

MY GOD IS A SHOCKER! : PART ONE

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The Word "Crap", Jesus' Hard Sayings, Mark Of The Apostate Backslider, God's Selective Program, Be Sensitive To Others, Love For Our Weaker Brethren, Spiritual Maturity, Stunted Spiritual Growth, Hypocritical Organized Religion, There's No Room For Compromise, Foul-Mouthed Americans, Lights In The World, Using The Word "Damn", God's Unorthodox Methods, Abraham And Sarah, Lot And His Two Daughters, Jacob Was A Deceiver, Judah Onan And Tamar, The Royal Tribe Of Judah And Patriarch Jacob's Prophecy Regarding The Mysterious Shiloh

Some time ago, a certain dear person wrote to me because she had become somewhat offended by my occasional use of the word "crap" in some of my communications. While this person wrote to me in private -- and I will of course respect and protect her privacy -- I have decided to make my response to her public, because I believe that what I am about to share are things which certain modern Christians really need to hear; even if they do find them offensive, or hard to accept. Let us not forget that the Lord Himself quite often said certain things, and did certain things, which not only caused His self-righteous, supposedly law-abiding religious enemies to become offended, but which also caused Him to lose some of His weaker followers as well. For example, as I mention in other articles, in John chapter six, after Jesus had given His "Eat-my-flesh, drink-my-blood" sermon, we find the following events occurring:

"Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him."
John 6:60-66, KJV

As I have noted before, I find it interesting that God has apparently chosen the reference John 6:66 as the mark of the backslider, just like the apostate 666; that is, the Mark of the Beast which is mentioned in the Book of Revelation. At any rate, the fact that some weaker Disciples tend to fall away, is a necessary part of the process of purging the grain which is brought into the Lord's granaries; that is, into the granaries or silos. Only the best corn or wheat can be stored safely, and will not rot, until it is put to good use during

a time of need; just as the Lord only chose those calibre of men which He knew would make the best Apostles during the formative years of our Christian faith. This issue is also discussed in some of my articles which address the topics of discipleship and spiritual growth.

Naturally, I am concerned, and sorry, when some individuals become a little offended by my usage of certain words, such as the word "crap", in my online communications. I think it is apparent to most people that I do try to remain sensitive to the sensitivities of others within reason; and I do my best to be careful regarding what I say in my articles, as well as when I am online. However, I will not go so far as to compromise the truth, in order to avoid hurt feelings. My responsibility is first, and above all, to God, and I must say and write as I feel led by Him.

Occasionally, there are certain things which I feel I should say, but I don't. Out of love for my readers, I purposely refrain myself from doing so, because I realize that some of our brethren are weaker spiritually than others. I have to consciously make an effort to tone things down a bit in my articles and comments, so that they do not become overly offended, and are at least able to receive the truth that I'm trying to share with them. As I told the person who inspired this series, Jesus did the very same thing. He realized that His Disciples were not yet able to bear certain things -- particularly regarding His coming Crucifixion -- so He chose to wait on revealing such things to them. The Apostle Paul did the very same thing. It was a sign of their love for the weaker brethren. Consider the following verses:

"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now."
John 16:12, KJV

"I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able."
1 Corinthians 3:2, KJV

In fact, Paul tells us that those people who are mature in the faith should bear the infirmities, or mental weaknesses -- derived from the Greek word "asthenema" -- of the weaker brethren; that is, those Christians who are not yet able to bear the stronger meat of the Gospel of Christ. Consider these verses:

"We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me."
Romans 15:1-3, KJV

Yet, at the same time, there were also occasions when Paul apparently felt disappointed by the lack of spiritual growth in some of the Disciples. We find such an example in his Epistle to the Hebrews, where he writes the following:

"For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of

milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."
Hebrews 5:12-14, KJV

So, basically then, it is a matter of realizing what kind of an audience one has, and then giving them as much truth as they can possibly bear, and then going no further. In the case of my online ministry, some people have been with me for several years or longer now. Because of this fact, I expect them to be able to bear more truth, and more strong meat than the average worldly Christian who may possibly be a Christian in name only, and who may not possess a strong foundation in God's Word. Sometimes I will test our flock with a certain comment in order to see how they will react. It is a good way to determine their spiritual temperature, as well as the loyalty of individuals. There will always be those people who agree and who are happy to accept the truth of God's Word -- regardless of how strong it may be -- while there will also be those people who protest, because their spiritual growth is rather stunted, and they can proceed no further. The reasons why this occurs are varied. I likewise discuss this topic in the series entitled "Are You Just a Baby Huey?".

This weakness on the part of some brethren is often due to the fact that they come from very conservative -- and to be honest -- very self-righteous, religious backgrounds in the church system. As some of you will know, it is a place where a lot of people tend to play the holier-than-thou game with each other. They walk on glass with each other, and must be careful about every single little word they say which might be offensive to someone, or which might make them look bad before friends or family, or which might cause a complaint. As I have often said, there is a great deal of menpleasing and falsehood occurring within the church system. Act like a saint, and then go home and live like the devil, seems to be the mentality of many churchgoers.

This attitude is nothing short of hypocrisy. In my view, it is a feel-good-in-the-flesh-for-an-hour kind of faith; just like some Sunday worship services. If our Christian faith is not practiced on a day-to-day and hour-to-hour basis, then it is not real Christianity. It is a counterfeit religion. So while I try to remain sensitive to others in my writing, at the same time, as I stated a moment ago, I must endeavor to never compromise the Gospel message. I must always speak and write as I am led by the Lord, because I am first, and above all, accountable to Him. In the words of the Apostle Paul:

"Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?"
Galatians 4:16, KJV

Moreover, I likewise believe that there is such a thing as righteous indignation. Furthermore, there are times when that indignation against wrong, evil and sin can best be expressed with stronger words, as I have sometimes done. While some non-Christians will no doubt find this humorous,

when I say "stronger", let me clarify that "crap" has been about the extent of it. You will never find me using more vulgar four-letter words, which are so common on the street, and in the American entertainment industry. Quite frankly, I find the language they use totally unnecessary, and totally unacceptable. It is indeed tragic that a once God-fearing people have reduced themselves to such a base level. That is not what I call being a light to the world, as the following verses instruct us to be:

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

Now, there have been a few times when I have wanted to use the word "damn", because I have felt that it was appropriate for the situation; yet I haven't, because I love my readers, and as I have already stated, I know that some of them are simply too weak to handle such a graphic word. They have been heavily influenced by that self-righteous spirit which originates with organized religion. If I have the accusatory finger pointed at me for merely using the word "crap", how much more would I be demonized for saying "damn"? The word "damn", or a variation thereof, is used throughout the Holy Scriptures. It is a reference to judgment, or condemnation, sometimes by God, and sometimes by our own conscience; such as in the following verses:

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation."
Matthew 23:14, KJV

"Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?"
Matthew 23:33, KJV

"But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation:"
Mark 3:29, KJV

"And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."
John 5:29, KJV

"For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body."
1 Corinthians 11:29, KJV

"Having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith."
1 Timothy 5:12, KJV

"And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time

lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not."
2 Peter 2:3, KJV

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
Mark 16:16, KJV

"And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin."
Romans 14:23, KJV

"That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."
2 Thessalonians 2:12, KJV

So even though this word is widely used in the Bible, I am forced to be cautious with using it in my communications. Why? Is it because I am wrong to use it; or is it because certain people have had their minds and attitudes shaped by their religious background within organized religion?

Let us now take a look at some other examples which are found in the Bible. Perhaps by the time I am done, you will come to the conclusion that my use of the word "crap" is a very light thing, and is by no means unChristian, as some individuals have erroneously been led to believe. With the following examples, you will plainly see that God is in fact an idol-smasher. He is an iconoclast. He will not hesitate to shock people out of their sins when it becomes necessary; even by utilizing some very graphic, and sometimes extremely unorthodox methods when it suits His purposes. Naturally, I cannot possibly share them all in this series, but I believe that my point will be well made with those I have chosen to include here.

