



Bible Believers' Bulletin

Vol. 41 No. 2

“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth” (John 17:17)

February 2017

THE MODERN DAY PHARISEES

By Brian Donovan

The New Testament scriptures have a lot to say and reveal about a group of religious Jews who were around at the time of the first coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. They became His killers who instigated the Roman murder of the Saviour. Many Christians today have formulated an opinion of what they believe constitutes a modern day Pharisee, and often place the label on anyone who preaches against their sins. Whenever a preacher begins to preach on the sanctification and holiness of the child of God, from somewhere in the congregation will arise cries of “Pharisee”. But as we will point out in this article with at least a dozen verses of scripture, not opinion, the marks of a Pharisee are not connected with someone who preaches about holy living. As a matter of fact, the apostle Paul says in I Thessalonians 4:7, that the Christian is not called “unto uncleanness, but unto

holiness”, and if any despise that call, they “despiseth not man, but God, who hath given unto us his Holy Spirit” (verse 8). As we will see in our study of the Pharisees, they will major on the outward appearance, rather than the inner holiness, so whenever a Christian emphasizes the outside and equates it with holiness, he is in the same boat with the Pharisees.

The Pharisees first show up in history around 300 B.C., after the Greek culture and language of Alexander’s kingdom began to infect the Jews in Israel. The original intent of this group appears to be an attempt to fight off the influence of the dirty Gentile ways, in order to preserve the Hebrew language, nation and laws of Moses. One example of this, long before the Pharisees rose up, is found in the young teenaged Hebrew captive at Babylon named Daniel in 600 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar tried to enforce on Daniel a Gentile name (Belteshazzar- Daniel 1:7), a Gentile diet (the King’s meat and drink -Daniel 1:8), and the Gentile language (the tongue of the Chaldeans - Daniel 1:4). Daniel purposed to remain separated, even while having to

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Leaving Your First Love

By Dr. Peter S. Ruckman

“Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because THOU HAST LEFT THY FIRST LOVE. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and REPENT, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou REPENT” (Rev. 2:4–5).

These are the words of the Lord Jesus Christ to the first of the seven churches of Asia Minor—**“the church of Ephesus”** (Rev. 2:1). Dispensationally, it represents the church age of the apostles; prophetically, Christ is speaking to a church up in the end times. Historically, of course, it is an actual local church which Paul founded in the city of Ephesus (see Acts 19–20), so devotionally, we can make application to any local church today.

Christ begins His message to this local church by patting its members on the back for testing the Charismatics. **“Thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them LIARS”** (Rev. 2:2).

Some people came to that church claiming to have the apostolic gifts of Mark 16:16–18 (which see). Those Ephesians didn't take their word for it. They tried those birds out and found they were *lying*: they didn't have the *apostolic signs*.

The Lord commended them for being *intolerant*. Those Ephesian believers had the right attitude toward that bunch of fake apostles: **“how thou canst not bear them which are evil”** (Rev. 2:2). He commended them for being *critical*; they judged **“righteous judgment”** (John 7:24) and got rid of the bad stuff and kept what was right.

They were good church members. They not only worked, they labored—*hard work, great effort*. They had worked hard and hadn't fainted in adversity (Rev. 2:3). They had been through some trouble for the sake of Christ and had gained *patience* (cf. Rom. 5:3); Christ acknowledges that and commends them for it (Rev. 2:2–3).

But after all of that “patting on the back,” the Lord has some words of *rebuke* for them in verse 4. They had the “sugar”, now comes the “pill.” He gave them the “gas”; now it's time for the “operation.” The problem in this local church was they had **“left”** their **“first love.”**

That is the problem when dealing with almost anything. The Christian can lose his first love for God. You can lose your first love for your family. You can lose your first love for your church. You can lose your first love for your spouse.

Jacob Chelli, a converted Hindu whose mission work the two churches I pastored supported for years and years, once told some of my ladies: “Love is not something you fall into; you have to *work* at it.” The trouble with women, men, and with men, ladies, is that they are *people*. After the honeymoon is over and the romance cools down, you have to deal with *life*. The glamor begins to fade, and you are introduced to the *real person*, with all the faults and failings. There are going to be

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disagreements; there are going to be *arguments*.

In the passage before us, there are three salient things in reviving your first love between you and your Saviour. The first is “**Remember.**” You need to remember that you are *living in the end times*. It is a *crazy* age. You are living in a *mentally sick* generation: their minds have stopped working.

