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We're Under Attack, Satan's Devices, Spiritual Unity, False Brethren And Doctrines, Law vs Grace, The Jerusalem Visit, Paul's Warning To Galatians, Beware Of Dogs, More Endtime Deception And False Manifestations, Golden Teeth?, Half-Miracles?, By Faith or By Sight?, Defining Faith, I Believe, Immutability Of God's Word, Gold - A Testimony Against Them?

As I point out in other articles, we Christians are living in dangerous times. In fact, Jesus Himself tells us that the Endtime will be marked by an increase in persecution against God's children, as the antichrist, unbelieving world at large, continues on its merry way to the very gates of hell. In the Gospel of Matthew, the Lord told His first Disciples, and by proxy, we, their Endtime spiritual counterparts:

"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

There should be no mistake then, that our faith is being attacked on many different fronts; not only in foreign lands, where Christ is hated so much, that our brethren are being persecuted and killed for their faithful witness, such as in some of the Muslim countries, but even on fronts much closer to home. The great tragedy of this situation, is that some people have become so spiritually blind, and so callous of heart, that they do not even realize that they are under attack! They have totally ignored the Apostle Paul's warning when he wrote:

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

Satan has indeed gotten an advantage over some Christians, and not for the first time! While many of these onslaughts from the enemy of our soul are external in nature, some of our dear brethren have been so foolish as to not realize that Satan has seriously penetrated their defenses! He is so desperate in this late hour, that he has even gone so far as to set up many false shepherds within our very midst, in order to lead the Lord's precious sheep astray! Sadly, this tactic is nothing new! He has been using it for literally thousands of years!

During the First Century, when the Lord's Church was in its formative years, most of these false brethren were flesh

Jews, who crept into the local fellowships by pretending to accept the doctrine of Christ; however, once they had won the confidence of a few, just like the termite which slowly but steadily destroys from within, unseen by the occupant of the house, these workers of darkness also began their evil, destructive work by spreading false doctrines, in order to try to destroy the foundation of the Lord's Church; that of course being faith alone in Jesus Christ for our Salvation. They did their best, to try to destroy the doctrinal and the spiritual unity which the Lord and His Apostles worked so hard to achieve. Jesus and the Apostle Paul both spoke of this unity in the following verses:

"And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are...That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." John 17:11, 21-23, KJV

"And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd." John 10:16, KJV

"That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Romans 15:6, KJV

"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."  
1 Corinthians 1:10, KJV

"Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you." 2 Corinthians 13:11, KJV

"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace...That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."  
Ephesians 4:1-3, 14-16, 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

"Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind."  
Philippians 2:2, KJV

During the course of His Earthly Ministry, Jesus warned His followers to beware of these vile snakes and their subtle tactics. This becomes quite evident by such verses as the following:

"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

"Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves." (Luke 10:3)

"Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees." (Matthew 16:12)

"Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, 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." (Matthew 13:24-25)

The Apostle Paul was also fully aware of the divisive agenda of these antichrists; and this is one of the reasons why he dedicated so much of his writings to explaining the true doctrine of faith and grace, as opposed to the deceptive false doctrine of faith mixed with good works. This false doctrine of the legalistic Jews emphasized the observance of the mandates of the Mosaic Law, such as the need for one to be circumcised, as a necessary requirement for a person's Salvation. Consider the following key verses which highlight some of Paul's teachings:

"And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."  
Acts 13:39, KJV

"Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith." Romans 3:20-27, KJV

"Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law

by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." Romans 7:4, KJV

"Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified...I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." Galatians 2:16, 21, KJV

"But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith." Galatians 3:11, KJV

"Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace." Galatians 5:4, KJV

"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 2:8,9, KJV

"And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work." Romans 11:6, 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

In the article 'A Biblical Cafeteria Or The Whole Course?', I explain how this Jewish-inspired false doctrine of grace mixed with observance of the Law, became so powerful in Jerusalem, that Paul had to leave his work in the mission field, in order to travel to Jerusalem to speak with Peter, James, John and the rest of the Elders. Paul basically told the Jerusalem brethren that it simply was not fair to cast a legalistic yoke upon the necks of the new Gentile converts in Asia and beyond. This historic meeting is excellently portrayed in the movie 'Peter And Paul', starring Anthony Hopkins and Robert Foxworthy. I encourage you to see it, as in my opinion, it is the best role ever performed by Anthony Hopkins. You may recall that after discussing the matter, Peter made the following decision in Acts chapter fifteen:

"And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they." Acts 15:7-11, KJV

Paul later reiterated Peter's decision in his own Epistle to the Galatians, when he scolded them for their backsliding to renewed dependence upon the Law, and wrote such things as the following:

"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." Galatians 1:6-9, KJV

"And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage:" (Galatians 2:4)

"O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain." Galatians 3:1-4, KJV

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." Galatians 5:1, KJV

Of course, 'the yoke of bondage' to which Paul is referring, is the Mosaic Law. The Galatians were not the only ones who received a pointed warning from the Apostle Paul. Because he saw the dangers which the young new Church faced from these false brethren, and the treacherous teachings that they propagated amongst the unwary sheep, Paul was faithful to offer a number of other warnings to the churches which were scattered throughout Asia and Southern Europe. Consider the following verses:

"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them." (Romans 16:17)

"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. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him...For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works." (2 Corinthians 11:3-4, 13-15)

"Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision." Philippians 3:2, KJV

"If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself." (1 Timothy 6:3-5)

"But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain. A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject; Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself." (Titus 3:9-11)

