact of life for the on-fire Christian. It simply cannot be avoided; that is, unless one willingly chooses to hide their light under a bushel, which will have its own serious consequences. Of course, Jesus was not the only person who had to escape from angry mobs; mobs which ultimately demanded His very blood. Many other people in the Bible had to flee from persecution as well. You may recall that in the Old Testament, the Prophet Elijah fled from King Ahab and his wicked, witchy wife Queen Jezebel, whose body was eventually devoured by dogs. The Prophet Jeremiah was accused of being a traitor to his own nation, and eventually found himself thrown into a pit full of mud, into which he sank. In the Book of Acts we also learn that the Apostle Paul was forced to engage in a nighttime escape -- in a basket no less -- when he had to flee from Damascus. Consider these verses:

"And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him: But their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him. Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket."
Acts 9:23-25, KJV

"In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me: And through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands."
2 Corinthians 11:32-33, KJV

The previous verses are just a few examples of the harrowing incidents which were experienced by the Lord and His First Century followers. As I said, the Old Testament is full of similar stories, as is the Book of Acts, the Epistles, and the Book of Revelation. As we saw earlier, Jesus advised us to count the cost, and to make certain that we can complete what we have begun before we even start it, lest we shrink back in cowardice when the going gets rough. There is no doubt that the going did indeed get rough for our Christian brethren of the First Century. It is commonly believed that most of the Twelve Apostles died as martyrs; as did Stephen, James, Paul and others as well. As the following Scriptures clearly reveal, persecution in one form or another is what we should expect, if we actively engage in witnessing for the Lord:

"And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved."
Matthew 10:22, KJV

"Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall

kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another."
Matthew 24:9-10, KJV

"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 . . . And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name."
Acts 5:17-18, 41, 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

"If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us:"

2 Timothy 2:12, KJV

"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."

2 Timothy 3:12, KJV

"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."

Revelation 2:13, KJV

"And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled."

Revelation 6:9-11, KJV

"And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth."

Revelation 18:24, KJV

"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."

Revelation 20:4, KJV

God's Care and Protection

It is evident then that we are bound to face casualties of one kind or another, as a result of actively promoting our faith. In fact, while we Christians who live in the West are free to practice our faith with very little opposition, such is not the case with many of our brethren who find themselves living Muslim-dominated nations, and in other non-Christian lands. As many of you will already know, these dear brethren face daily persecution in the form of ostracism, oppression, persecution, torture, imprisonment, and even death. While we do not know the future, or what the Lord may have in store for us in the years ahead, given the way that a large part of the world is becoming increasingly hostile to our Christian faith, it is a cause for concern. However, we should by no means fear; because no matter what happens, God is still in control, He truly cares for us, and He won't allow anything to happen to us, unless it is for our own good. Consider the following verses:

"The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them."

Psalms 34:7, KJV

"Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved."
Psalms 55:22, KJV

"A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee."
Psalms 91:7, KJV

"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."
Proverbs 3:5-6, KJV

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee."
Isaiah 26:3, KJV

"And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows."
Matthew 10:28-31, KJV

"Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows."
Luke 12:6-7, KJV

"And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."
John 10:28-29, KJV

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."
Romans 8:28, KJV

"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."
Hebrews 13:5, KJV

"Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you."
1 Peter 5:7, KJV

Don't Look for Trouble or Be a Martyr

While persecution may possibly be in store for some of us as a result of our witnessing activities, at the same time, we should not purposely go out looking for trouble. As I noted earlier, if you are a faithful witness for the Lord, trouble will find you soon enough. As I also pointed out, and mention in the article entitled "He Who Fights and Runs Away: Choose Your Battles Wisely", sometimes it is wiser to back down and

be a little more low-key, rather than face persecution, and possibly lose our freedom to witness altogether. The truth is that sometimes fighting back may simply be our pride kicking in. If you are accused of being a coward, who cares? Another day, another battle. Don't go out of your way to be a martyr. The Lord needs each of us here as long as possible. If you do something stupid to cut short your ministry, you may possibly miss someone who you were supposed to reach. In such a case, the Lord will just have to send along someone else to finish the job for you.