Here is the United States trying to set up “democracies” in Moslem countries by making the constitution the *Koran*. *You don't get democracies out of the Koran*. The *Koran* doesn't teach a democracy; it teaches an international church-state under the control of a *religious* ruler who claims to be the successor of a *military dictator*—Mohammed. That is why the Taliban has resurged in Afghanistan, why the Muslim Brotherhood has taken over Libya, and why ISIS has taken half of Iraq and Syria. But this country has lost its mind to the point where it *refuses* to take a book seriously that commands its followers to *kill, enslave, and subjugate* anyone who won't accept the religion of that book, the *Koran*.

You know what some funeral homes are doing now? They're installing *drive-through windows*. The corpses are put on display for people to drive by and view them. Somebody's mind is collapsing on him.

I have the results of a poll taken at the Wayne University campus in Detroit, Michigan. The poll takers would ask students at random times throughout the course of a day about what was on their minds. They found that 20% of the students—*male or female*—were thinking about *fornication*. That's one out of every five students on campus. I guarantee you that number is higher today than it was when that poll was taken. You parents who send your kids off to college, is that for what you are paying? Somebody's mind is twisted.

Here's a doctor named Tracy London. He practices “impact therapy” on his patients. “Impact therapy” is dropping 21-pound sandbags on people. It's supposed to cure aches and pains by sending “pressure waves” through the joints. That's like stomping somebody's foot to take his mind off his toothache. Somebody is as nutty as a pecan pie.

A billion people on this planet think God spoke to a epileptic, sex-obsessed, pederast murderer through a *600-winged* angel. Why, who that read the Bible would think an angel has wings? *No* angel in that Bible has wings; the cherubim and seraphim have wings. Another 900 million think you should address a sinner by the title of God the Father (John 17:11); they think a Jewish woman has the attribute of God (omniscience) and is able to hear the prayers of all 900 million of them at once. What's the problem? Someone is sick in the head.

There are probably 900,000 educated people on this earth who think evolution is a science. They think life came from something *dead*. That's a theory called “spontaneous generation,” and it was disproven by Louis Pasteur back in 1859. But evolutionists go right on teaching that life came from *dead rock* (the earth being slung out of the sun and cooling, etc.). That's the mental

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processes of a *mad man*; they're out of their minds.

Something else you ought to remember—you ought to remember *when you were saved*. You know why you got saved? Because you realized you were a sinner who deserved hell, and you knew that the Son of God loved you enough to die in your place, and you accepted that love gift free of charge. You loved your Saviour enough to believe what He said and say yes to His offer of salvation.

There was a time when you loved the Lord so much you would have crawled across broken glass on your hands and knees to thank Him for dying for your sins. Well, how are things now with you in that regard? It has been said that if you love anybody more than you love Jesus Christ and if you love any book more than the Bible, you're backslidden. You've "**left**" your "**first love**."

I can remember a time in my life where I was going through, what I thought then, were some pretty rough circumstances. Of course, looking back on them, there wasn't much to it, but it was a big deal at the time. I was so down in the mouth because the Lord wasn't doing anything about it, even though I had prayed, confessed every sin I could think of, and had "claimed the promises." It got so bad that I got mad with the Lord and quit reading my Bible for three months.

Then I saw an ad, in the back of a magazine, for Officers Candidate School at Ft. Benning, where I had trained years before. That ad pictured a battalion in an attack. I looked at those GIs in the picture, all with the same uniforms and the same equipment without a dime's worth of difference between them. In my mind's eye, I saw the Lord reach down from heaven and tap one of them on the shoulder and say, "You! I want you!" *I was that fellow.*

The Lord seemed to say to me, "You see there. You weren't meant to dress in a 'monkey suit,' and wear a tie, and shake old ladies' hands, and play harmonica for kids in vacation Bible school. You were meant to fight and die out there in the dirt and the mud. But I called you for something else." And that turned things around for me.

From time to time, it's good for you to go back in your memory to when you first got saved and remember what God did for you.

"He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings" (Psa. 40:2).

My "**first love**" was *that Book*. It got rid of my dirty language, my dirty music, my dirty women, my dirty cigars, and my dirty beer. It gave me a new life, both spiritually and physically. That's why when somebody attacks that Book, I am not in a very good humor. I was wallowing in the filth of this world, playing soldier, dance-band drummer, and disc jockey; and the Lord pulled me out of that mess, cleaned me up, and gave me a gold mine.

You ought to remember your *separation*. You ought to look back to a time in your Christian life where you were *glad* you were different from the old crowd and didn't want to be like them anymore. When you get op-

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position from those who don't love the Lord for doing right and witnessing, that shows you're on the right track.