For the sake of clarification, in the previous verse from Paul's Epistle to the Philippians, when he states 'beware of the concision', Paul is referring to those Law-observant Jews who tried to convince the new Christian Disciples, that circumcision was still necessary for one's Salvation, which of course was a total lie. The word 'concision' is derived from the Greek word 'katatome', which means 'mutilation'. Easton's Bible Dictionary states that Paul purposely used this word, instead of 'peritome', meaning 'circumcision', in order to show his utter contempt for those false brethren who tried to force circumcision upon the new converts to the faith. Notice also that just as the Lord told us not to give that which is holy unto dogs, in other words, to not waste our time trying to force the Truth upon those who don't wish to hear it, Paul also refers to those antichrist Jews as dogs. I am surprised that the powers that be, who control the printing presses of the world, have not yet removed that verse from our Sacred Text due to its clearly anti-semitic nature. The Apostle John took his warning regarding the unbelievers even a step further, by stating that if anyone were so foolish as to even accept one of these deceitful false brethren into their home, they would be guilty of their same evil deeds:

"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 1:9-11)

As far back as the Old Testament, the Lord clearly expressed His hatred for those who intentionally sow division and discord amongst the brethren by speaking lies and deceit. In the Book of Proverbs, we find the following verses:

"These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to

mischievous, A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren." (Proverbs 6:16-19)

In some of his Epistles, particularly in those addressed to Timothy, his dearly beloved son in the faith, Paul offered the following admonitions. Similar to the Lord's own words to His Disciples in the previous verses regarding severe persecution in the Last Days, Paul's warnings are clearly directed to us as well, because we are indeed the children of the Endtime; that is, of 'the latter times', as we see in the last two verses of the following set:

"That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:" (Ephesians 4:14-15)

"Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein." (Hebrews 13:9)

"As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do." (1 Timothy 1:3-4)

"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;" (1 Timothy 4:1)

"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;" (2 Timothy 4:3)

My point in sharing all of these things from the past with you, is to show you that Satan has not changed. His human instruments, the children of darkness, have not changed. They may modify and update their deceptive methods, but it is the very same bag of tricks: false doctrines, sowing division amongst the Christian body, demonic manifestations which are explained as coming from God, etc. Absolutely nothing has changed, except perhaps the outward appearance of the poison.

Can any of us deny that these things are indeed happening throughout Christendom at this very moment? Some of us have personally witnessed these things for ourselves, while others of us have only heard of, or possibly read of, the many false manifestations and deceptive doctrines which have already led so many of the Lord's children astray. While I have already written other articles on this very same topic, such as 'Lying Wonders Of The Endtime', 'Are The Fruits Of The Spirit For Today?' and 'Have You Been Slain In The Spirit?', I have been motivated to write yet another series on this subject as a result of some alarming news I received

from several members of our online fellowship. According to these dear people, (and one of them has provided me with a firsthand account), another so-called 'manifestation of the spirit' has made its ugly appearance within certain churches in North America. From what I have been told, and read, God is now supposedly filling people's teeth with gold! Not only that, but there are also reports of the appearance of gold dust on people's faces, hands and clothing!

To say the least, I am totally shocked to think that some of our own dear brethren in the faith, are so gullible, that they have been deceived by such things; and this would truly be ridiculous if it wasn't so sad! From what I have been told, there are even pictures of these so-called 'miracles'. As I mention in other articles which touch on the topic of healing, if the Lord truly wants to heal a person of some affliction or disease, He is quite capable of doing it wholly and immediately. I have never read anywhere in the Bible where the Lord performed half-miracles; have you? In this particular case, why in the world would the Lord waste His time filling a tooth with gold, when He can just replace the entire tooth? Are His Powers finally waning after six thousand years of use? Excuse my sarcasm, but that is how idiotic this whole thing sounds to me. When Jesus healed the man with the withered hand, we are clearly told that 'it was restored whole, like as the other'. That being the case, if these so-called golden teeth miracles are truly of the Lord, then why doesn't He also restore those damaged teeth whole as the others? Here is the story from the Gospel of Matthew:

"And, behold, there was a man which had his hand withered. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days? that they might accuse him. And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days. Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other." Matthew 12:10-13, KJV

I can only conclude that this is either a clear case of intentional deception by the leaders of some of these congregations, who are desperate for fame, or who may be anxious to fill up their pews and their collection plates, or else it is yet another demonic device of Satan to fool those whose faith is not founded upon the Word of God, but merely upon signs and wonders. Perhaps it is even both! Like the 'manifestations' I have discussed in previous articles, I simply cannot accept that this current so-called 'move of the spirit', is of God! I am convinced that one reason why some of these odd happenings occur, is because these foolish Christians prefer to walk by sight, instead of by faith as we are instructed to do in God's Holy Word. They require a spiritual crutch in order to keep their faith alive, or to even gain faith to begin with. It is also because they want a do-good feel-good religion in the flesh. Consider the following verses which clarify the attitude of the true Christian Believer who walks by faith, and not by sight:

"Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him:

but the just shall live by his faith." Habakkuk 2:4, KJV

"For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."  
Romans 1:17, KJV

"(For we walk by faith, not by sight:)"  
2 Corinthians 5:7, KJV

"But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith."  
Galatians 3:11, KJV

"Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him."  
Hebrews 10:38, KJV

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen...But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Hebrews 11:1, 6, KJV

"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Romans 10:17, KJV

"For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." James 2:26, KJV

Many people have often asked us Christians, 'Exactly what is faith, and how do I obtain it?'. To answer the first part of this question, as the Apostle Paul basically tells us in the previous verse taken from his Epistle to the Hebrews, faith is a kind of intangible 'knowing' in our hearts, which does not require that we see with our eyes, or that we experience anything with our other physical senses. He states that it is 'the evidence of things not seen'. We have the evidence of God's Word, and that is all that we should need in order to believe. When different characters in the Bible heard the Word of the Lord, either from Jesus Himself, or else from one of His followers, we are told that they expressed their faith with a simple, solid 'I believe'. They required no other proof than the sure Word of the Master. Consider the following examples found in the New Testament:

"And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief."  
Mark 9:24, KJV

"And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him."  
John 9:38, KJV

"She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world."  
John 11:27, KJV

"And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Acts 8:37, KJV

"Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that

it shall be even as it was told me." Acts 27:25, KJV

Can we also say with the Apostle Paul 'I believe God'? As the prophet Balaam told Balak, the king of the Moabites, thousands of years ago, God is not a man that He should lie. Just like His Word, which He has magnified above His very Name, the Lord is immutable; that is, He is unchanging. What He was able to do thousands of years ago, He is just as capable of doing today, if we will only believe. Consider the following verses:

"God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" Numbers 23:19, KJV

"Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear:" Isaiah 59:1, KJV

"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." Hebrews 13:8, KJV

"...for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name." Psalms 138:2, KJV

So again, I have no doubt that God can restore a person's teeth completely and wholly, if He really wants to, and that He does not need to resort to second-rate tactics by simply filling those damaged teeth with gold, or whatever is truly happening. If what is occurring is actually an outright demonic manifestation, and not just some kind of prank or fraud invented by well-meaning, but misguided humans, then I can only wonder if the gold in those people's teeth, if it really is gold, might not serve as a testimony against them in the Day of Judgment, due to their lack of real faith, and the fact that they allowed themselves to fall under Satan's delusion. I am reminded of how the Apostle James warns us of the fate which awaits those who actually hoard gold and silver in this life, through fraud and the oppression of the poor:

"Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are motheaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter. Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you." James 5:1-6, KJV

Might these stories of gold fillings and gold dust be an example of spiritual fraud, either by humans, or even by Satan himself? In the second part of this series, we will continue our discussion by taking a look at such topics as alchemy and sorcerers, by the Power of God?, Satan's

converts, ungodly manifestations, obtaining faith, miracles to believe or because we believe?, the fishes and the loaves crowd, the Christian circus, the lion in wait, chaff or real wheat?, the blind leading the blind, going with the flow, removing false, weak shepherds and silent compromise or the choice to obey the Lord. I trust that you will join me.

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Alchemy And Sorcerers, The Power Of God?, Satan's Converts, Ungodly Manifestations, Obtaining Faith, Miracles To Believe Or Because We Believe?, Fishes And Loaves Crowd, Christian Circus, Lion In Wait, Chaff Or Real Wheat?, God's Fruitful Branches, Blind Leading The Blind, Go With The Flow?, Remove Weak False Shepherds, Silent Compromise Or Obey The Lord?

As I thought on this issue of gold fillings, I was suddenly shocked when I realized how similar this seems to alchemy. If you have ever read any medieval tales of knighthood and chivalry, or perhaps played some of those terrible RPG's, that is, the extremely popular role-playing games, where the participants become powerful characters like magicians and sorcerers, then you will know that alchemy is basically the practice of using sorcery, in combination with chemistry, in order to try to convert baser elements into gold. It is witchcraft plain and simple! Now, in part one, I told you that there is nothing new under the sun. Satan and his children of darkness have been using the very same tactics for literally centuries. Immediately after the idea of alchemy and sorcery entered my mind, I was reminded of the following Jewish sorcerers found in the Book of Acts. Notice that in this first story, Barjesus, who was also known as Elymas, is very clearly described for us as being a Jew, a false prophet, and a sorcerer; and that his primary goal was to keep the deputy from embracing the new Christian faith:

"And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Barjesus: Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God. But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith. Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand. Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord."

Acts 13:6-12, KJV

"But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one: To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God. And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with

sorceries. But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done...And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me." Acts 8:9-13, 18-24, KJV

In this second account, while we are not outright told that Simon was a Jew, the fact that this occurred in Samaria, may be an indication that he was; although it is also true that there were many foreigners living in Samaria at the time due to the various invasions by the Assyrians, Babylonians, etc. One thing is for certain; just as Paul pointedly asked the new Disciples in the churches of Galatia who had bewitched them, which I believe was really a rhetorical question, being as Paul already knew that it was the antichrist Jews, we are told here that Simon also bewitched the people of Samaria; so much so, that they exclaimed 'This man is the great power of God'. In other words, he cast such a powerful spell upon the Samaritans, through the evil display of his ungodly abilities, that they failed to realize that, while Simon was indeed 'the great power of God', he was actually the great power of the god of this world, Satan himself! He was a child of hell and a son of Satan his spiritual father, as Jesus also told the Jews in the following verses:

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves." Matthew 23:15, 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

Let me tell you something; Christians are not the only ones who are interested in evangelizing the world! Satan has the very same agenda; and he has been very successful at it! He has already won many converts to his cause, just as we have also won many souls to the cause of Christ. In fact, that demon of darkness has been so successful in his campaign against the Children of Light, that as I explain in many of my Endtime articles, someday soon, his children will pledge their loyalty to their ungodly spiritual father, when they bow down to the Beast and receive his damnable mark!:

"And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six."  
Revelation 13:16-18, KJV

I am simply amazed by the similarities between this story, and the people's reaction to Simon, due to their own lack of Spiritual Discernment, and what we see happening in some of these congregations today! I have read a number of personal testimonies from different Christians, who have told me how they have been compelled to leave their church, sometimes after many years of fellowship with that congregation, due to the fact that their brothers and sisters in the Lord have fallen under the strong delusion of some of these modern-day false prophets and sorcerers. If you have read my revelatory series 'Have You Been Slain In The Spirit?', then you will already know to what I am referring. Some of these so-called 'men of God' have become so extremely powerful through their fellowship with the forces of darkness, that all they have to do is to touch a person, or to blow on them lightly, or even to just speak the word, and the person will keel over backwards. I have read accounts of how rows upon rows of people have fallen over backwards, 'slain in the spirit', because of the evil power exerted by these false ministers of light. I am reminded of one of my favorite verses from the Book of Isaiah:

"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

What is truly tragic, is that these poor people want it to happen; they expect it to happen; and when nothing does happen, like it is happening to all of their friends around them, they feel very disappointed, as if something must be terribly wrong with them. They are deceived by others into believing that they must really be displeasing to the Lord. They must not be very 'spiritual'. These so-called 'godly manifestations' have resulted in people being 'slain in the spirit', barking like dogs, rolling on the floor in a fit of hysterical laughter, stomping their feet, screaming and yelling, moaning and groaning, shaking and jerking, foaming at the mouth, and now even having their teeth filled with gold, and gold dust appearing on their persons, if it is to be believed. These people are encouraging all of these manifestations to occur, by foolishly inviting these evil forces into their lives. They have created a spiritual vacuum, and Satan is more than happy to fill it! These things may taste sweet in their mouths now, but someday, it will turn sour in their bellies, because it was Satan's bitter poison all along! It was darkness, and not the Light that they erroneously assumed it to be!