To begin with, are you aware of the fact that Abraham, who is the father of the Jewish nation, and also the spiritual forefather of all Christians as well, not only married his half-sister, but then proceeded to trick Pharaoh, king of Egypt, into thinking that she was just his sister, in order to save his skin; that is, to save his life? The Scriptures tell us that Sarah -- who was then known as Sarai -- was in fact rather beautiful, and that poor Abraham was afraid that the Egyptians might kill him, in order to take his wife from him, and give her to Pharaoh. So what did Abraham do? He told a little white lie. Following are the key verses from that particular story:

"And it came to pass, when he was come near to enter into Egypt, that he said unto Sarai his wife, Behold now, I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon: Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, This is his wife: and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive. Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister: that it may be well with me for thy sake; and my soul shall live because of thee. And it came to pass, that, when Abram was come into Egypt, the Egyptians beheld the woman that she was very fair. The princes also of Pharaoh saw her, and commended her before Pharaoh: and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house. And he entreated Abram well for her sake: and he had sheep, and oxen, and he asses, and menservants, and maidservants, and she asses, and camels. And the LORD

plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai Abram's wife. And Pharaoh called Abram, and said, What is this that thou hast done unto me? why didst thou not tell me that she was thy wife? Why saidst thou, She is my sister? so I might have taken her to me to wife: now therefore behold thy wife, take her, and go thy way."
Genesis 12:11-19, KJV

So it is clear that Abraham told a bald-faced lie, in order to save his life. Not only that, but he convinced his wife to go along with his deception. Surprisingly, this is not the only time that Abraham used this ruse. He did the very same thing with Abimelech, who was the king of Gerar. Again, Abraham's deceit came to light, and he finally confessed; as we see by the following verses:

". . . Because I thought, Surely the fear of God is not in this place; and they will slay me for my wife's sake. And yet indeed she is my sister; she is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife. And it came to pass, when God caused me to wander from my father's house, that I said unto her, This is thy kindness which thou shalt shew unto me; at every place whither we shall come, say of me, He is my brother."
Genesis 20:11b-13, KJV

Now, please notice that Abraham states "at every place". In other words, he was a continual liar. He did not just pull this stunt in Egypt, or in Gerar, he did it where? "At every place". Did God hold this against Abraham? Did He punish him for his dishonesty? Apparently not. Why not? Allow me to tell you why: Because since the very first chapter of the Book of Genesis, God had set a plan in motion -- that is, the Plan of Salvation -- and dear Abraham and his descendants were all a part of that wonderful plan. They had to survive come what may, in order to eventually produce the Savior through the tribe of Judah. So apparently, God was willing to overlook certain flaws in their characters.

Just prior to the previous story regarding the exploits of the Patriarch Abraham, we discover that the two daughters of Lot -- who was Abraham's nephew -- committed what in today's terms would be considered blatant seduction and incest with their aging father. As you may know, Sodom and Gomorrah had just been destroyed -- which Abraham witnessed from afar -- and the three of them -- that is, Lot and his two daughters -- were hiding out in a cave. They apparently thought that it was the end of the world, or at least that there were no men left to raise up a seed for them; that is, to continue the family line. So what did they do? They purposely made their father Lot drunk, and then they engaged in sex with him, as we see by the following verses:

"And Lot went up out of Zoar, and dwelt in the mountain, and his two daughters with him; for he feared to dwell in Zoar: and he dwelt in a cave, he and his two daughters. And the firstborn said unto the younger, Our father is old, and there is not a man in the earth to come in unto us after the manner of all the earth: Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father. And they made their father drink wine that night: and the firstborn went in, and lay with her father;

and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose. And it came to pass on the morrow, that the firstborn said unto the younger, Behold, I lay yesternight with my father: let us make him drink wine this night also; and go thou in, and lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father. And they made their father drink wine that night also: and the younger arose, and lay with him; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose. Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father. And the firstborn bare a son, and called his name Moab: the same is the father of the Moabites unto this day. And the younger, she also bare a son, and called his name Benammi: the same is the father of the children of Ammon unto this day." Genesis 19:30-38, KJV

Many of you will be familiar with the story of Jacob the Deceiver. Jacob was the son of Isaac, and the grandson of Abraham. First, Jacob stole his brother Esau's inheritance by taking advantage of Esau's need -- Esau came home hungry -- and then, following his own mother Rebekah's counsel, he tricked his own father, Isaac, into believing that he was Esau the elder. The reason why Jacob did this was so that he could receive his father's blessing, even though he was the younger son, and was thus not entitled to that particular blessing. So Rebekah and Jacob actually conspired together in order to commit this clearly dishonest deed. Yet again, it was all apparently a part of God's Divine Plan. Following are some of the key verses from that story:

"And Jacob sod pottage: and Esau came from the field, and he was faint: And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage; for I am faint: therefore was his name called Edom. And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright. And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me? And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised his birthright." Genesis 25:29-34, KJV

"And she gave the savoury meat and the bread, which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob. And he came unto his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I; who art thou, my son? And Jacob said unto his father, I am Esau thy firstborn; I have done according as thou badest me: arise, I pray thee, sit and eat of my venison, that thy soul may bless me. And Isaac said unto his son, How is it that thou hast found it so quickly, my son? And he said, Because the LORD thy God brought it to me . . . And Jacob went near unto Isaac his father; and he felt him, and said, The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau. And he discerned him not, because his hands were hairy, as his brother Esau's hands: so he blessed him. And he said, Art thou my very son Esau? And he said, I am . . . And it came to pass, as soon as Isaac had made an end of blessing Jacob, and Jacob was yet scarce gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting . . . And when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, Bless me, even me also, O my father. And he said, Thy brother came with subtilty, and hath taken away thy

blessing. And he said, Is not he rightly named Jacob? for he hath supplanted me these two times: he took away my birthright; and, behold, now he hath taken away my blessing. And he said, Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me?"
Genesis 27:17-20, 22-24, 30, 34-36, KJV

Let us take a look at another shocking example that is found in the Scriptures. Are you aware of the fact that the act of ejaculation is plainly mentioned in the Scriptures? The Bible informs us that while engaging in sex with Tamar -- who was the wife of his deceased brother -- Onan selfishly ejaculated on the ground -- that is, he spilled his semen on the ground -- because he did not want to impregnate her, which was his obligation to do according to the Levitical Law, in order that the family line might continue. Consider these verses:

"And Judah said unto Onan, Go in unto thy brother's wife, and marry her, and raise up seed to thy brother. And Onan knew that the seed should not be his; and it came to pass, when he went in unto his brother's wife, that he spilled it on the ground, lest that he should give seed to his brother. And the thing which he did displeased the LORD: wherefore he slew him also."
Genesis 38:8-10, KJV

As you can see, God was so angry with Onan due to his selfish act, that He killed him. It is because of this Levitical Law, that in the New Testament, we find some of the self-righteous religionists -- who were known as the Sadducees -- tempting Jesus with the following discussion. Please note that these were the fellows who didn't believe in the Resurrection, the Spirit World, or the Afterlife:

"The same day came to him the Sadducees, which say that there is no resurrection, and asked him, Saying, Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. Now there were with us seven brethren: and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and, having no issue, left his wife unto his brother: Likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh. And last of all the woman died also. Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her. Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven. But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. And when the multitude heard this, they were astonished at his doctrine."
Matthew 22:23-33, KJV

Returning to Tamar, Judah had one more younger son named Shelah; who by law, should have become Tamar's next husband. However, out of fear that he too might die, Judah refused to give Shelah to Tamar when he was grown, even though Judah had given Tamar his word, that she would have him for a husband. Judah was clearly rebelling against God's Will. He was not yielding to the Spirit. So what did persistent Tamar do? She pretended to be a harlot, a whore, a prostitute, in order to

entice Judah -- who was her very own father-in-law -- into engaging in sex with her. This he did, which resulted in the birth of Pharez and Zarah; one of whom was an ancestor of Jesus Christ, as well as an ancestor of all of the Judean kings. Again, here are some of the key verses from the story:

"And it was told Tamar, saying, Behold thy father in law goeth up to Timnath to shear his sheep. And she put her widow's garments off from her, and covered her with a vail, and wrapped herself, and sat in an open place, which is by the way to Timnath; for she saw that Shelah was grown, and she was not given unto him to wife. When Judah saw her, he thought her to be an harlot; because she had covered her face. And he turned unto her by the way, and said, Go to, I pray thee, let me come in unto thee; (for he knew not that she was his daughter in law.) And she said, What wilt thou give me, that thou mayest come in unto me? And he said, I will send thee a kid from the flock. And she said, Wilt thou give me a pledge, till thou send it? And he said, What pledge shall I give thee? And she said, Thy signet, and thy bracelets, and thy staff that is in thine hand. And he gave it her, and came in unto her, and she conceived by him."
Genesis 38:13-18, KJV

Of course, that is not how the story ends. Judah is so out of tune with what God is trying to do, that when he is informed that Tamar is pregnant outside of wedlock, we are told that he wants to have her burned. Whether that means that he wanted to burn her at the stake like a witch, or whether it means that they were to burn her genitals so that she could no longer engage in sex, I am really not certain. This will require more research on my part, as I am not completely knowledgeable regarding the Levitical customs of that time period.