Remember your *service*. Do you remember the first time you ever did something for the Lord? I remember back at Bob Jones, when I got done with my studies at night, I would pack four pockets with tracts and go on the street in downtown Greenville and stop everyone who went by and give out tracts—sometimes with both hands. I wouldn't let one get by within a block without offering a tract. Sometimes I would get a chance to talk to someone, and occasionally, I would lead somebody to Christ. I enjoyed that; it was a thrill. Does visitation still thrill you like that? Do you need to return to that **"first love."**

When I was an unsaved man back in the army of occupation over in the Philippines, I drew a picture of the Last Supper with all the disciples passed out drunk. I thought it was a big joke, but my G.I. buddies didn't laugh. They weren't any more saved than I was, but at least they had "religion." They said, "Ruckman, some things just ain't funny."

Well, a few years later, I was saved and getting ready to paint my first baptistry. I held out those brushes and asked the Lord to bless them. He said to me, "Remember that picture you drew back there in the Philippines?" Ashamed, I said, "Yes, Lord." The Lord said, "Do you see any reason I shouldn't take your hands off at the wrists right now?" I was all by myself there in that church building, but I could have sworn there was somebody behind me with a sickle swung back ready to come down. I said, "No, Lord." He said, "OK; go ahead and paint." And I've been painting and drawing for the Lord ever since, but that was the first time.

The first time I was ever invited somewhere to preach was a little church up in North Carolina. I had to drive a half a day from Greenville, South Carolina to get there. The church only had about thirty people in it. I preached Saturday night and two services Sunday. They took up an offering for me, and I counted it when I got back to my trailer. It was only \$3.30, but I was so proud of that money. Of course, since then, I have received much larger offerings, some with four digits in them. But I have never been as proud of any offering as I was of that \$3.30. *It was the first time in my life I had ever gotten paid for doing what the Lord told me to do.*

You ought to remember, and the second thing in Revelation 2:5 Christ says you ought to do is **"repent."** Repent of what?

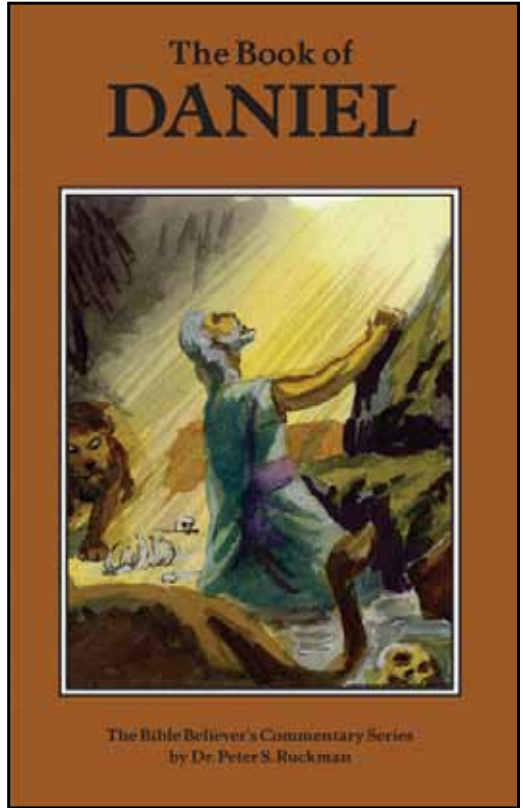
Well, you should repent of *being indifferent to the unsaved*. A Christian said to his buddy one time, "The two greatest problems in America are *ignorance* and *apathy*. What do you think about that?" His buddy replied, "I *don't know* and I *don't care*."

The lost are all around you, Christian. Do you make an effort to win them to Christ? Out in the world, if you are a professing Christian, you are considered a Catholic or a Protestant. The Baptists always balk at that because there

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were Baptists around before any Protestants showed up, but do you *protest* against all the devilment going on around you, Christian? The Bible gets thrown out of school; do you say anything? “Affirmative action” gets pushed; do you object? The city council brings in liquor; do you speak up? You need to repent of being indifferent to the lost and what they are trying to do.

You need to repent of your *indulgence*. Americans like to do what they enjoy and avoid doing what they don't enjoy. But that Bible says you are to **“endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ”** (2 Tim. 2:3). That Bible says, **“in the last days perilous times shall come”** (2 Tim. 3:1), and one of the marks of those **“perilous times”** is that men will be **“lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God”** (2 Tim. 3:4). Is that *you*, Christian?

You ought to repent of your *indecision*. You intend to read the Bible through, but you don't do it—REPENT! You husbands, do you get under conviction about praying with your wife and then never do anything about it—REPENT! You're going to join the church one of these days, but “one of these days” never seems to come—REPENT! You're going to start tithing but can never seem to put anything in the plate over a dollar—REPENT! You students need to write your mommas and daddys to let them know you're still alive, but you never seem to find the time—REPENT! Do something, man; do something. Don't just keep putting things off.