But there is no need to worry, is there? Like the foolish Samaritans, these deceived Christians can simply say 'This man is the great power of God! God is doing these things through him! Don't be afraid of it just because it is a

little out of the ordinary, and not what you are normally used to seeing in the churches'. To those of you who have fallen under this evil influence, like the Apostle Paul, I must also say to you: "O foolish Christians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth?" Wake up!

Let us return now to the issue of faith. I have already told you what faith is, but exactly how does one acquire faith? As we saw in part one, the Apostle Paul answers this for us in his Epistle to the Romans, by telling us that faith comes through a study of God's Word. Paul wrote "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God". Not only do we obtain faith through reading God's Word, but we also keep, maintain and cultivate our faith so that it will grow, by continuing to read God's Word, and also by putting our faith into action. As we also saw in part one, James wrote "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also"; so we must put feet to our faith. Both Paul and Peter discussed the need for spiritual growth. Consider the following examples:

"As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:" 1 Peter 2:2, KJV

"Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:...But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:"  
Ephesians 4:13, 15, KJV

"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving." Colossians 2:6,7, KJV

If you are interested in reading more about spiritual growth, I encourage you to read such articles as 'Are You Just A Baby Huey?', as well as 'My Personal Vision And Your Challenge'. To reiterate then, our faith as Christians, is supposed to be solely based upon the promises found in God's Word, and not upon our own good works, or upon any outward physical signs or manifestations. While true miracles will most certainly encourage and strengthen our faith, just as Jesus Himself performed many wonderful works in order to firmly prove His Messiahship, as well as because He simply possessed a great love for the people, our faith should not be rooted in such miracles. It must rest squarely upon the Rock of God's Word. Such manifestations should be a result of our faith, and not a requirement for our faith. In other words, we shouldn't need physical miracles in order to have faith, but true miracles will indeed prove our faith; that is, they will be the positive result of having true faith in the Word of God; and that is the key; the Word of God. What we must ask ourselves regarding these current manifestations which are occurring within the Christian body, is whether or not they are in accordance with the Word of God. Is there a Scriptural precedent for them? Once we really study God's Word, being led by His Spirit, the answer becomes quite apparent.

It is interesting to note that just as modern Christians pour into these churches and fellowships by the droves when they hear of these so-called 'manifestations', because they obviously seek a sign, many people followed after Jesus for the very same reason. It wasn't that they really believed in Him as the Son of the God; they were just thrilled by the miracles that He did. In fact, the Lord Himself tells us that some of them were so selfish, and so hard-hearted, that they didn't even care about the miracles; and they most certainly did not believe that He was the Son of God; they were just happy to fill their bellies with the fishes and the loaves. Consider the following verses which make this very evident:

"The day following, when the people which stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was none other boat there, save that one whereinto his disciples were entered, and that Jesus went not with his disciples into the boat, but that his disciples were gone away alone; (Howbeit there came other boats from Tiberias nigh unto the place where they did eat bread, after that the Lord had given thanks:) When the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, neither his disciples, they also took shipping, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus. And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither? Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed. Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent. They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat. Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not." John 6:22-36, KJV

Isn't that amazing? They had seen the signs; He had filled their bellies; and yet those unbelieving Jews still did not believe in Him, and demanded even more signs! They were just a part of the 'fishes and the loaves crowd' who were there for the thrill of the moment, to see what they could get out of it. They were not interested in the Words of Life which came from the Saviour's mouth; they didn't want the Heavenly Manna; they only wanted the physical bread.

This is a very serious concern of mine which I express in other articles as well. Being as I am outside of organized religion, it is very easy for me to see how sidedtracked our faith has become in this modern day; and I must say that it

is the fault of the false shepherds. I am alarmed by the Spiritless, worldly pastors, priests and preachers who are placing more emphasis on the sights and the sounds; and yes, on these so-called 'manifestations', than they are on the serious study of God's Word. It seems that being 'slain in the spirit', speaking in tongues, rolling on the floor due to 'holy laughter', barking like dogs, roaring like lions, having one's teeth filled with gold, bringing in the best so-called Christian rock band, and having cheerleaders and banners to captivate, woo and keep their audiences, have become more important to some of these men, than in making sure that the faith of their congregations is firmly founded upon the Word. It is a total circus, and a far cry from the original Church of the First Century, which took heed to the Apostle Peter's warning when he wrote:

"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

As I said at the very beginning of this series, some of our dear Christian brethren are being devoured by these ungodly spirits, by the lion in their very own circus, and they don't even know it! The lion is not only out of his cage, but he is out of control! Do you recall the verses I shared in part one from Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians? In those verses, he tells us that these false brethren, these false ministers of light who introduce these deceptive doctrines and ungodly manifestations into the Lord's body, 'lie in wait to deceive'. Just like their father the devil, these deceivers lie in wait, just as a lion will lay low, waiting for the opportune moment to pounce upon its prey; and they will often attack the weakest, the smallest, the slowest, and the most unsuspecting of the herd. Let this be a warning to all of you who are still young in the faith. You are more prone to attack by the forces of darkness, than the Lord's battle-scarred and experienced fighters who have already learned to keep an eye out for the onslaughts of the enemy!