However, the main issue to consider here is that Judah was about to make a major mistake by destroying what God had just carefully created. How did God go about fulfilling His purpose? He actually used Judah's own sexual urge against him, in order to trick him into doing His Will, so that the Judean line would continue. Now, tell me. How is that for a totally unorthodox method? God tricked Judah into engaging in sex with his own daughter-in-law, Tamar! Judah basically tricked Tamar -- by refusing to give her Shelah as had been promised -- and then God tricked Judah in return!

If you are familiar with the story, then you will know that eventually, everything was brought to light, Judah realized his sin and the error of his ways, and he in fact confessed that Tamar had acted more righteously than himself, as we see by the following verses:

"And it came to pass about three months after, that it was told Judah, saying, Tamar thy daughter in law hath played the harlot; and also, behold, she is with child by whoredom. And Judah said, Bring her forth, and let her be burnt. When she was brought forth, she sent to her father in law, saying, By the man, whose these are, am I with child: and she said, Discern, I pray thee, whose are these, the signet, and bracelets, and staff. And Judah acknowledged them, and said, She hath been more righteous than I; because that I gave her not to Shelah my son. And he knew her again no

more."
Genesis 38:24-26, KJV

About six months later, Pharez and Zarah were born. As you may recall, before his death, Jacob specifically prophesied that the sceptre -- that is to say, the rod or staff of authority, derived from the Hebrew word "shebet" -- would not depart from the tribe of Judah until Shiloh came to claim it as his own, as we see by the following verses:

"Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be. Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes:"
Genesis 49:9-11, KJV

Exactly who is this mysterious Shiloh? While there is some speculation amongst certain Bible scholars, personally, I am convinced that it is a reference to none other than Jesus Christ. Why? The previous verses are full of hints. Notice the reference to a foal, to an ass's colt, to garments washed in wine and the blood of grapes, and to the fact that it clearly states that "unto him shall the gathering of the people be." If we follow my longtime practice of comparing Scripture with Scripture, we can only arrive at one obvious answer, which proves that these verses are an Old Testament prophecy to the Jews, regarding the coming of the Messiah, Jesus Christ, via the Tribe of Judah, which was not the priestly line. Please consider this verse:

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."
John 12:32, KJV

The previous verse is a fulfillment of Jacob's prophecy; and it was spoken by Jesus Himself. As Jacob prophesied, "and unto him shall the gathering of the people be."

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

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MY GOD IS A SHOCKER! : PART TWO

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More Fulfillments Of Jacob's Prophecy, Tamar's Persistence, Jesus Is The Lion Of The Tribe Of Judah, Ruth Seduces Boaz,

King David Commits Adultery And Murder, Foreskins Were An Israelite Token Of Victory, David's Wild Dance And Michal Is Struck Barren, Did God Make A Mistake?, Judging God, God's Ways Are Above Our Ways, Isaiah And Menstruous Cloths, God Is The Boss, Isaiah Walks Naked, Unorthodoxy With A Message, Apostate Israel And Assyrian Expansion, King Hezekiah And Sennacherib, Dung And Piss: An Odd Diet, "Pisseth Against The Wall", Prophet Ezekiel Is Told To Eat Dung, Cannibalism In The Scriptures, Prophet Hosea Is Ordered To Marry A Whore

Continuing our discussion from part one, following are a few more prophetic fulfillments regarding the words that were spoken by Jacob in Genesis chapter forty-nine:

"And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written, Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt."
John 12:14-15, KJV

"And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs."
Revelation 14:17-20, KJV

"And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God."
Revelation 19:13, KJV

Returning to the story of Judah and Tamar, because of one woman's persistence, the line of Judah continued, ultimately resulting in the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ, who is the true Lion of Judah. This point becomes evident by the following verses:

"For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood."
Hebrews 7:14, KJV

"For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah:"
Hebrews 8:8, KJV

"And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof."
Revelation 5:5, KJV

So think about this for a moment. Thus far, we have seen that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has an earthly ancestry which includes liars, deceivers, and a woman who played a whore. In spite of what she did, Tamar was clearly blessed

by God, and deemed more righteous than selfish Judah. Why? Because she did not do it for money. She did it in order to preserve the Royal Seed. Tamar was in tune to God's Spirit. I don't know if she really knew what the future held, but because of her persistence and trickery, God's Plan was fulfilled. How is that for a shocker from the Holy Book?

Tamar's seductive behavior is not the only questionable or what some people might view as an "unChristian" act that is associated with our Savior. Moving up hundreds of years, are you aware of the fact that Ruth -- who was another ancestor of Jesus Christ -- purposely seduced Boaz, who himself was the great grandfather of King David, in obedience to her mother-in-law Naomi's bidding? That dear girl waited until Boaz had eaten and was drunk, and then crept in and slept with him late at night. Her motivation? Again, it was to continue the family line. Following is a part of the story:

"Then Naomi her mother in law said unto her, My daughter, shall I not seek rest for thee, that it may be well with thee? And now is not Boaz of our kindred, with whose maidens thou wast? Behold, he winnoweth barley to night in the threshingfloor. Wash thyself therefore, and anoint thee, and put thy raiment upon thee, and get thee down to the floor: but make not thyself known unto the man, until he shall have done eating and drinking. And it shall be, when he lieth down, that thou shalt mark the place where he shall lie, and thou shalt go in, and uncover his feet, and lay thee down; and he will tell thee what thou shalt do. And she said unto her, All that thou sayest unto me I will do. And she went down unto the floor, and did according to all that her mother in law bade her. And when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of corn: and she came softly, and uncovered his feet, and laid her down. And it came to pass at midnight, that the man was afraid, and turned himself: and, behold, a woman lay at his feet. And he said, Who art thou? And she answered, I am Ruth thine handmaid: spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid; for thou art a near kinsman. And he said, Blessed be thou of the LORD, my daughter: for thou hast shewed more kindness in the latter end than at the beginning, inasmuch as thou followedst not young men, whether poor or rich. And now, my daughter, fear not; I will do to thee all that thou requirest: for all the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman. And now it is true that I am thy near kinsman: howbeit there is a kinsman nearer than I. Tarry this night, and it shall be in the morning, that if he will perform unto thee the part of a kinsman, well; let him do the kinsman's part: but if he will not do the part of a kinsman to thee, then will I do the part of a kinsman to thee, as the LORD liveth: lie down until the morning. And she lay at his feet until the morning: and she rose up before one could know another. And he said, Let it not be known that a woman came into the floor. Also he said, Bring the vail that thou hast upon thee, and hold it. And when she held it, he measured six measures of barley, and laid it on her: and she went into the city. And when she came to her mother in law, she said, Who art thou, my daughter? And she told her all that the man had done to her."

Ruth 3:1-16, KJV

Now isn't that an odd question! Why in the world would Naomi ask her daughter-in-law -- who she already knew very well -- who she was? Was Naomi mad? Had she lost her memory? Or is it possible that Naomi was asking Ruth if their plan had worked, and if she was no longer the same person she was twelve hours earlier? Do you understand what is being inferred here? As we learn from the story of Ruth, wise Boaz acted like a gentleman and married Ruth after a closer next-of-kin refused her.

Next in our list of unorthodox stories is Boaz and Ruth's great grandson, King David. Many of you are familiar with the fact that King David was both a murderer -- he purposely had Uriah killed in battle -- as well as an adulterer -- he took Uriah's beautiful wife, Bathsheba, to be his own wife -- yet he too is heralded as one of the greatest kings of Israel. Not only that, but we all know that David was also a direct ancestor of Jesus Christ. Due to the length of the story regarding Bathsheba, I will not include it here. You will find it in 2 Samuel chapters eleven and twelve. Let me just mention that God did punish King David for his sinful and selfish deeds. However, He also blessed David with many other sons; the first of whom was King Solomon.