Now the last thing the Lord tells that church in our text is if they don't repent, He will **“remove”** their **“candlestick.”** That's a reference to a Christian's *testimony*. “This little light of mine, I'm going to let it shine.” If the candlestick is removed, the church doesn't give light to the community anymore, and the community becomes indifferent to that church.

I don't ever want anyone in Pensacola to be indifferent to the Bible Baptist Church. I don't mind if folks attack the work or lie about it or steal sheep from it (someone obviously knows a good deal when he sees one) or shut it down or cut it down or ridicule it. I understand all of that and expect it. But I don't want anyone to be indifferent to this place. I want it either to be a blessing or a thorn in the side of people in this town. They will hate it or love it, but they won't pretend it isn't here.

When the lights go out, the power's gone. A church will just get “deader and deader” with no real witness. That's when folks start talking about that “nice, little church” with that “nice, sweet pastor.” It is just as *humanistic* as it can be.

That is *not* a Christian's **“first love.”** When you got saved, you didn't worry about any “sweet, nice” person. You were convicted over *what God said*.

In some little town down South, there was some Holiness group (Church of God, Assembly of God, some church like that) that wanted to put up a church building, and the city zoning laws wouldn't allow it. So that preacher and ten of his members went to the city council meeting to plead their cause. When the town council turned them down, that pastor, in his slow country drawl, said, “We ain't here to cause you no trouble, but we believe we should com-

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mit everything to the Lord in prayer. Let us pray." And down on their knees that little band of Holiness folk went and began praying out loud all at once for about fifteen minutes.

When they got through, those councilmen were ready to "give them the moon." They granted them permission to put up their church building and dismissed them. But those country folk weren't done yet. When that preacher heard the good news, he said, "We sure do thank you for that, and to show you how thankful we are, we're going to praise the Lord for a while." And the whole lot of them began to run around the building and holler and praise God for another fifteen minutes.

Now say what you will about that church, but *it had influence*. Nobody may have liked them or wanted them around, but they made an impact.

Some churches are as dead as can be. Someone says, "I go to that church because they're so friendly over there." Is that why you go? Where does the Lord or the Book come in? Churches are so devoid of the power of God these days, they have to have a snack shop and a coffee shop to bring people into the building. (Back in the 40s and 50s, they were putting in *bowling alleys*, where they sold *beer* on the church property.) Some of these "mega-churches" have to put on these big shows with movie clips, and classic cars and marriage beds on the platform, just to keep the congregation's interest. The power's gone—no light!

Back when Sam Jones, the old-time Methodist evangelist, came into a town, by the time he got through, all the liquor stores closed and the movie theaters shut down. Why? People got saved and stopped going. These days, all the churches in a town couldn't shut down *one* liquor store. The Christians in America haven't been able to get the Bible back into schools, stop a million abortions a year, prevent the faggots from taking over, get rid of the X-rated movies, or put an end to the drug traffic. *The church has lost its influence.*

This country was started by a bunch of Christians from Europe, who had been influenced by the preaching and teaching of Luther, Calvin, Knox, and the Reformers; they came over here and settled. When the time came to set up a government, the leaders had to base it on the Bible to get the Christians to accept it. One of those "Founding Fathers" (John Adams) said, "Our Constitution was made only for a religious and moral people. It is wholly inadequate for the government of any other."

If that's the case, this nation is *shot*. The culture of the Pilgrims, Wesley, Whitefield, Edwards, Asbury, Cartwright, Moody, Sunday, et al., is *gone*. The church in America no longer has any influence. When the basic "freedom" is the right to fornicate at will with whomever (or whatever!), instead of the freedom to worship and serve God as the Bible says, it's over; "that's all she wrote."

Hyman Appelman was converted from a family of orthodox Russian Jews

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and became a Southern Baptist evangelist. He was bragging to someone, one time, of the Southern Baptist churches in “the great state of Texas.” That fellow asked him, “How many Baptist churches are in Texas?” “Four thousand,” replied Appelman. Smiling wryly, the other fellow said, “You got any liquor stores in Texas?” Four thousand Southern Baptist churches couldn’t get rid of the liquor stores and saloons in their state. That was back before 1983 (when Appelman died). How are things looking today?