For those of you who have already fallen into Satan's trap, allow me to ask you: If all of these signs, and the noise and the excitement in the flesh were to just suddenly stop, would your faith also disappear? Once the thrill is gone, will you be gone too, just like the 'fishes and the loaves crowd'? Are you like the chaff which is separated by the wind of false doctrines, or are you real wheat, which is truly rooted in the Word of God, and established in the faith as the Apostle Paul tells us? In a spiritual sense, are you still a child who lacks true Spiritual Discernment? Allow me to remind you again of what Paul wrote:

"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving." Colossians 2:6,7, KJV

"That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;" Ephesians 4:14, KJV

Do you see the comparison Paul is making in that last verse? Just like young, physical children, who due to their own lack of wisdom and maturity, naively accept whatever their parents or other adults tell them, Paul is stating that it is time that we Christians stop being spiritual children, who blindly accepting whatever false doctrine, practice or manifestation is presented to us. We all need to grow up spiritually, and to ask the Lord for His Divine Wisdom and Spiritual Discernment. We need to stop being tricked by Satan's subtle devices. We need to become serious about our faith. Only those who were serious about their new faith, and who persevered in the Lord's teachings, survived after Jesus had returned to His Father in Heaven. All of the rest of the half-hearts soon forgot the excitement of the moment, and returned to their dull, empty, spiritless lives. As Jesus teaches us in the Parable of the Sower, such people are choked by the cares of this life, because they are not truly grounded in the Word of the Lord as they should be:

"And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it...And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection." Luke 8:7, 14, KJV

Such people are dead, fruitless branches; who after hearing the Words that give Life, do not remain grounded in the Word, so that they can bring forth more fruit as the Lord commands us to do. As I explain in other articles, such as in 'Once Upon A Time: A True Story', being as we are the spiritual Bride of Christ, we are to bring forth fruit, that is, new spiritual children, into the Kingdom of God. The only way that we can do this, is by remaining yielded to the Lord, by remaining grounded in His Word, and by obeying that Word by sharing it with others through personal witnessing, so that they too can find Eternal Life. We cannot win them of our own accord; only God's Spirit can do that; but we must at least give them a chance by being faithful messenger boys and girls. This is what the Lord requires of us, His children. We cannot, and should not, be ashamed of Him, or of our faith. 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

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned...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 15:1-6, 16, KJV

"And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred."

Mark 4:20, KJV

"Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." Romans 7:4, 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

While Satan is constantly on the attack, trying to sift God's children like wheat, in order to prevent us from bearing fruit for the Lord, just as he did with Peter, the Bible also clearly tells us that at the end of the world, there is going to be one final sifting of the wheat by the Lord Himself at the time of the Great Harvest, when He blows away the ungodly people of the world with a strong blast of His nostrils. Might it be possible that this purge will also include the chaff of deceived brethren and false leaders, who have foolishly accepted these ungodly doctrines, and devilish manifestations as being of the Lord? Consider the following verses. I am including all of Psalm One, as it clearly shows the contrast between those who are rooted firmly in God's Word, and the ungodly who reject the Lord's counsel:

"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish." Psalms 1:1-6, KJV

"How oft is the candle of the wicked put out! and how oft cometh their destruction upon them! God distributeth sorrows in his anger. They are as stubble before the wind, and as chaff that the storm carrieth away." Job 21:17,18, KJV

"Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth." Daniel 2:35, KJV

"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: Whose fan is in his hand, and he will

thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." Matthew 3:11,12, KJV

"And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." Luke 22:31,32, KJV

Perhaps if I say this enough, you will begin to believe me. One of the primary reasons why these deceptive doctrines and demonic manifestations have become so rooted in some of the Lord's flocks, is because instead of going straight to God's Word in order to confirm what is of the Lord's Spirit, and what is not, by trying, or testing, the spirits against His Word, as the Apostle John instructed us to do, the majority of Christians trust in their spiritual elders completely to tell them the truth. They are still spiritual children. In his first Epistle, John wrote:

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." 1 John 4:1, KJV

Sadly, some of the modern-day clergy is not doing this; and they certainly must not be encouraging their congregations to do it either; otherwise, these kinds of things would not be happening within the Body of Christ. Due to their own lack of spiritual depth, which is a result of compromise in their lives, and their not having a strong connection with the Lord's Spirit through a clear understanding of His Word, some of these church and fellowship leaders have allowed themselves to be carried along by this flood of spiritual deception, instead of resisting it, and fighting against it. They have become blind leaders of the blind; and as Jesus told His followers:

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

As I mentioned earlier, these irresponsible shepherds are encouraging these things by saying, 'Oh yes; this is just another manifestation of God's Spirit. Just accept it; you'll get used to it after a while. Don't be put off by its strangeness'. The attitude of some of these hirelings seems to be that as long as it is bringing more members through their doors, and filling up their collection plates, they will continue to encourage it. In modern language, we refer to this as 'going with the flow'; and many of their members are flowing right along behind them; but do you know where it will lead unless they wake up? Jesus Himself tells us quite plainly when He says:

"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

Quite frankly, it is my opinion that if the leaders of these

churches and fellowships are so spiritually shallow, and so lacking in discernment, that they are unable to recognize what is truly of God's Spirit, and what is not, then they have no right leading the Lord's children in any capacity, whether it be as a priest, pastor, minister, Sunday school teacher, fellowship leader, or whatever position they may occupy. As a responsible member of your congregation or fellowship, I do not encourage you to put up with such weak leaders. If your prayers do not result in positive change in your fellowship, and particularly in the person leading it, then I believe that it is your right, as a Bible-believing Christian, to seek to have such an unspiritual shepherd removed from his position of authority, if he does not yield to godly counsel and correction after several attempts.