Before leaving King David behind, allow me to mention a few more interesting facts regarding the life of this famous and highly-respected Jewish king. Are you aware of the fact that it was a common practice of the Israelites to cut off the foreskins of their male enemies as a token of victory? For those of you who do not know what a foreskin is, it is the sheath of skin which surrounds an uncircumcised man's penis. Imagine. If you were defeated by the Israelites, you risked suffering sudden circumcision; and I seriously doubt that any kind of local anesthesia was applied. Of course, maybe you were already dead when they did it. My regular readers know that I love the Lord, and I love His Word. Yet I am not ashamed to admit that even though I have studied the Bible for many years, I still find this practice very repulsive. I just cannot imagine myself ever grabbing any man's penis, and doing this to him, regardless of whether he is dead or alive.

Well, the Prophet Samuel informs us that King Saul required that David collect one hundred foreskins of his Philistine enemies, before he would give David the hand of his daughter Michal in marriage. We are told that David humbled King Saul by not just bringing him one hundred Philistine foreskins, but by doubling the amount and bringing him two hundred of the same. Imagine if such outlandish marriage requirements were made today. Lord help us! Consider this verse:

"Wherefore David arose and went, he and his men, and slew of the Philistines two hundred men; and David brought their foreskins, and they gave them in full tale to the king, that he might be the king's son in law. And Saul gave him Michal his daughter to wife."
1 Samuel 18:27, KJV

Speaking of Michal, are you aware of the fact that God cursed her, so that she was unable to bear any children for David? Do you know why the Lord did this? The Bible tells us that it was because she was a jealous woman. It seems that David was a rather happy, wild and carefree king. He was so in love with the Lord, and His Word, that he was not afraid

to publicly demonstrate his affection for the Lord. On one particular occasion, when the Ark of the Covenant was being returned to Jerusalem, David danced wildly before it. The reason why Michal became jealous and spoke against David, is because he did his wild dance in front of the handmaids of Israel, and we are given the impression that he stripped off some of his clothes. God simply did not like anyone speaking against His anointed leader -- not even David's wife -- and David told her so. Thus she was cursed, as we see by these verses:

"And David danced before the LORD with all his might; and David was girded with a linen ephod. So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet. And as the ark of the LORD came into the city of David, Michal Saul's daughter looked through a window, and saw king David leaping and dancing before the LORD; and she despised him in her heart . . . Then David returned to bless his household. And Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David, and said, How glorious was the king of Israel to day, who uncovered himself to day in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants, as one of the vain fellows shamelessly uncovereth himself! And David said unto Michal, It was before the LORD, which chose me before thy father, and before all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the LORD, over Israel: therefore will I play before the LORD. And I will yet be more vile than thus, and will be base in mine own sight: and of the maidservants which thou hast spoken of, of them shall I be had in honour. Therefore Michal the daughter of Saul had no child unto the day of her death."
2 Samuel 6:14-16, 20-23, KJV

So allow me to ask you a question. Considering the stories which we have examined thus far in this series, couldn't God have made much better choices than people such as these? In fact, didn't this questionable lineage place a dark stain on Jesus' bloodline? Is it difficult to understand why to this very day, many modern Jews still refuse to accept Jesus as the one true Messiah? Is it difficult to understand why they say so many nasty things about Him, and even spit at the very mention of His name? Did God make a mistake by choosing such questionable people? Or was He actually trying to emphasize a particular point by resorting to such unorthodox methods, and by using people who were less than perfect? Personally, I am convinced that He was. As I point out in the article entitled "The Only Credentials You Need!", that point seems to be that God can use whoever He wants, however He wants, whenever He wants, regardless of what mere humans think of His methods; even if they think that He is wrong, or not a very holy God. As the Lord said to dear Job:

". . . Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? he that reproveth God, let him answer it. Then Job answered the LORD, and said, Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further. Then answered the LORD unto Job out of the whirlwind, and said, Gird up thy loins now like a man: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. Wilt thou also disannul my judgment? wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous?"

Job 40:1b-8, KJV

Many centuries later, the Apostle Paul would likewise write the following in his Epistle to the brethren at Rome:

"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

So, as we have begun to see, if we start to examine some of the lives of the "heroes" of the Bible, we discover that they said and did some things which would make the sensitive modern Christian turn their head in shock, in disgust, and in absolute wonderment. Yet each of the individuals who were involved in these different situations were both chosen and blessed by God. To reiterate, God simply does not care what we humans think of His methods. As we see by the following group of verses, God's ways are simply not our ways; and at times they are far beyond our human comprehension. For this reason, we should all be very careful, and not be too quick to judge Him:

"Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding."

Isaiah 40:28, KJV

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

Isaiah 55:8-9, KJV

"Which doeth great things past finding out; yea, and wonders without number."

Job 9:10, KJV

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

Romans 11:33, KJV

Before leaving the Old Testament behind, let's take a look at a few more examples of God's unorthodox methods. First in our line-up is a person who is greatly respected by Bible scholars of our modern era. Allow me to introduce you to the Prophet Isaiah by way of one of his many prophecies. Please be advised that this individual seems to have a penchant for employing shock value in his writings. He would have fit in perfectly with modern shock radio and television. Yes, I am employing a bit of sarcasm here. Near the end of the Book that is named after him, this humble Prophet of God wrote the following lines in which he very graphically describes our less-than-perfect condition:

"But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away."

Isaiah 64:6, KJV

Do you fully understand what Isaiah has written here? The Lord is having him say that our righteousness stinks! Our self-perceived holiness is putrid! Exactly how bad is it? Well, if we look up the Hebrew origin of the phrase "filthy rags", we discover that it is derived from the word "ed". According to the Brown, Driver, Briggs, Gesenius Hebrew Aramaic English Lexicon, this Hebrew word refers to the filthy rags or stained garments of menstruation. In other words, God is having Isaiah state that our righteousness, and the holier-than-thou image that certain people have of themselves -- in this particular case, the backslidden Jews -- isn't any better than a stinking, putrid menstrual cloth; that is to say, a Kotex or Tampax!

Well, if God really wanted to create a favorable impression with us, or with the ancient Israelites, He certainly did a rather poor job of it, didn't He? He certainly didn't make it easy for Isaiah, did He? But you see, as I have already made clear, God simply does not care what we think of Him, or of His methods. He will do as He pleases, because He is the boss, and not us. He is the one who calls the shots. How dare any of us to speak against Him. Tragically, blasphemy against God is rampant everywhere today, and the forces of darkness are exalted and praised across the land. There should be no doubt that the very spirit of antichrist has filled our modern world.

Imagine if the Prophet Isaiah, the man who prophesied of the fall of kings and kingdoms, the man who prophesied of the sufferings of the Messiah, the man who also prophesied of the Millennial Rule of Jesus Christ, came today and said the very same things concerning the modern religious system. Would he have been accepted by such a pharisaical group of people? I seriously doubt it; particularly after I tell you of another interesting fact regarding the life of this wonderful Prophet of God.

Are you aware of the fact that the Prophet Isaiah was the first streaker? For those of you outside of America who are not familiar with the term, a number of decades ago, there was a certain fad in the United States whereby for the simple sake of shock value, certain daring individuals -- both men and women -- would don nothing but tennis shoes, and run -- or streak -- unexpectedly across a certain area, totally in the nude. I never personally witnessed this. Whether or not they were trying to make some kind of political statement, I do not recall. Perhaps some were, while others did it merely for the challenge, or the exhilaration that they experienced while doing it. I really don't know.

Well, some 2,700 years ago, dear Isaiah was called by God, to do something equally as radical. In fact, I would dare say that it was even more radical. Why? Because Isaiah did not just dash across town for a minute or two. He did not even run. We are told that he walked totally naked for not just a few minutes, but for a total of three years! Notice that in the following verses we are told that he did not even wear a loin cloth around his buttocks and genitalia:

"At the same time spake the LORD by Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying, Go and loose the sackcloth from off thy loins, and put off thy shoe from thy foot. And he did so, walking naked

and barefoot. And the LORD said, Like as my servant Isaiah hath walked naked and barefoot three years for a sign and wonder upon Egypt and upon Ethiopia; So shall the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptians prisoners, and the Ethiopians captives, young and old, naked and barefoot, even with their buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt." Isaiah 20:2-4, KJV

As you can see by the previous verses, whenever the Lord asked one of His servants to perform such an unorthodox act, it was always for a specific reason. In this case, Isaiah's three-year naked streak was meant to serve as a very graphic example of the fate which would soon befall the Egyptians and the Ethiopians, as they were taken into captivity by the Assyrians. Now, can you imagine what would happen today if a man of God were to strip himself of his clothing, and engage in a ministry similar to that of the Prophet Isaiah? There is no doubt in my mind that the religious establishment would quickly brand him a false prophet who was possessed by the devil; well, at least those who still believe that Satan is real. Sadly, many churches now teach that Satan was only a symbolic or metaphorical creature.