As I said earlier, when you are out on the witnessing field, you must be led by God's Spirit. Don't waste your time on the goats, and most certainly do not provoke them unnecessarily. For example, if a certain store owner, shop manager, or mall security officer asks you to leave the premises immediately, don't stand there and mouth off to them. If you do, the next thing you hear may be a police car siren pulling up behind you. Wouldn't it be rather dumb -- not to mention a waste of your time -- to spend the next few days in a jail cell with smelly drunks and who-knows-who? While you may boast in your self-righteous pride that you are willing to suffer for Jesus Christ, I must wonder if you were really locked up because of your own stupidity.

Agree with Thine Adversary Quickly

To reiterate, do not purposely go looking for trouble; and try to avoid playing the martyr. If business owners, civil authorities or similar individuals ask you to move along, do so quickly before they become impatient with your flippant attitude. As Jesus teaches us, "Agree with thine adversary quickly." Some of the verses which come to mind are the following:

"Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing."
Matthew 5:25-26, KJV

"They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's."
Matthew 22:21, KJV

"And Jesus answering said unto them, Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's. And they marvelled at him."
Mark 12:17, KJV

"And he said unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's, and unto God the things which be God's."
Luke 20:25, KJV

"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men."
Romans 12:18, KJV

"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake."

Romans 13:1-5, KJV

"These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee. Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men."

Titus 2:15-3:2, KJV

"Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king."

1 Peter 2:11-17, KJV

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

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ENDTIME WITNESSING : WINNING THE SHEEP AND WAGING THE WARFARE

PART 6

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A Soft Answer Turneth Away Wrath, Satan: Liar And Deceiver,
Avoid Time-Wasting Goats, Fiery Destruction Of The Wicked,

Stand Fast And Contend For The Faith, Find A Proper Balance,
We Will Always Be Rejected By The World, We Are Children By
Adoption Through Faith, Strangers and Pilgrims On The Earth

A Soft Answer Turneth Away Wrath

As we have seen, it is unrealistic to expect that you will win every single battle while you are out witnessing. While you may not like it, and while it may possibly wound your pride -- maybe you need it -- there will be times when it will simply be best for you to quietly and obediently leave the premises before you find yourself in even worse trouble. Consider the wisdom that is found in the following verse:

"A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger."
Proverbs 15:1, KJV

As we saw earlier, if instead of softly saying "Yes, officer; I'm leaving the premises now", you decide to foolishly resist his order, become confrontational with him, and start making a speech about your rights as a citizen of your country, then do not be the least bit surprised if you do in fact stir up his anger, so that he has no choice but to deal with you in a more forceful manner. Trust me; you really do not want to do that. As we all know from certain incidents that have come to light, while there are many good, decent police officers, at the same time, there are also those renegade officers who do tend to overreact when placed under stress. Again, just think about how much better you could have invested that time that you spent sitting in that jail cell. So please remember that "A soft answer turneth away wrath."

Satan: Liar and Deceiver

Considering that we are involved in real spiritual warfare, it is important to know who our enemies are. Naturally, we know that our primary spiritual enemy is Satan himself. In fact, in the original Hebrew language, "satan" -- which is actually pronounced saw-tawn' -- means "adversary" or "one who withstands". As I more fully explain in articles such as "Satan: His Origin, Purpose and Future", as well as in the series "Satan" King of Empires, King of Tyrus", this is precisely what that demon of darkness has been doing ever since he was ousted from the Heavenly Kingdom. He has been resisting and fighting against our Heavenly Father and His Divine Authority, and endeavoring to frustrate His plans. Through lies, deceptions and distortions of God's truth, the Devil has been engaged in all-out war to deceive humankind, so that we too will rebel against God. Consider these verses which expose his evil character and wicked machinations:

"Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said,

Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."
Genesis 3:1-5, KJV

"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."
John 8:44, KJV

"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, 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

"But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ . . . And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light."
2 Corinthians 11:3, 14, KJV

"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

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:"
1 Peter 5:8, KJV

"Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices."
2 Corinthians 2:11, KJV

Avoid Time-Wasting Goats

It goes without saying that if Satan really ran around in a red suit with a pitchfork in his hand and sporting two horns and a tail as he is so often erroneously depicted, he would be easy to identify. Obviously, that is not what Satan even looks like, and that is not how he operates. Oh no; he is a lot smarter than that. He does not normally confront us in face-to-face battle. Instead, he uses his human emissaries to harass us and waste our time.