Of course, you must also be a realist. Unless you know a lot of people who feel as you do, who also believe that the Body of Christ has been seriously led astray under their current spiritual leadership, it would be foolhardy of you to even attempt to do such a thing. Over a period of time, some of these men become extremely powerful, and very entrenched in their position. They will not give up without a fight, and a very good one at that. No matter how Biblically unsound their doctrines may be, they will have a core of faithful, blind followers who will not abandon them, no matter what you try to do. They will blindly support and protect their cult leader to the bitter end. In the long run, if you are truly convinced that your church or fellowship has yielded to some ungodly doctrines and practices, such as those I have described in this series, and if it is not possible to correct and/or remove those persons who have introduced such things to your congregation, then you are going to have to make a personal choice to either remain with them, in silent compromise, or else to stand upon God's Word and leave. You cannot do both. As a true Child of Light, you are supposed to fellowship with the Light, and not with the works of darkness. Allow me to share some additional verses with you from the writings of the Apostle Paul:

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

2 Corinthians 6:14-18, KJV

While Paul was specifically writing about unbelieving idol worshippers in the above Scriptures, if taken in conjunction with the verses I shared with you in part one regarding those who preach another gospel, the very same principles still apply. We are to have absolutely nothing to do with false brethren, or with their deceptive leaders, who are apparently empowered by Satan, the Prince of Darkness, to perform these lying wonders of the Endtime; otherwise, as

John wrote, we are partakers of their sins. We are to come out from among them, to separate ourselves from them, and not to have anything to do with them. As we have seen, the Scriptures speak very clearly regarding this issue. In the final part of this series, I will be discussing such topics as man worship versus God worship, being true examples or overlords, Satan's confusion versus God's still small voice, temporary thrill versus true strength, God's music versus Satan's noise, outward show versus spiritual depth, being married to Jesus in name only, divorced from the Word, putting the experience above the Word, Satan's if syndrome, believing to see or seeing to believe, doubting Thomas, faith of gold and backsliding in our faith. I trust that you will join me.

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Man Worship Or God Worship?, Examples Or Overlords?, Satan's Confusion Or God's Still Small Voice?, Temporary Thrill Or True Strength?, God's Music Or Satan's Noise?, Outward Show Or Spiritual Depth?, Married In Name Only?, Divorced From The Word, Putting The Experience Above The Word, Satan's If Syndrome, Believe To See Or See To Believe?, Doubting Thomas Faith Of Gold, Backsliding In Our Faith, Final Comments

I have read some convincing evidence from some of my readers, which clearly indicates that some of these church and fellowship leaders, and even certain television and radio evangelists, have been set up like little gods. They have become modern idols in the hearts of their followers; and some, because of their own pride, do nothing to put a stop to it. In fact, by their own superficial showmanship, they are encouraging it. This is particularly true when we think about some of these so-called Christian rock bands. Similar to the Scribes and the Pharisees of old, these people love the attention which is lavished upon them. What we see happening in some of these churches, and at some of these fellowships and concerts, is all a vain show in the flesh, and blatant man worship, with very little real God worship. Allow me to clarify, that there is nothing wrong with looking up to certain Christian leaders as our spiritual mentors, and striving to be like them. Even the Apostle Paul wrote:

"Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ."  
1 Corinthians 11:1, KJV

We are all supposed to be good Christian examples to each other. As Paul also advised us, we are to exhort one another daily; we are to encourage each other in our faith and walk with the Lord; however, what we see happening within some Christian bodies today, is much more than this. We have men who are becoming little gods in their churches by exercising a certain spiritual authority which, in some cases, I am not convinced is of the Lord. This appears to be particularly true with certain of these so-called 'five-fold' ministries, because it is my understanding that this is where a lot of these spiritual manifestations are occurring. Some of these men are taking their spiritual authority too far, and are becoming lords over God's heritage, instead of being humble examples to their flocks. Sadly, because of the deceptive manifestations, which the unknowing flock accepts as being signs from the Lord which confirm their leader's spiritual authority, they allow these things to continue. The Apostle Peter wrote:

"Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock." 1 Peter 5:3, KJV

To those of you who have unwittingly been caught up in these things, allow me to ask you: How can you possibly even hear the real Voice of the Lord amidst so much sights, sounds, manifestations, and confusion? I am again reminded of the Prophet Elijah's encounter with the Lord in the following verses:

"And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake: And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice." 1 Kings 19:11,12, KJV

You see, God does not need or require all of the flashy signs and show in the flesh. Perhaps that is what He was trying to teach the Prophet Elijah. It is when all of that has passed, and been done away with, that we can truly commune with the Lord as the Prophet Elijah did on the mount. In the article 'Famous Forties In The Bible', I explain that Moses too had to get away from the noisy multitude below, and all of its problems, by climbing to the summit of Mount Sinai alone, in order to hear the still, small Voice of the Lord, and receive His Commandments. In like manner, following His Baptism, Jesus also spent forty days in the wilderness, away from the crowds, communing with His Father. In the Book of the Prophet Isaiah, the Lord tells us that 'in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength'. It is when we are quiet before the Lord, and listening to His Voice, and when we place our confidence in His Word, and not in the outward signs and wonders, that we find true spiritual strength, and not just a temporary 'spiritual high' or thrill in the flesh which wears off after a while.

Allow me to give you a clear example. On various occasions, I have observed as young Christians have engaged in chat. One thing which some of them seem to have in common, is that they enjoy raving about their favorite Christian rock bands and artists. They will tell each other what concerts they have gone to, who is coming to town, how cool the band looked and sounded, etc. It reminds me of when I was a lot younger and used to engage in similar conversations with my friends regarding worldly bands. Allow me to clarify that there is absolutely nothing wrong with praising the Lord through music and song. The Book of Psalms is filled with the many heart-felt praises of King David, who offered his joyful songs and prayers of thanksgiving to the Lord, as well as his honest confessions and laments. Many Christians have been blessed by the wonderful writings of the Jewish king. Consider the following verses:

"&lt;&lt;To the chief Musician, A Song or Psalm.&gt;&gt; Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands:" Psalms 66:1, KJV

"&lt;&lt;To the chief Musician upon Gittith, A Psalm of Asaph.&gt;&gt; Sing aloud unto God our strength: make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob." Psalms 81:1, KJV

"O come, let us sing unto the LORD: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms." Psalms 95:1,2, KJV

"Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all the earth: make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise. Sing unto the LORD with the harp; with the harp, and the voice of a psalm. With trumpets and sound of cornet make a joyful noise before the LORD, the King." Psalms 98:4-6, KJV

&A Psalm of praise.> Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands. Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing. Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name. For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations." Psalms 100:1-5, KJV

In like manner, some of the Christian music which fills the airwaves today is indeed inspiring and uplifting; although personally, I never really listen to any of it; partially because I require a quiet environment in order to do my work for the Lord, and also, because I do not like all of the commercials and doctrinal programs which fill up the time slots in between the good music. At the same time, I must also tell you that after paying closer attention to some of the song lyrics on some of the radio shows which are geared towards young Christians, that is, when you can even hear them through the 'music', I have to conclude that some of it is not only a far cry from the beautiful Psalms of King David, but it is downright unchristian. It is no better than the hard rock, worldly music that I used to listen to as a young teenager before I began to follow the Lord. It is a deceptive mixture of Satanic noise, with the words 'Christ', 'Jesus', 'Lord', 'God', etc., lightly dispersed throughout the song, in order to give it a somewhat 'Christian' flavor.