I can take you to churches within a hundred miles of Pensacola that used to be vibrant, Spirit-filled works. I mean, great revivals, boy, with so many people getting saved the church secretary couldn’t record their names fast enough. What are they today? Showcases for upper-middle-class Christians who do nothing. The new versions (*NRSV*, *NIV*, *ESV*) have been brought in; the rock bands are playing on the platform; the preacher is preaching “social justice” (*Marxism*) from the pulpit. The light’s gone out!

Do you enjoy fellowship with Christians who never witness? Do you like to be around Christians who never offend anybody about anything? Do you hang around churches that give less than 5% of their income to foreign missionaries? Do you judge other Christians on how “nice” they are or how they “feel” about one another? The light’s out!

Christ says, “Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent . . . or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick.” God help you, Christian people, to return to your “first love.”

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live a captive's life in Babylon. Another example is found over one hundred and fifty years later when Nehemiah found the Jews assimilating themselves into the Persian culture as they violated the sabbath (Nehemiah 13:15), intermarried with God's enemies (Nehemiah 13:23), and lost their use of the Hebrew language (Nehemiah 13:24). Being the good pastor that he was, Nehemiah physically smacked them around, pulled out their hair, and made them swear they would straighten up (Nehemiah 13:25).

With the complete domination of Alexander's army over the Mediterranean world, which included Palestine, the Jews began to adopt the Greek ways, which caused the rise of the Pharisees, whose name comes from the Hebrew word which means "to separate". They desired to keep the law of Moses and they mainly rose up from the scribes whose job it was to preserve the Hebrew scriptures. They were called "lawyers" (Matthew 22:35), in the sense that they were supposed to know the law of Moses inside and out, as copiers and preservers of that law. Yet in their apostasy, they eventually became religious leaders who were completely ignorant of the very scripture of which they were supposed to be the keepers. By the time of the first coming of Jesus Christ some three hundred years after they began, His preaching and teaching of doctrine got the attention of the commoners, as they saw that "he

taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes" (Matthew 7:29). The Pharisees' hatred of Christ was founded on an "envy" of His authority (Matthew 27:18). "Authority" was the issue they had with Him all along (Matthew 21:23), and they constantly questioned it. After rejecting His authority over them as their Messiah, as well as His command of the scriptures, the Pharisees demanded His death by turning Him over to the Romans (Matthew 27:12-13) to be crucified. When Pilate tried to release Him, the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude (Matthew 27:20) that they should destroy Him. With that, they sealed their future to no longer be the religious leaders of the Jewish nation as the Lord brought in the Roman armies within forty years (Titus in 70 A.D.) to destroy their temple and scatter them as a nation. Since that time the Pharisees have ceased to exist as religious leaders of the Jews. As prophesied in Hosea 3:4, the children of Israel have had to "abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice". Since that time the rabbis have compiled a group of writings called the Mishnah, which orthodox Jews study today, while ignoring the scriptures that they were given to preserve. Rabbi Judah (200 A.D.), Maimonides (1100A.D.), and others have put together a ridiculous amount of meaningless commentaries and teachings that "reject the commandments of God,

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that ye may keep your own tradition" (Mark 7:9). This enables the modern day Pharisee to put the authority on themselves, rather than the word of God.

The Pharisees may be gone as a group, but their spirit is alive today in the church of God. Rather than look for this spirit in the lives of others, we would do well to recognize this spirit in our own lives as we look at the scriptural marks of a Pharisee. These eleven marks can be used as warnings, lest we find them taking over in our own walk with the Lord.

The first mark of a Pharisee is that he does not discern the work of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 9: 32-34). When the Lord Jesus cast the devil out of a man, the Pharisee claimed that it was done through the prince of the devils. Here was a man who was completely out of touch with the work of the Lord through His Holy Spirit. Christian, how many times have you not recognized the work of the Holy Spirit in your life as He did something for your good that you despised? Often, it is not

until he looks back over a circumstance, before the child of God finally discerns that it was the hand of God dealing a situation into his life for his good. It requires that we have our senses exercised in the scriptures to discern the work of the Holy Spirit (Hebrews 5:14).

The second mark of a Pharisee is that he emphasizes the letter of the law over the spirit of it. When Jesus and his disciples walked through a field and were hungry, they plucked some ears of corn to eat and when the Pharisees saw it, they accused them of breaking the sabbath laws (Mark 2:23-24). Jesus rebuked them with the spirit of the sabbath law, which was made "for" man as a help, not something to hurt him (Mark 2:27). The sabbath law was that the Jews were not to work by putting their sickle to the corn and harvest the crops, it was not intended to prevent a hungry man from taking nourishment, as the disciples were obviously doing. The spirit of all the new testament laws for the Christian life are not hurtful, but to produce a fruitful,

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good life (Galatians 5:22-23). A Pharisee will try to use them to hurt and control, rather than to help others. The commandments given to us in the New Testament are not grievous (I John 5:3), but are given for our benefit.