As I mentioned earlier, it is only once we come out of the trenches, invade his territory, and engage in witnessing to the lost people of the world, that the Devil shows his face by way of the people that he controls. Soon enough you will find yourself being confronted by hecklers and other types of goats who will try to distract you from your witness. At

such times, it is important that you resist the temptation to engage them, because that is exactly what the Devil wants you to do. He wants to suck you into his trap. As I explain in "Should Christians Engage in Doctrinal Debates?", the time that you spend arguing doctrines, or rattling swords with an unreceptive goat, is time wasted.

Engaging in such exchanges with the goats is also a waste of your energy, as well as an exercise in futility; because the truth of the matter is that a man convinced against his will, is of the very same opinion still. I can tell you from my own witnessing experiences that such people are not the least bit interested in hearing the truth. Their minds are already made up. Their sole purpose is to harass you, and to try to make you look foolish in front of your audience. Such people are hardened of heart, spiritually blind, and quite often even past feeling the conviction of God's Spirit working in their lives, because their conscience has been "seared with a hot iron". What this phrase means is that such people have been spiritually cauterized, so that they have become insensitive to God's Spirit.

While some of the following Scriptures are really describing the unbelieving Jews of two millennia ago, sadly, they could just as easily be describing the antichrist hecklers, yabbuts and goats who populate our modern world as well. As you read these verses, please notice that a few of them clearly state that the reason why these unreceptive people, troublemakers and reprobates do not understand the message of the Gospel, is because they have not the Spirit of God. We must conclude then that they have the spirit of the world, and the spirit of Satan, who is the adversary of God. That is why they enjoy attacking God's children and faithful witnesses:

"Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves."
Matthew 10:16, KJV

"He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God."
John 8:47, KJV

"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."
1 Corinthians 2:14, KJV

"If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha."
1 Corinthians 16:22, KJV

Please note that in the previous verse, the word "anathema" means "accursed".

"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: Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness."
Ephesians 4:17-19, KJV

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth."

1 Timothy 4:1-3, KJV

"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. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith."

2 Timothy 3:1-8, KJV

"Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation."

2 Peter 3:3-4, KJV

"Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son."

1 John 2:22, KJV

"And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error."

1 John 4:3-6, KJV

"For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."

2 John 1:7-11, KJV

"Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ."

Jude 1:3-4, KJV

"These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage. But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit."

Jude 1:16-19, KJV

Fiery Destruction of the Wicked

While such hard-hearted people may mock, scorn and belittle us and the Christian message which we bear, as they are in fact appointed to do, in their foolish pride, what they fail to recognize and understand, is that by so doing, they are in fact sealing their own fate. As I explain in such series as "Hell, the Lake of Fire and Universalism", unless such people repent of their wickedness and unbelief, someday to their own shock and horror, they will discover that they in fact have an appointment to keep with the Lake of Fire. I seriously doubt that they will be laughing then. Consider the following verses and take heed:

". . . The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn . . . He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear."

Matthew 13:24b-30, 37b-43, KJV

"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God . . . For our God is a consuming fire."
Hebrews 10:31, 12:29, KJV

"And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."
Revelation 20:15, KJV

"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, KJV

Stand Fast and Contend for the Faith

While I have urged caution and using Wisdom and Spiritual Discernment when dealing with the unreceptive children of the world -- that is, the children of disobedience -- such as perturbed shopkeepers, civil authorities such as police officers and security guards who are required to do their job, as well as the goats, dogs and "yabbuts" that the old serpent will no doubt send our way, please understand that I am by no means advocating any degree of compromise in the message that we preach. As some of my longtime readers and online friends will already realize, the word "compromise" and I are not the best of friends. Furthermore, as I said earlier in this series, during the years that I was a very active street preacher and door-to-door witness, I endured my share of persecution in one form or another. If anything, it toughens you up and makes you thick-skinned.