This so-called 'Christian rock' music reminds me of one of those vanilla ice cream bars which you eat on a stick, which has a thin chocolate covering on the outside. It appears to be one thing, but you quickly discover that it is something entirely different once you bite into it. It is truly sad, because you see, just as some of their parents are being deceived by the sights, sounds and thrills of all of these so-called 'manifestations', which are being performed by the ringleaders at their spiritual circuses, the children are doing the very same thing when they attend these 'Christian' rock concerts. Both parents and children are getting excited and emotional in the flesh by these things, but it is all just Satan's deceptive counterfeit. Once a person leaves the Christian rock concert, or the fellowship filled with all of these 'manifestations', the temporary thrill wears off; and for the next six days, they live their ho-hum existence, until they can go back for a refill when the next weekend arrives. This is not what true Christianity is about.

In short, while my words may be offensive to some of you reading this, the truth of the matter is that some of the

people who do these things, are merely going through the outward motions of being Christians. Some of them have no spiritual depth. They do not possess a true, deep, ongoing relationship with the Lord, because their faith is not truly founded upon His Word, but merely upon the outward show and signs in the flesh. They are like a part of 'the fishes and the loaves crowd'. Just as those people physically separated themselves from Jesus once serious persecution arose against Him, Satan has been so crafty in his modern techniques, that he has also managed to spiritually divorce many Christians from the Lord. He has left them with an outward appearance, but no inward spiritual depth. It is really a relationship in name only. You will recall that in part two, I shared the following verse with you, in order to show you how we are symbolically married to Jesus Christ, the Living Word of God:

"Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." Romans 7:4, KJV

It is because some Christians are no longer married to Jesus Christ, or at least they have become backslidden in their relationship with Him, that they are not bearing spiritual fruit for the Kingdom of God, as we saw in part two. Even in His own day, the Lord exposed these two sins of spiritual shallowness, and a divorce from His Word. You may recall that in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, Jesus said the following:

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

"And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth; and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth: But when the sun was up, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away." Mark 4:5,6, KJV

Notice exactly what the Lord says in that first verse. Why is their worship vain? Because they have replaced the true Word of God, with the doctrines of men. Bringing the Lord's statement up to our current time, these false shepherds and hirelings have replaced the Truth of the Scriptures with a modern-day counterfeit; and sadly, all of these so-called manifestations, like the gold fillings, are a clear part of it! As I point out in other articles, such people are a part of the 'Lord, Lord' crowd. They seem to do everything right in the flesh, according to the appearance of men, but it is all wrong; because as the Lord states in the previous verse, and as I also explain in other articles, God looks upon the heart, and not upon the outward showy appearance. This is precisely what He told the Prophet Samuel when he was sent by the Lord to anoint David as the next king of Israel:

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

outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart."

1 Samuel 16:7, KJV

As I have already made clear, it is because some Christians have become divorced from the true Word of God, that they no longer possess the means by which to rightly determine the spiritual legitimacy of these various manifestations, which have taken root in some of these churches and fellowships. How can one truly understand God's Spirit, and how it is supposed to operate, if he doesn't even take the time to perform a careful examination of our Rule Book, the Bible, and then compare these manifestations with it? Quite simply, you just cannot do it. Once you throw out the Rule Book, then anything becomes valid; everything is permissible and acceptable. Isn't this precisely what we are now seeing in some of these fellowships and churches where all of these wild and dangerous things are occurring? These spiritual children are so enthralled with playing with their toys, that they don't even realize that the enemy of their soul has thrown in some dangerous toys! They don't even realize how far they have strayed from the true Spirit of God, and the standard of His Word.

Just recently, I was involved in an in-depth conversation with a dear friend of mine, in which I discussed this very same topic. She explained to me how it is important that we 'experience God'. She then went on to give me a specific example of an Easter pilgrimage she made recently to the top of a local mountain. This was one of those traditional walks up a steep, difficult trail, in which the participants feel that they must suffer for their sins, by getting scratched, falling down, bleeding, etc. It is supposed to be a form of Catholic penance. Many of us are familiar with such Catholic traditions, and know how totally unnecessary they are. We all know that Jesus Christ already suffered for us, the just for the unjust; and even my friend readily admitted this:

"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:"

1 Peter 3:18, KJV

My friend then described how close she felt to the Lord as she breathed in the clean mountaintop air, and admired the wonderful panoramic view. I think this is absolutely wonderful. There have been many times when I too have been to a certain place, and have been so inspired to just gaze at the Lord's natural creation. It is truly an invigorating experience. It is like recharging our spiritual battery as we draw in the Lord's wonders around us. Even the Apostle Paul tells us how the natural world is clear proof of God's existence; and thus, not even the most hardened atheist has a legitimate excuse for not believing in the Lord:

"For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:" Romans 1:20, KJV

But you see, there is also a very serious danger in desiring to experience God with our five senses; and we are clearly

seeing the result of this in our modern day through these various false and deceptive manifestations. We simply cannot place the thrill of experiencing God in our flesh, above the Rules He has given us, which tell us how we are supposed to experience Him. This is where all of these deceived people fall into error. They have either placed their experiences above the Word, by ignoring its warnings, or else they have tried to justify their experiences by the Word, by twisting the meanings of certain Scriptures found in the Bible. I provide an excellent example of this in the series 'Have You Been Slain In The Spirit?'. I hope that you will find time to read it.