The third mark of a Pharisee is to try to prevent Jesus Christ from receiving His due glory. In Matthew 12:23, the crowds were amazed and glorified Christ as the son of David and as soon as that began to happen, the Pharisees rose up to hinder it. Saved people should check their reactions to when the Lord begins to be glorified in a service, or in any of the daily events in their lives. It is not unusual to see a Christian cause a distraction, sometimes unconsciously, that will hinder and even divert that glory and praise away from the Lord. A Pharisee resents the Lord being given credit and attempts to take it to himself. Whenever that spirit rises up in the life of the saved sinner, he should try to discern it and put it down.

The fourth mark is to seek signs while ignoring the direct commands of scripture. In Matthew 12:38-40, the Pharisees sought a sign from Jesus and He told them that they already had the only sign they needed in the scriptures, which was the sign of the prophet Jonah. The death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ was the proof of His deity. The fact that the Pharisees and scribes did not turn to receive Him when they were given the

chances in the early period of the book of Acts, shows how little they cared for the truth. As a Christian, we should be careful about putting out fleeces and qualifying our obedience with the word "if", especially when the Lord has already given direction through the scriptures.

A fifth mark of a Pharisee is to be offended at personal, pointed, Bible preaching. The Lord Jesus had no hesitation in naming their sins to their faces (Matthew 15:7-11), and when He did, the Pharisees were offended (verse 12). That is one of the most common responses to Bible preaching in these last days. Many a local church has been split because someone was offended at their sins being named from the pulpit. A church is in bad shape when their reason for existing is because they would not stand for hard, negative truth being preached at them. A hireling can easily be found who will be careful never to offend the flock that he has been hired to coddle. Jesus Christ prepared His disciples with some rough truths and then told them that "These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended" (John 16:1). The Christian should be on guard against a bad reaction to the Bible being preached, even thanking the Lord when He speaks personally to us regarding our own sins. The man after God's heart once wrote that "great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them" (Psalm 119:165).

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The next mark of the Pharisee is to ask questions without any desire for the truth. In Matthew 19:3, the Pharisees asked Christ about the lawfulness of putting away a wife for any cause. When the Lord's answer showed that marriage was originally set up for life, not to be sundered by anyone, they moved on to question why the Mosaic law said it was okay. They had no desire to change either their minds or their lives.

The seventh mark of a Pharisee is to join hands with those they do not agree with, as long as those people have a mutual dislike for the same person. In another attempt to try to trap Jesus in His words, the Pharisees came to Him with the Herodians with a question about whether they should pay taxes (Matthew 22:15-17). The Herodians were those who taught that the Jews should adapt to the Roman ways and customs, while the Pharisees were the orthodox who believed in separation from the Gentile ways. The two groups were opposed to each other's beliefs, yet in their mutual hatred for Jesus Christ, they agreed to come together. They figured that no matter which way Jesus answered, He would be trapped. If He told them not to pay the taxes, the Herodians would accuse Him of disobeying the civil authorities. If He said that they should pay them, the Jews would have accused Him of not being in favor of the nation of Israel. They had no idea who they were

dealing with, and as usual, the Lord shut their mouths in His wisdom. This mark of the Pharisee is regularly seen in Christians today, as many times, they will split a local church and join up those they previously would not give the time of day to, as long as there is a mutual hatred for the previous pastor and flock. Splitting up a local church and starting another down the road is the foundation for many a Baptist church today. The point of fellowship among these kind of Pharisee Christians, is the mutual dislike for the same person. This spirit is so strong that it even allows for those who would never forgive each other previously, to forgive and forget in a heart beat, once there is an acknowledgement of agreeing to despise the same folks.

Mark number eight of the Pharisee is to preach one thing and do another (Matthew 23:1-4). Jesus did not say that they were not preaching the truth, for He told His hearers to observe and do whatsoever they bid, but the Pharisee himself did not do the things he was preaching. This mark can be combined with the mark that the Pharisees only did things publically to be seen of men (Matthew 23:5). A Pharisee will fake a spiritual walk with the Lord in public, while devouring widow's houses (Matthew 23:14). The Roman Catholic corrupt versions from Alexandria completely take out this whole verse, since this is exactly how the Roman Baalite priests have

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THE MODERN DAY PHARISEES

Continued from 13
worked for centuries. The ASV, RSV, NIV, etc., follow Rome and omit Matthew 23:14, based on the flimsy evidence of seven corrupt manuscripts, besides the Satanic Vaticanus manuscript.