At any rate, I don't doubt that the legal authorities would send the men in white coats in order to quickly subdue and lock up anyone who would dare venture out onto the street in the nude, in order to preach the Word of God. Stop and think about what your reaction would be if you heard such a thing on the nightly news. Being the skeptical person that I am, I know that I would raise my eyebrows, and I would be extremely hesitant to embrace such an individual as a modern Prophet who has been sent by God.

That brings us to our next example of "shocking" language which is found in the Bible. Similar to his contemporaries, Isaiah was a very intense Prophet of warning. As I mention in articles such as "The Fruits of Disobedience", during much of the time that they existed as an independent nation, the people of ancient Israel were living in great sin, and God was getting rather tired of it. Thus, He sent Isaiah and other Prophets to warn them that they had better repent. As we learn from the Scriptures, their primary sin was their worship of the ancient pagan gods, which had been strictly forbidden since the days of Moses. So rebellious were they, that not only did they build altars to these false gods, but they likewise sacrificed their very own children to them as well. Scattered amongst the disobedient kings of ancient Israel, there were a few good leaders, such as King Hezekiah who ruled over the southern kingdom of Judah.

At this time in world history, the Assyrian empire was aggressively conquering the Middle East, and the land of Judah was next on their agenda. Of course, their conquest had been ordained by God, even though in their pride, the foolish Assyrians did not realize this. They assumed that they conquered different lands by the power of their false gods, and they even ridiculed the God of Israel. What they failed to realize is that King Hezekiah was one of the good kings. Furthermore, Hezekiah had done something which had in fact pleased the Lord. He had put a halt to the worship of the false gods in Judah, as we see by the following verses:

"Now it came to pass in the third year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, that Hezekiah the son of Ahaz king of Judah began to reign. Twenty and five years old was he when he began to reign; and he reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also was Abi, the daughter of Zachariah. And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that David his father did. He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brasen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it Nehushtan. He trusted in the LORD God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him. For he clave to the LORD, and departed not from following him, but kept his commandments, which the LORD commanded Moses."
2 Kings 18:1-6, KJV

So unbeknownst to the Assyrians, at that particular time, the Lord was with the people of Judah; and His intentions were to deliver them out of the hand of their enemies, which He did. You can read about the Divine Deliverance in chapter nineteen of the Second Book of the Kings. Consider now part of what was said when Rabshakeh -- who was one of the proud generals of Assyrian king Sennacherib -- drew near to the walls of Jerusalem, in an attempt to convince the people of Jerusalem that they should simply surrender peaceably, and thus avoid any unnecessary bloodshed:

"But Rabshakeh said, Hath my master sent me to thy master and to thee to speak these words? hath he not sent me to the men that sit upon the wall, that they may eat their own dung, and drink their own piss with you?"
Isaiah 36:12, KJV

That is rather strong language for the Bible; and I suspect that most people would find it much more offensive than my use of the word "crap". Why would Rabshakeh even resort to saying something like that?

Well, if you take the time to study the war strategies which were used by the Assyrians and the Babylonians in the Bible, you will discover that they relied heavily upon the strategy of siege. Most cities were surrounded by steep walls at that time in history -- including the city of Jerusalem -- and the inhabitants would store up supplies which could last for a considerable amount of time. This was particularly beneficial during times of war. I'm reminded of the following verse that is found in the Book of Proverbs:

"A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished."
Proverbs 22:3, KJV

Eventually, however, the supplies would run out; and unless they surrendered, what else would they have left to eat or drink? So I believe that this is what Rabshakeh was really saying to them: "Surrender now, or you will end up eating and drinking your own dung and piss." In fact, if you read some of my other articles regarding this topic, you will see that this is precisely the strategy that the Babylonians used less than two hundred years later when they too sieged

-- and in fact conquered -- Jerusalem during the reign of King Zedekiah.

It might interest you to know that this is not the only place where the word "piss" is used in the Bible. On six different occasions, the phrase "pisseth against the wall" is also used; as we see by the following example verse:

"So and more also do God unto the enemies of David, if I leave of all that pertain to him by the morning light any that pisseth against the wall."
1 Samuel 25:22, KJV

Let's continue our discussion by taking a look at the life of another Old Testament messenger of God; that is, the Prophet Ezekiel. Are you aware of the fact that God actually commanded him to eat his own dung? Ezekiel was completely horrified by such a thought, because he considered himself to be such a holy man who would never eat anything unclean, just like the Apostle Peter in the New Testament, as we see by the following two verses:

"But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean."
Acts 10:14, KJV

"But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth."
Acts 11:8, KJV

In the Prophet Ezekiel's case, the Lord decided to make it a little easier for him by telling him he could eat cow dung instead. Following are the key verses:

"And thou shalt eat it as barley cakes, and thou shalt bake it with dung that cometh out of man, in their sight. And the LORD said, Even thus shall the children of Israel eat their defiled bread among the Gentiles, whither I will drive them. Then said I, Ah Lord GOD! behold, my soul hath not been polluted: for from my youth up even till now have I not eaten of that which dieth of itself, or is torn in pieces; neither came there abominable flesh into my mouth. Then he said unto me, Lo, I have given thee cow's dung for man's dung, and thou shalt prepare thy bread therewith."
Ezekiel 4:12-15, KJV

Imagine. The God of Heaven commanded His Prophet to eat his own dung! But again, as we have already seen, the reason why the Lord chose to do this, was to try to shock the children of Israel into recognizing the seriousness of their sins. He knew that it would require a strong hand in order to motivate them to repent. Thus, He used this unorthodox example with Ezekiel to tell them exactly what was going to befall them. In fact, the degree of suffering became so acute after the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians, that to our horror, the Prophet Jeremiah informs us that women were eating their very own children! Cannibalism was actually occurring in Israel at that dark time, as we see by the following verse:

"The hands of the pitiful women have sodden their own children: they were their meat in the destruction of the daughter of my people."

Lamentations 4:10, KJV

The other Prophets of the Old Testament were not immune to the Lord's unorthodox, wild tactics. In the case of Hosea, God's Word informs us that the Lord ordered the Prophet to marry a whore in order to graphically illustrate backslidden Israel's whoredoms with the pagan gods of the countries which surrounded them. Not only that, but we are informed that this Prophet even had a son by this woman, as we see by the verses that follow:

"The beginning of the word of the LORD by Hosea. And the LORD said to Hosea, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms: for the land hath committed great whoredom, departing from the LORD. So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim; which conceived, and bare him a son."
Hosea 1:2-3, KJV

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

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MY GOD IS A SHOCKER! : PART THREE

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Jesus Rebukes Jewish Religionists: Children Of Hell, Vipers And Hypocrites, Discerning God's Spirit, Wild Man John The Baptist Loses His Head, Rebuke Is A Form Of Love, Bastards In The Bible, God Chooses Weak People So He Gets The Glory, Our Wild Crazy God, Only One True God, Atheists Who Endeavor To Embarrass Christians, Saul Of Tarsus Persecutes The Early Church, Foul-Mouthed Apostle Paul: It Is All Just Dung, Paul Goes To Rome And Is Martyred There, Are You Ashamed Of Your Faith?, Jesus Sacrificed Everything For Our Sakes And Became Of No Reputation, Jesus Christ Is The Rejected Cornerstone

Having now shared with you a few examples of God's rather unorthodox methods that are found in the Old Testament, let us take a glance at the New Testament as well. Most modern Christians are probably more familiar with the teachings of Christ, than they are with the Old Testament stories. You may also know that it was because of His teachings -- which to some people appeared to contradict the Mosaic Law -- that the Lord was constantly in conflict with the self-righteous religious leaders of His day. Of course, we know that Jesus eventually grew rather tired of their hypocrisy. Thus, on various occasions, He did not spare His words in order to expose their blatant sins against God and the people. Jesus

referred to them as the children of hell, as the evil spawn of their father the Devil, as a generation of vipers, as hypocrites, and more. Consider these sample verses:

"O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."