In short, while we are engaging in our witnessing activities, we should not compromise the Truth of the Gospel message for the sake of trying to save our own necks, or our reputations. Neither should we soften the message so as not to offend the people who we are ministering to. We must not preach a weak, watered-down, non-offensive, socially-acceptable Gospel that has no "umph" or "spiritual teeth" to it. Let us never forget that the heart of the Gospel message is repentance and belief in the Son of God as the solution to our dilemma of sin. If we are so afraid to tell people that their hearts are wicked, and that they are sinners who rebel against the Lord, then we really have no business being in the profession of preaching the Gospel to begin with. However, as we have already seen, we must also be careful that we are motivated by love, and not by our own pride or self-righteousness, as if we are any better than everyone else.

As the following Scriptures clearly reveal, the Lord expects us to stand fast in the faith, to endure hardness as soldiers of Jesus Christ, to contend for the faith, and to be focused on pleasing our Heavenly Father, instead of being menpleasers. We must not bow to political correctness as so many churches and Christians have already done. As we saw earlier, we must boldly preach the Gospel of Salvation and not be ashamed of our faith. Finally, we must resist the Devil, and any of his human emissaries which he may send along to taunt us:

"Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We

ought to obey God rather than men."
Acts 5:29, 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

"Neither give place to the devil."
Ephesians 4:27, KJV

"Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;"
Ephesians 6:6, KJV

"Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong."
1 Corinthians 16:13, KJV

"Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;"
Philippians 1:27, KJV

"Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved."
Philippians 4:1, KJV

"For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord."
1 Thessalonians 3:8, KJV

"Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle."
2 Thessalonians 2:15, KJV

"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."
James 4:7, KJV

"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:"
1 Peter 3:15, KJV

"Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."
Jude 1:3, KJV

Find a Proper Balance

The truth of the matter is that as faithful messengers and witnesses of the Gospel message, we really walk a delicate tightrope. On one hand we must endeavor to be as courteous as possible, and try to obey and respect man's laws as much as we can, in accordance with the Scriptures. On the other hand, we face the dilemma of trying to know what action to take when the laws of man clearly conflict with God's laws.

When some irate store owner says "Hey! This is my property! I don't want you passing out your Gospel tracts here! Move along!", what are you supposed to do? Should you react like Peter and the Apostles and say "We ought to obey God rather than men!" -- and quickly find yourself being brusquely led from the property by the police, and possibly face some jail time -- or should you do as the owner demands, swallow your pride, and quickly leave the premises?

While I have offered my counsel in this series, obviously, I cannot make the decision for you. You must learn to operate according to your own faith. It is for this reason that it is imperative that you are in tune to God's Spirit while you are out on the witnessing field. Sometimes you have to make split-second decisions. In examining the Epistles of Paul, we discover that he offered a variety of comments which seem to cover both ends of the spectrum. As we saw in part five, Paul says that we should "be subject unto the higher powers". The Apostle Peter offers the very same advice in his Epistle, as we also read in part five.

In the verses below, Paul also says that we should be willing to become all things to all men so that we can reach as many lost people as possible with the Gospel of Salvation. Paul's general rule seems to be that whatever glorifies God the most is what is best, and is the proper course of action to take:

"For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you."
1 Corinthians 9:19-23, KJV

"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved."
1 Corinthians 10:31-33, KJV

Yet at the same time, Paul also indicates in this Epistle that despite trying to conform to the laws of man whenever it is humanly possible, nevertheless, he and his traveling companions are still despised, buffeted, reviled, persecuted and treated as if they are the filth and offscouring of the Earth. Consider the following verses:

"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:"
1 Corinthians 1:27-28, KJV

"We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised. Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace; And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it: 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 4:10-13, KJV

Children by Adoption / Strangers and Pilgrims

It becomes evident then, that no matter what we do to try to fit in, insofar as man's laws are concerned, nevertheless, as long as we remain faithful witnesses of the Gospel of Christ, the children of this present world are simply never going to fully accept us. We will always be outsiders to them, because we are in fact outsiders. As I point out in such articles as "One From Beyond: Hebrew of Hebrews", we are no more of this world than Jesus is of this world, or the Apostles, or any of the other heroes of faith who are mentioned in the Scriptures. Even though we offer our lives daily in sacrificial service to the Lord, in the hope of bringing some of the children of the world to the point of Salvation, ultimately, unless they likewise come to Jesus Christ, they will continue to look down upon us, despise us and reject us. That is a fact of life; so get used to it.

Lest you acquire a cocky attitude, let me point out to you that before acknowledging Christ in our lives, we too were children of disobedience and strangers to God. We likewise followed the voice of strangers. However, as the following verses reveal, through our acceptance of Christ, we were in fact adopted into God's wonderful spiritual family, and have thus become "fellowcitizens with the saints", and members "of the household of God". As a result, we too look for a Heavenly City -- that is, New Jerusalem -- "whose builder and maker is God":

"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:"

John 1:12, KJV

"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."

Romans 8:15-17, KJV

"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus."

Galatians 3:26, KJV

"Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,"

Ephesians 1:5, KJV

"That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world . . . Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;"
Ephesians 2:12, 19, KJV

"And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers."
John 10:5, KJV

"By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God . . . These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city."
Hebrews 11:8-10, 13-16, KJV

"Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;"
1 Peter 2:11, KJV

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

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ENDTIME WITNESSING : WINNING THE SHEEP AND WAGING THE WARFARE

PART 7

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We Are Winning The War Because Christ Has Already Won, Keys Of Death And Hell, Firstfruits Of The Resurrection, Blessed Hope, Why We Witness, Conclusion, My Suggested Reading List

We Are Winning Because Christ Already Won

While we may not win every battle as we wage our spiritual warfare in the witnessing fields of the world; while we may be cruelly mocked and laughed at, scorned and scoffed at, belittled, criticized, persecuted, imprisoned, tortured and perhaps even killed; we can all take comfort in knowing that this great war of the Spirit has already been won. In fact, it was won almost two millennia ago when the Son of Man was hung upon a tree; that is, a Roman Cross. As I amply explain in other articles, it was at that time that through His own Death and miraculous Resurrection, Jesus handed a victory to all Believers through faith in His Name. Thus it is written:

"These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."
John 16:33, KJV

"But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."
1 Corinthians 15:57, KJV

"For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."
1 John 5:4, KJV

Firstfruits of the Resurrection

Through His victory over death and the grave, Jesus opened wide the way to Salvation, Redemption and Eternal Life for us all. In fact the Scriptures inform us that He became the Firstfruits of the Resurrection, as well as the Firstborn of a whole New Nation of resurrected Sons and Daughters of God. This New Nation has been in the process of being populated since the First Century when Christ and the Old Testament Saints rose from their graves, as we see by the following verses:

"Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many."
Matthew 27:50-53, KJV

"For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body . . . For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren."
Romans 8:22-23, 29, KJV

"If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead,

and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming . . . Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

1 Corinthians 15:19-23, 51-52, KJV

"Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature . . . And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence."

Colossians 1:12-15, 18, KJV

"To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,"

Hebrews 12:23, KJV

"Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures."

James 1:18, KJV

"And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,"

Revelation 1:5, KJV

"These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb."

Revelation 14:4, KJV

What you may find rather interesting is the fact that the amazing events which are described in Matthew 27:51-52 by Matthew, appear to be a type of foreshadow of what is also described as occurring at the sound of the Last Trump -- or Seventh Trump -- in 1 Corinthians 15:51-52 in this set of verses.