Another mark of the Pharisee is to go all out to make a proselyte just like himself in order to get a following (Matthew 23:15). The scriptures are not the basis for the follower to obey, but the private convictions of the Pharisee and his traditions. Many a Christian has bowed to the pastoral authority types in our age, without a clue of what the Bible says about their professed beliefs, since they only go by "what the pastor said". The victory for the Pharisee is to get someone to blindly follow whatever he says, ignoring the scriptures along the way.

The next mark of the Pharisee is to major on the minor things, while making the major things minor (Matthew 23:23). In the words of Jesus Christ they, "strain at a gnat and swallow a camel" (Matthew 23:24). A Pharisee will find it critical that someone is dressed just right, while ignoring the deceitful heart. The Christian should check himself against the pride of no longer doing certain things and appearing separated from the world, while never speaking up to a lost sinner on their way to hell. The Pharisee check list will center on the minor things of dress codes and attendance and numbers. This leads to our last mark of the Pharisee, which

is that he will put an emphasis on the outside appearance without concern for the inner man (Mark 7:1-9). The "washing of pots and cups" and "except they wash, they eat not", are much more important to the Pharisee than the washing of the heart. Obedience to the Bible is not necessary to live the life of a Pharisee since they have placed their traditions above the word of God (Mark 7:9). The Roman Catholic popes are much more careful in public than they used to be in order to appear holy on the outside. Pope Nicholas (1450 A.D.) said that "it is in my power to change times and seasons to make laws and destroy them...yes, even the commandments of Christ". That is the talk of an anti Christian Pharisee. Over the years, these papal Pharisees have thrown out the Bible for their own tradition, while putting robes on the outside to cover their wickedness in public. Pope Franny the Pharisee has mocked Genesis 1:1, saying that the big bang pipe dream of evolution makes sense. A few years ago at the Vatican, Franny claimed that "when we read about creation in Genesis, we run the risk of imagining God was a magician with a magic wand able to do everything". This comes from an idolater who believes he can wave his magic hand and turn a cookie into the literal fleshly body of Jesus Christ to be cannibalized, and with another magic wave, turn alcoholic wine into the literal blood of Jesus Christ. As he walks around in public

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THE MODERN DAY PHARISEES

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in "long robes" (Luke 20:46), the media treats him as if he is a holy man. The Lord wants to receive glory for His great work of creation and the more you observe it, the more amazed you become. The man of sin in Rome tries to steal the credit that is due the Creator, while claiming to be the "Vicar of Christ" on earth.

The media has the same marks of the Pharisee such as asking questions with no desire for the truth (see any of the Roman Catholic Fox News interviews), majoring on minors (a black man being shot by police while fifty more per day are being murdered by their own brothers, Clinton's e-mails get press while her crimes are ignored), giving voice to a people they despise, but give them a good story (black lives matter), faked concern for our welfare (see any woman interviewer on any of the major networks as she fakes a pained look of concern on her face), as well as being completely ignorant of the work of the Holy Spirit of God (see Katrina, Twin Towers, Hurricane Andrew, and the coming collapse of a country that has turned from Him).

All the marks of a Pharisee can be found in the heart of every saved sinner. The child of God should make himself aware of these marks and do all he can to fight them off as soon as they rise up. The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked... (Jeremiah 17:9). There resides

down deep your heart, a desire to steal glory from Jesus Christ for self, live by sight and seek signs, to get offended and mad at the Lord when Bible preaching hits home, being a fake in public, along with all the other marks. Since everything we have is "of him, and through him, and to him" (Romans 11:36), we need to be on guard against these marks and refuse to succumb to them.

Bro. Donovan's Meeting Schedule

February 10-12

Open Door Baptist Church
7688 Market Ave. N.
Canton, OH 44721
Pastor Bob Butterfield
(330) 494-9774

March 10-12

Red Lion Bible Church
105 Springvale Rd.
Red Lion, PA 17356
Pastor Steve Schmuck
(717) 244-3905

April 7-9

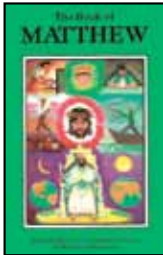
Bible Baptist Church
619 Albemarle Road
Asheboro, NC 27203
Pastor Tom Cochran
(336) 625-6095

May 5-7

Lakeside Baptist Church
3055 Bacom Point Road
Pahokee, FL 33476
Pastor Ted Hines
(561) 924-7592