As I explain in some of the aforementioned articles, this need to see supernatural manifestations, and to experience God with one's physical senses in order to encourage one's faith, is nothing new. Of course, the unbelievers also seek for signs, but they do it mockingly, as a way to add weight to their deceptive lie, when they say that God does not exist, or that Jesus Christ is not the Son of God who died for the sins of the world. A reading of the four Gospels plainly reveals that Jesus' unbelieving Jewish enemies were notorious for possessing this very same attitude. They were plagued by what we might refer to as the 'If Syndrome'; which was inspired by the very father of lies, Satan himself. Consider the following verses which prove this point:

"And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread."  
Matthew 4:3, KJV

"And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone."  
Matthew 4:6, KJV

"And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross." Matthew 27:40, KJV

"And saying, If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself..." "And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us." Luke 23:37, 39, KJV

"Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly." John 10:24, KJV

"Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe. And they that were crucified with him reviled him." Mark 15:32, KJV

While God's rules are that we must believe in order that we might see His miraculous works, Satan's rules are the exact opposite. His children must see before they will believe; as we see in that last verse from the Gospel of Mark where the scoffing Jews say 'that we may see and believe'. In other words, using an American slang term, they place the buggy,

or carriage, before the horse; which is rather ridiculous. This very same twisted perception is exposed for us in the following verses as well:

"Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe." John 4:48, KJV

"They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work?" John 6:30, KJV

In the eleventh chapter of the Gospel of John, where Jesus raises His good friend Lazarus from the dead, we find the Lord clearly telling a saddened and unbelieving Martha that she must place her faith before her sight, before what her physical senses are telling her, if she truly wishes to behold the miracles of God. How much like Martha are many of us today. Some of us want so hard to witness the mighty healing power of the Lord in our lives, but alas, it appears that either our faith simply is not sufficient, or perhaps the Lord has other plans for us. I discuss this topic more fully in the article 'Why Doesn't God Heal Me?':

"Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days. Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?" John 11:39,40, KJV

Of course, Martha was not the only one who was plagued with unbelief. In other articles, I also discuss the story of the man whom we have all come to know as 'Doubting Thomas'. I can only wonder how Thomas must feel to know that his name, and the unbelief associated with it, has become a common byword in our modern day. After Thomas had made his famous statements in which he demanded physical proof of the Lord's Resurrection, we all know that Jesus made another appearance during which He said to Thomas:

"...Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." John 20:29b, KJV

Notice again that Thomas had to see in order to believe, while the Lord corrects him, and us, by saying that even if we never see a single miracle, or a single manifestation, or anything at all with our physical senses, we must still believe; and if we do, then we are truly blessed; because this is true faith of gold. It is the kind of faith which will not perish in the fire, because it is a pure solid faith which is built upon the Word of God, and not upon any physical signs and wonders; particularly not upon the false lying wonders of the Endtime which we are all witnessing in our current day. This is the kind of faith which pleases God. Please consider the following verses:

"But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." Job 23:10, KJV

"And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold

is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God." Zechariah 13:9, KJV

"That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:" 1 Peter 1:7, KJV

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

"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Hebrews 11:6, KJV

Before concluding this series, allow me to address one more issue which is directly related to all of the points which I have already discussed. In his Epistle to the Hebrews, the Apostle Paul wrote in part:

"Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." Hebrews 10:38, KJV

What exactly does Paul mean by the term 'draw back'? This phrase is derived from the Greek word 'hupostello', pronounced hoop-os-tel'-lo, which my Greek lexicon defines as follows:

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

- 1) to draw back, let down, lower
- 1a) to withdraw: of a timid person
- 2) to withdraw one's self, i.e. to be timid, to cover, shrink
- 2a) of those who from timidity hesitate to avow what they believe
- 2b) to be unwilling to utter from fear
- 2c) to shrink from declaring, to conceal, dissemble

----- End Quote -----

In other words, when Paul talks about drawing back, he is referring to those who are afraid to stand up for their faith. They are afraid of what others will think of them, so they cowardly keep quiet about their faith in Jesus Christ. As we saw in part two, this is something which we should not do; because if we are ashamed of the Lord, and of our faith in Him, He will also be ashamed of us at His Return. Instead, we must boldly confess with our mouths, our faith in the Lord Jesus. Consider the following verses:

"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

"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

"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

"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

"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

However, as I was pondering that previous verse from Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews, I realized that this drawing back from our faith is not something which happens overnight. I point out in other articles how Satan will work on us for a long time. He will chip away at our faith a little at a time with his lies, doubts and deceptions. Do you realize that one way in which he might do this, is by tricking us into transferring our faith in the Word of God alone, to faith in

the lying signs and wonders? Can you honestly see how subtle this is? In other words, the minute we begin to place more emphasis on the manifestations, and on wanting to experience God with our five senses, we have begun to draw back in our faith. We are no longer walking by pure faith as Paul tells us to do; we have begun to walk by sight; and unless the Lord shakes us up in His mercy, we may end up backsliding all the way! It doesn't seem that way at first, does it? It seems so innocent, but the end result is total dependence upon the signs and the wonders in order to maintain our faith, or possibly before we will even begin to believe; just like those antichrist Jews!

So what about you? Where is your faith? What is it founded upon? Is your faith a faith of gold; or do you require some kind of spiritual crutch like these false signs and wonders which have become rooted in some of the Lord's Body? When you do encounter these manifestations, such as these latest reported incidents involving gold fillings and gold dust, do you carefully measure them against God's Holy Word to see if there is a Scriptural precedent for them, or do you weakly compromise your faith, blindly follow the excitement and the crowd, and accept the words of the false prophets as being true? Are you bewitched by these modern sorcerers who have crept into the Lord's churches? Do you too exclaim 'This man is the great power of God!?' I certainly hope not! If you have in the past, I truly hope that this series will wake you up, and shake you up, and get you back on the right spiritual track for the Lord! As in all of my articles, I have strived to do my best to give you the straight truth as it is found in God's Word. I truly hope that you will accept it.

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