Keys of Hell and of Death

Hidden in the Scriptures appears to be a mystery which seems to indicate that in some way which currently remains unknown to me, Satan acquired the power and control over death and hell. If we consider that in the Scriptures, the word "hell" often refers to the common grave, perhaps this occurred when he was cast down to Earth. Satan was the symbolic keeper of the keys. However, as we learn in the Book of Revelation by Jesus' own mouth, through His own Death and Resurrection, He

took back ownership of these important keys. Please consider the following verses which verify this point. As you read the verse, notice that the phrase "had the power of death" is in the past tense. This seems to indicate that Satan no longer retains this power:

"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;"
Hebrews 2:14, KJV

"I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."
Revelation 1:18, KJV

Our Blessed Hope / Why We Witness

This promise of Resurrection and New Life in the Kingdom of Heaven is the central hope of our Faith. It is this important message of hope which we offer to a world which has no hope, unless they too place their faith in the atoning, redemptive Sacrifice of Jesus Christ. This is what should motivate us to witness and share our Faith with others. If your desire and goal is to witness to the world, this message regarding Jesus Christ crucified and resurrected from the dead is the primary message that you should share. Everything else is secondary to it. You may understand Old Testament history, the ancient laws and traditions of the Jews, the Levitical priesthood, the successes and failures of the ancient Jewish kings, and many other things; but if you are not really preaching Christ crucified and resurrected, then you are not actually giving people what they really need to hear the most.

Closing Remarks

In conclusion, witnessing -- regardless of what kind you are engaged in -- can be a very rewarding experience. By sharing the light of Jesus Christ with the world -- at least with the world of your own neighborhood, city and country -- not only are you pleasing the Lord through your obedience to His Word, but equally important, through your witnessing endeavors, you are helping to save souls from the snare of death; that is, eternal death. So, in the words of the Apostle Paul, please continue to "Preach the word" and "be instant in season, out of season". If you do, if you remain faithful, then in God's time you will hear that blessed "Well done, good and faithful servant . . . enter thou into the joy of thy lord." Please consider the following verses:

"The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise."
Proverbs 11:30, KJV

"Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."
James 5:19-20, KJV

"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season;
reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine."
2 Timothy 4:2, KJV

". . . Well done, 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 25:23, KJV

With these final verses I will bring this series to a close.
I trust that you have enjoyed it, that it has encouraged you,
that you have learned something from it, and that it has been
a great blessing in your life. If you have an account with
Facebook, Twitter or Google+, I would really appreciate if
you would take the time to click on the corresponding link
that is found on this page. Thank you so very much! May God
bless you abundantly!

For additional information, you may want to refer to the
list of reading resources below which were also mentioned in
this series, or which contain topics which are related to
this series. All of these articles are likewise located on
the Endtime Prophecy Net web server:

A Treasure in Earthen Vessels: God's Promise of the Spirit
A Verse a Day to Keep the Doubts Away
All Are Given a Chance, But . . .
Are You a Burning Ember for the Lord?
Civil Disobedience and Christian Persecution
Do You Want Love and Light, or Rod and Wrath?
Elijah: Where Are the True Prophets of God?
Exposing the Tactics of the Enemy!
Free Will and Personal Choice
He Who Fights and Runs Away: Choose Your Battles Wisely
Hell, the Lake of Fire and Universalism
Is the Message of Salvation Meant for All Men?
Not Everyone is a Child of God
One From Beyond: Hebrew of Hebrews
Parable of the Sower: Salvation and Service
Rightly Divide the Word of Truth
Satan: His Origin, Purpose and Future
Satan: King of Empires, King of Tyrus
Should Christians Engage in Doctrinal Debates?
Sluggards and Sloths: Are You Diligent and Faithful in the Affairs of God's King
dom?
Study, Work, and Don't Be Ashamed
The Fruits of Disobedience
The Internet: Our Final Frontier; Your Last Chance?
The Mystery of Cornelius the Centurion
The Only Credentials You Need!
The Royal Law: Thou Shalt Love
To Pray or Not to Pray? That is the Question

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