Matthew 12:34, KJV

"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 . . . Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?"

Matthew 23:15, 33, 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

How are we supposed to react to these statements? This is the very same man who preached wonderful sermons regarding loving our enemies, and doing good to those who hate us. Do we have any right to accuse Him of not being very loving, or even of being a hypocrite? Sadly, some nonbelievers have so little fear of God, that they do these very things, and much worse, because they simply do not understand the Spirit of God, and how He operates. Thus it is that the Apostle Paul wrote the following in his first Epistle to the brethren at Corinth:

"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

From a worldly perspective, Jesus' predecessor -- John the Baptist -- did not offer a much better example. Neither did he preach a "respectable religion". Like Jesus, this wild man who roamed in the wilderness of the Jordan River Valley, and who was dressed in camel's hair, and who ate locusts and wild honey, accused the Scribes and the Pharisees of being a brood of vipers, as we see by the following two verses:

"But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"

Matthew 3:7, KJV

"Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"

Luke 3:7, KJV

But what really got John the Baptist in trouble, is when he accused King Herod of marrying his brother Philip's wife, while Philip was still alive. In other words, John publicly accused Herod of committing adultery. Imagine going to the leader of your own country, and publicly humiliating him by telling him that he is an adulterer. Is it any wonder then

that Herod's vindictive wife, Herodias, saw to it that John was eventually beheaded, as we see in these verses?:

"But Herod the tetrarch, being reproved by him for Herodias his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done, Added yet this above all, that he shut up John in prison."
Luke 3:19,20, KJV

"For John said unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her. And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet. But when Herod's birthday was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleased Herod. Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she would ask. And she, being before instructed of her mother, said, Give me here John Baptist's head in a charger. And the king was sorry: nevertheless for the oath's sake, and them which sat with him at meat, he commanded it to be given her. And he sent, and beheaded John in the prison. And his head was brought in a charger, and given to the damsel: and she brought it to her mother. And his disciples came, and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus."
Matthew 14:4-12, KJV

So were Jesus and John the Baptist demonstrating God's love to these lost people? Wasn't this behavior of theirs rather unChristian? Quite simply, the answer to the second question is a resounding "No!" It is important that we understand that God's love is manifested in many different forms, depending upon the situation. Furthermore, as I point out in articles such as "Beholding the Evil and the Good", "Do You Want Love and Light, or Rod and Wrath?" and "Love, Mercy, Forgiveness and Chastisement", exposing the sins of wicked people is in fact one form of God's love. Similar to any good parent, it is precisely because He loves us, that our Heavenly Father rebukes us and corrects us when we get out of line and are wrong. As we read in the Book of Proverbs and in Hebrews:

"Open rebuke is better than secret love."
Proverbs 27:5, KJV

"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."
Hebrews 12:6-8, KJV

Oh my! There is that offensive "b" word in the Holy Bible! What are we supposed to think of this Book? From one end to the other, it is simply filled with repulsive language, with very questionable behavior, and with extremely graphical examples which would both appall, offend and confuse a lot of people, if they knew about them. Given the examples that we have seen here, how can we possibly justify our faith before nonbelievers? How can we possibly invite them to join our faith? Who would possibly want to join such a religion as ours; a religion which was founded by, and which has been promoted by liars, deceivers, thieves, murderers, adulterers and adulteresses, whores, wild men running naked, deranged people with very unusual appetites, gluttons, drunks, and

people who are supposedly filled with the Devil? One would have to be crazy to join such a religion as ours, wouldn't they? The Apostle Paul apparently didn't think so. In his first Epistle to the Corinthians he wrote the following:

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

1 Corinthians 1:26-29, KJV

Why does God choose such people? Paul tells us plainly that it is so "that no flesh should glory in his presence." In other words, we are such sinners, we are such losers, we are such weaklings, that we really have no other choice but to acknowledge Him, to thank Him, and to glorify Him, whenever something good happens to get done through us. By our very weaknesses and imperfections, He gets the glory. That's why!

Well, I must tell you that I truly got a good laugh as I finished writing the previous paragraph where I described the kinds of people God has chosen to use down through the ages. We Christians must have the wildest, craziest, most unorthodox God in the entire Universe! Actually, He is the only true God that there is, as becomes evident by verses such as the following:

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD:"
Deuteronomy 6:4, KJV

Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God."
Isaiah 44:6, KJV

"Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any."
Isaiah 44:8, KJV

"I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me:"
Isaiah 45:5, KJV

"Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the LORD? and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me."
Isaiah 45:21, KJV

"Yet I am the LORD thy God from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt know no god but me: for there is no saviour beside me."
Hosea 13:4, KJV

"And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said

the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he . . . And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord:"

Mark 12:32, 39, KJV

"Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith."

Romans 3:30, KJV

"But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him."

1 Corinthians 8:6, KJV

"Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one."

Galatians 3:20, KJV

"There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

Ephesians 4:4-6, KJV

"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;"

1 Timothy 2:5, KJV

"Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble."

James 2:19, KJV

At any rate, who can possibly doubt that our God has a good sense of humor? Personally, I love it; I love Him; and I love His Word. I am not the least bit ashamed about what I have learned from the Scriptures. Occasionally, I have encountered certain misguided atheists and other ungodly individuals who seem to think that they can embarrass and shock us Christians by pointing out some of the aforementioned "offensive" verses and hard-to-swallow stories. However, I am not the least bit embarrassed by them. I am not ashamed of my faith. Neither am I ashamed of any of the colorful characters who populate our spiritual ancestry. How about you? As I noted earlier, God can choose and use whoever He likes, and it is simply none of our business to say otherwise.

This list of Scriptural examples would not be complete if we did not include one of the most celebrated leaders of the New Testament Church. That, of course, is the Apostle Paul. Here we have a highly educated, devoutly religious man who was a Pharisee of Pharisees, and a Roman citizen as well, as Paul informs us in his own words. Paul was obviously very serious when it came to his religion and his Jewish upbringing; so much so that he heavily persecuted the First Century Church. Consider the following verses which verify these points:

"But Paul said, I am a man which am a Jew of Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city: and, I beseech thee, suffer me to speak unto the people. And when he had given him licence, Paul stood on the stairs, and beckoned with the hand unto the people. And when there was made a great silence, he spake unto them in the Hebrew tongue, saying, Men, brethren,

and fathers, hear ye my defence which I make now unto you. (And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence: and he saith,) I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day. And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women. As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished."
Acts 21:39-22:5, KJV

"And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned? When the centurion heard that, he went and told the chief captain, saying, Take heed what thou doest: for this man is a Roman. Then the chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He said, Yea. And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was free born. Then straightway they departed from him which should have examined him: and the chief captain also was afraid, after he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him."
Acts 22:25-29, 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."
Acts 23:6, 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

"For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God."
1 Corinthians 15:9, KJV

"For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers."
Galatians 1:13-14, KJV

"Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him [Stephen] 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 7:57-8:3, KJV

"And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem."

Acts 9:1-2, KJV

So here we have a man who had received the best possible education available to a Jew living at that time; and then he has this life-changing experience on the dusty road to Damascus, which not only totally reverses his personal belief system, but which drastically changes his personal values and priorities in life as well. Following Paul's miraculous conversion to the Christian faith, exactly how did he describe everything he had acquired while he was still a citizen of the world? Consider the following verse in which Paul summarizes his new spiritual perspective:

"Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,"

Philippians 3:8, KJV

Dung! Paul viewed it all as just a bunch of dung; and we all know perfectly well what word is commonly used today instead of dung. Yes, my friends, the original Greek word that used in this verse does in fact mean excrement; or to be even more precise, the excrement of animals. Everything was just a pile of crap to Paul, compared to having Jesus in his life. Should we consider Paul any less of a servant of God just because he chose to use this word in his Epistle to the Philippians? In fact, some of his Jewish enemies might have even accused Paul of being a hypocrite; because in this very same Epistle, and in his letter to the Ephesians as well, he plainly states the following:

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

Philippians 4:8, KJV

"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers."

Ephesians 4:29, KJV

So was Paul a hypocrite? Was he unholy? Was he any less of a

Christian because he used the word "dung"? Hardly! No honest Christian can deny that the Apostle Paul was undoubtedly one of the greatest evangelists and missionaries of his time. Not only that, but we all know that according to tradition, Paul paid the ultimate price for his faith in the end, when he was beheaded by his ungodly enemies in Rome; that is, by Emperor Nero. Ironically, the Roman elite were the very ones who Paul had gone to witness to in the first place. This becomes clear by verses such as the following:

"After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome."
Acts 19:21, KJV

"And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome."
Acts 23:11, KJV

"And from thence we fetched a compass, and came to Rhegium: and after one day the south wind blew, and we came the next day to Puteoli: Where we found brethren, and were desired to tarry with them seven days: and so we went toward Rome. And from thence, when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appii forum, and The three taverns: whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage. And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard: but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him."
Acts 28:13-16, KJV

"To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ . . . So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also."
Romans 1:7, 15, KJV

"Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. [To the Galatians written from Rome.]"
Galatians 6:18, KJV

"Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen. [To the Ephesians written from Rome, by Tychicus.]"
Ephesians 6:24, KJV

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen. [To the Philippians written from Rome, by Epaphroditus.]"
Philippians 4:23, KJV

"The salutation by the hand of me Paul. Remember my bonds. Grace be with you. Amen. [Written from Rome to Colossians by Tychicus and Onesimus.]"
Colossians 4:18, KJV

"But, when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me."
2 Timothy 1:17, KJV

"The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit. Grace be with

you. Amen. [The second epistle unto Timotheus, ordained the first bishop of the church of the Ephesians, was written from Rome, when Paul was brought before Nero the second time.]"

2 Timothy 4:22, KJV

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. [Written from Rome to Philemon, by Onesimus a servant.]"

Philemon 1:25, KJV

Regarding the previous set of verses, let me clarify that it is commonly believed that Paul did not personally write all of his Epistles. Due to his poor eyesight -- which may have possibly been a result of the incident on the road to Damascus where the Lord struck down Paul, and left him blind for three days -- Paul was forced to dictate a number of his Epistles to his traveling companions.

In light of everything we have discussed thus far, allow me to ask you something. Are you ashamed of your Creator? Are you ashamed of His Holy Book? Are you ashamed of your faith? I certainly hope not; because Jesus was most certainly not ashamed of us when He voluntarily chose to leave His majestic Throne in Heaven, in order to take on the lowly form of human flesh, so that He could fulfill His Father's Divine Plan. He was not ashamed to be falsely accused of things which He did not do. He was not ashamed to be mocked and ridiculed. He was not ashamed to be called a glutton and a drunk, or a companion of publicans, harlots and sinners, and a devil as well. Jesus was not ashamed to be rejected by the Jewish religionists, to be beaten, to be stripped naked, and to be hung publicly on a Roman cross like a common criminal, in order to demonstrate His Father's magnificent love for us, by dying for our sins. Please consider the following verses:

"Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."
Hebrews 12:2, KJV

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."
Philippians 2:5-8, KJV

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

"The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the LORD'S doing; it is marvellous in our eyes."
Psalms 118:22-23, KJV

"Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures,

The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?"
Matthew 21:42, KJV

"And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again."
Mark 8:31, KJV

"And have ye not read this scripture; The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner: This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?"
Mark 12:10-11, KJV

"Saying, The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day."
Luke 9:22, KJV

"But first must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation."
Luke 17:25, KJV

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

"This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner."
Acts 4:11, KJV

"To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed [that is disapproved, rejected, repudiated] indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed."
1 Peter 2:4-8, KJV

". . . Thou hast a devil . . ."
John 7:20, KJV

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

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MY GOD IS A SHOCKER! : PART FOUR

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A Friend Of Publicans Harlots And Sinners, Conservative Jews Were Offended And Shocked By Everything Jesus Said And Did, Jewish Religionists Conspired To Murder Jesus, Watch Out For Materialism And Spiritual Lethargy, Don't Ever Be Ashamed Of Your Faith, Contend For The Faith, Translation Of KJV Bible, Puritanical England, Offensive Word "Crap", God's Vessel Or Yours?, For Better Or For Worse But Let Me Change You A Bit, Quench Not The Spirit, Let Your Light So Shine, Compromise In The Church, 501(c)(3), Physically Alive But Spiritually Dead Christians, Don't Try To Mold Me, Walk Humbly Before The Lord, Rebuke Not An Elder, God Is A Shocker, Don't Be An Unreceptive Old Bottle, Suggested Reading Resources List

As we learned in part three, the Apostle Paul stated that Jesus willingly chose to make Himself "of no reputation". He purposely hung out with the dregs of Jewish society so that He could bring them Salvation. Consider the following verses which verify this point:

"And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners? But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. 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 9:10-13, KJV

"For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil. The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children."
Matthew 11:18-19, KJV

"But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not. Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him."
Matthew 21:28-32, KJV

"And when the scribes and Pharisees saw him eat with publicans and sinners, they said unto his disciples, How is

it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners? 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 2:16-17, KJV

"And after these things he went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he said unto him, Follow me. And he left all, rose up, and followed him. And Levi made him a great feast in his own house: and there was a great company of publicans and of others that sat down with them. But their scribes and Pharisees murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners? And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."
Luke 5:27-32, KJV

"For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil. The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners! But wisdom is justified of all her children."
Luke 7:33-35, KJV

"Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him. And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them. And he spake this parable unto them, saying, 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. Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it? And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost. Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."
Luke 15:1-10, KJV

The truth of the matter is that even though He was right, everything that Jesus said and did came as a shock and an offense to the conservative, law-bound, self-righteous, legalistic, proud, arrogant Jewish religionists. In fact, Jesus' entire life was a great offense to them. Consider just a few more of the facts which surround His life and ministry. He was conceived out of wedlock by questionable means. Whereas a normal Jewish king would be born in a palace, this eternal King of Kings and Lord of Lords was born in a stable and placed in a feeding trough, which we today call a manger. When the wise men came from the East, it was not to see wicked King Herod -- who they in fact ignored -- it was to worship and bring gifts to a little

baby who would one day change the world, and rule it as well.

When Jesus finally burst on the scene around thirty years of age, more shock rippled through Jewish religious circles. If Jesus was the Messiah, He certainly was not the messiah they were expecting. So many things that Jesus said and did were contrary to their religion beliefs and traditions. He and His Disciples didn't wash their hands before eating. He performed miracles of healing on the Sabbath day which the religionists claimed He wasn't supposed to do. He communed with the lowest riffraff of society, and forgave and healed prostitutes, and even accepted dishonest tax collectors as His followers. He and His band of ragtag followers plucked ears of corn on the Sabbath day which was contrary to the law. He ran merchants and moneychangers out of the Temple. He even went so far as to accuse the "respectable" Jewish religious authorities of being hypocrites, liars, thieves, oppressors, murderers and the children of the Devil.

But of all the things which Jesus said and did, the one which undoubtedly shocked and offended His Jewish enemies the most, was His claim to be the long awaited Messiah and Son of God. That is in fact what got Jesus killed by those Jewish thugs. If you personally doubt that the Jewish religionists were indeed responsible for His death, and accept the misguided opinion of those people who try to place the blame on the Romans, then carefully consider the following verses. These verses make it very clear that Pontius Pilate and the Romans merely served as the Jews' murderous proxies. The Jews were the real plotters of the murderous conspiracy against Jesus:

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

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

"And therefore did the JEWS PERSECUTE JESUS, AND SOUGHT TO SLAY HIM, because he had done these things on the sabbath day. But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God."
John 5:16-18, KJV

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

"I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but YE SEEK TO KILL ME, because my word hath no place in you. I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father. They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now YE SEEK TO KILL ME, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God. Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. 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 8:37-44, KJV

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

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

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

If Jesus was not ashamed to die for us, may God help us and give us the strength to not ever be ashamed of Him and our faith either. Lord help us all to not be ashamed to suffer a little persecution for His Name's sake, if and when we are called to do so. We folks in the West live such comfortable, materialistic lives. Even those of us who live on limited incomes have it much better than the poor people who live in other lands. But has our physical wealth and comfort caused us to become spiritually lethargic, and perhaps robbed us of our faith? Have we sold our souls for a pound of flesh? Are we actually more afraid of the opinions of others, than we are of disappointing our Lord? Have we unknowingly bowed to political correctness and become afraid to make ripples? As I have mentioned many times before, if we are ashamed of Jesus, He will most certainly be ashamed of us one of these days as

well; for as He Himself warned us:

"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

Following are some additional Bible verses which remind us that we should never be ashamed of our faith. We must all be willing to make a bold stand for Jesus Christ, regardless of what comes our way. If we are not ashamed of Him, then He will likewise not be ashamed of us:

"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

"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

"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

"For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren,"

Hebrews 2:11, KJV

"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 11:16, KJV

To reiterate, we must be willing to do as the Apostles Peter and Jude both admonished us to do. We must truly contend for -- that is, stand up for -- our faith, and be ready to give an answer to them that ask us concerning our faith. Lord help us not to cower in fear, or to be ashamed of the shocking and unorthodox methods which are sometimes used by our great God. Consider the following two verses:

"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

"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

If you are not ashamed, offended or embarrassed by the many examples I have provided in this series, which reveal God's

unorthodox nature, then neither should you object or take offense if I occasionally choose to use such a mild word as "crap" in order to emphasize my disapproval of something. I hope that you can agree by now, that this little word does not even come close to some of the shocking things which we find written in the pages of the Bible.

Taking into consideration the conservative political and spiritual environment which probably surrounded the court of King James during the early seventeenth century, I would not be surprised to learn that some of the words were purposely toned down during the translation process, by the dedicated translators of the King James Version of the Bible. One of the reasons why they might have done this, is because they were afraid of offending the king. Let's not forget that at that time in history, England was being strongly influenced by puritanical forces. As such, it must have been quite a challenge for them to translate some of those words in a way which would be acceptable to King James.

On the other hand, if you are offended by my occasional use of the word "crap", and if you really think that I am acting in an unChristian manner, then I ask you to please seek the Lord about it. As you do so, please ponder this question: Is the problem really my attitude, or is it possibly a result of your personal upbringing within organized religion? Is it even possible that your sensitivities are born of pride and self-righteousness, and a holier-than-thou image you have of yourself?

Now, in light of what the Scriptures teach us about bearing the infirmities of the weak, out of love, and because I do not want to offend anyone, I can immediately stop using the word "crap", if that is what some people really want me to do. However, if I were to do that, please consider the fact that by doing so, I am allowing you to make this vessel into something that it is not. I am allowing you to mold me into what you think I should be, in order to meet your personal standard of holiness, instead of what the Lord has already fashioned me to be. This is the very same thing that a lot of married couples do with each other. They supposedly accept each other, for better or for worse, exactly as they are at the altar; and then they spend the rest of their lives trying to change their spouse, in order to meet their personal expectations of what that person should be like. Women are particularly notorious for doing this. We've all heard of the hen-pecked husband.

As I was pondering this issue, the Lord reminded me of a verse which was written by the Apostle Paul in his first Epistle to the Thessalonians. He wrote as follows:

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

In the original Greek, the word translated here as "quench" is "sbennumi". It means to extinguish, stifle or suppress. In other words, people are not supposed to try to smother the flame of the Spirit which God is using to work through a certain person. Rather, we should allow the Spirit to burn freely in each individual, as God sees fit, and not as we see fit. After all, as Jesus stated in the Gospels:

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

How can we let our light shine, if we allow someone to place a bushel over it? The flame will soon start to sputter and smoke, and it will eventually die. Sadly, this is precisely what has happened to quite a few modern Christian churches. The leaders have bowed to political correctness. They have softened the message. They have compromised the truth of the Scriptures because they do not want to shock or offend their congregants. They want to not only keep their pews full, but they also do not want to lose their 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status by appearing to be too radical to the System which controls them. They have been shackled by the Devil and they don't even realize it.

Sadly, when the light goes out -- as so many have already done -- everyone walks in spiritual darkness; and that is exactly what we see in a lot of churches in America today. A lot of people go through the motions of being Christians, but inwardly they are really already spiritually dead; just as we see in the following verses that are found in the Book of Revelation:

"And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee."

Revelation 3:1-3, KJV

Taking into consideration the verses I have been sharing with you, I do not believe that it is anyone's place, or right, to judge my degree of holiness. Neither is it their place to try to mold my character, so that it conforms to their personal standard, which may be influenced by their religious background, or even by their cultural background. Their idea of what is Christian behavior, and what is not, could be totally wrong.

As we have seen by the various Scriptural examples which I have shared in this series, God sometimes does things which are totally contrary to what we think or expect. Sometimes He tells His servants to do or say things which simply will not be acceptable to the common herd of men; not even to other Christians. When a well-meaning person writes to me, and begins to tell me how I should act, how I should speak, how I should write, how I should wear my hair, how I should cut my beard, etc., while they may not understand it, they are in fact making a small attempt to usurp the influence of God's Spirit working in my life, in my mind and in my heart. My friends, this simply is not good. I must be allowed to burn free.

Since I first began this ministry, I have often emphasized

the importance of walking humbly before the Lord, and before each other. After all, none of us are any better than anyone else. What makes the difference is the Spirit of Christ that works in us. While I have never claimed to be a great man of God -- even though a few well-meaning people have attempted to convince me of that very fact on occasion -- God has put me in a position where I am viewed by some folks as being an older brother or spiritual elder. It is not something which I have personally sought after. Some people just view me in that fashion; and sometimes when they go a little overboard, it actually makes me nervous. At any rate, what does the New Testament plan reveal to us concerning elders in regards to the flock? In his first Epistle to Timothy, the Apostle Paul wrote as follows:

"Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren;"
1 Timothy 5:1, KJV

In that verse, the word "rebuke" is derived from the Greek word "epiplesso". This word means to chastise with words, to chide, to upbraid, or to rebuke. So when a person writes to me and says "You shouldn't use that word. You should not say that. It isn't very Christian", that is basically what they are doing. They are chiding me. They are rebuking me. Am I perfect? Am I sinless? Of course not; but I do believe that I possess enough of the Spirit of God to know how He expects me to act before the flock He has given me. I am sensitive to the conviction of the Holy Spirit.

In conclusion then, God is radical. God is a shocker. God is totally unorthodox. He likes to say and do things which wake people up out of their spiritual lethargy and sin. Not only that, but His definition of holiness and righteousness is a lot different from the menpleasing, political correct version which is pushed by holier-than-thou organized religion. They base holiness on outward appearances and hypocritical false images, just like the self-righteous Scribes and Pharisees of old. In contrast, God bases it on obedience to and submission to His Will and Spirit. He asked His servants in the Bible to do some very unorthodox things in order to make a point; yet they did them because they had a greater fear of God, than they did a fear of the opinions of men. Sometimes I too will choose to use a strong word in order to emphasize a point. I hope that you are spiritually mature enough to take the milk of the Word, as well as the stronger meat.

Having said that, please remain pliable and flexible. Do not become a rigid, old bottle which can no longer handle the radical nature of God's Spirit. As Jesus said in the Gospel of Luke:

"And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish. But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved. No man also having drunk old wine straightway desireth new: for he saith, The old is better."
Luke 5:37-39, KJV

Which one are you; an old bottle or a new one? The choice is really up to you. With these thoughts I will bring this series to its conclusion. It is my hope that you have found

it informative and enlightening, and I pray that it has been a blessing in your life as well. And, of course, I hope that you were not offended. If you happen to have an account with either Facebook, Twitter or Google+, I would appreciate if you would take the time to click on the corresponding link that is found on this page. Thank you so much, and 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 are related to this series, and which are likewise located on the Endtime Prophecy Net web server.

Are You a Burning Ember for the Lord?
Are You Just a Baby Huey?
Beholding the Evil and the Good
Civil Disobedience and Christian Persecution
Do You Want Love and Light, or Rod and Wrath?
Have You Sold Your Soul for a Pound of Flesh?
Longhairs and Weirdy Beardies vs. the Legalists
Love, Mercy, Forgiveness and Chastisement
Speak the Pure Language of Truth
Stop Cussing: Be Not Conformed to This World!
Striving For Perfection: Are You a Sinless Saint?
The Fruits of Disobedience
The Only Credentials You Need!
The Wisdom of God vs the Philosophy of Men
This Little Light, Glory of the Lord and Our Bright Future

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