N.T. COMMENTARIES

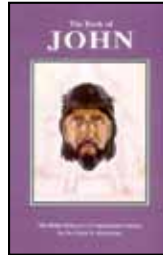
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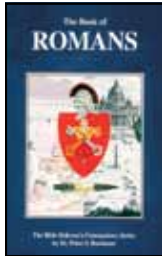
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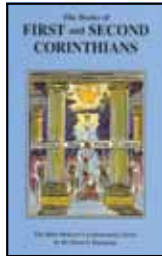
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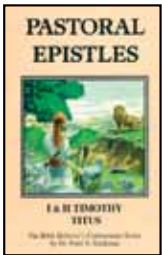
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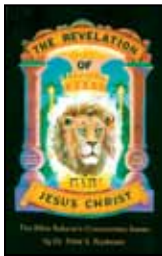
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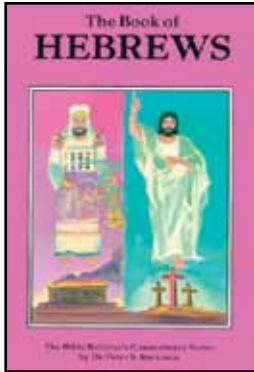
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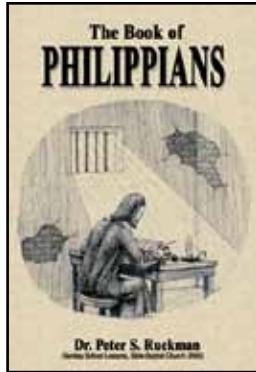
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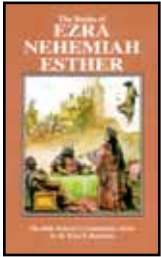
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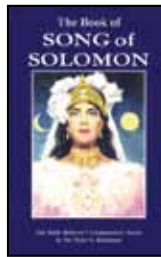
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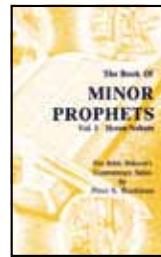
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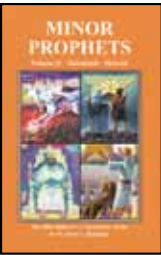
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What God Thinks of “Man”

Dr. Peter S. Ruckman

(Part One of Two)

The Lord is very vocal and verbose in the Bible in telling you exactly what He thinks of mankind. This explains why the Bible is not allowed to be taught in public schools or displayed in public places. There are two passages in the Bible that prove everything about which modern educational institutions and the news media think and talk regarding mankind in general (i.e., all nations and races) is 100% in error. They are Luke 16:15 and Isaiah 55:8–9.

“And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God” (Luke 16:15).

“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 than your thoughts” (Isa. 55:8–9).

When God gives you His opinion of mankind, He is very plain and clear. No one needs an interpreter in order to “get it.” It is so clear that nobody could possibly miss it.

There’s nothing “archaic” about the *King James Version* when it comes to God’s words about mankind. In the first place, God tells you that the United States, the UN, the EU, NATO, the Muslim Brotherhood, and the Arab League are not just “**as nothing**”; they are “**LESS than nothing**” (Isa. 40:17). They are not just a blank; they are a *minus*. They are a cipher with the rim knocked out. How do you think that “goes over” with *Time*, *Life*, *Newsweek*, *U.S. News and World Report*, ABC, NBC, CBS, CNN, FOX, National Public Radio, and the ten o’clock newscast?

Now in the Bible, the Lord speaks clearly, definitely, and at length about what He thinks of “man.” He says several things about mankind, in general, which all have had to be rejected by all economic, social, educational, political, military, and religious leaders from 5000 B.C. to A.D. 2015.

The first thing God says about you, all your friends, all your family, and all your relatives all the way back to Adam is that they are all *spiritually dead*. In your natural state, you are “**dead in trespasses and sins**” (Eph. 2:1). Jesus said, “**let the dead bury the dead**” (Matt. 8:22).

Don’t you find that highly complimentary? In God’s sight, men are *zombies*. They walk around, eat, sleep, marry, reproduce, make a living; but they’re *dead*. There it is. What are you going to do with it? Jesus Christ told you what to do with that information.

“Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.” (John 3:3, 6–7).

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What God Thinks of "Man"

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Jesus told that Jewish Rabbi, "You're first birth is no good. You were born wrong, buddy. You need to be *born again*."

"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Pet. 1:23).

Number two: God told you *men love sin*.

"And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John 3:19).

Love of self is a sin (2 Tim. 3:2), because love of self is love of the sinful, Adamic *flesh*. (Spell *flesh* backwards and take off the "h," and you have *self*.) The greatest Christian who ever lived said you aren't worth fifteen cents.

"For I know that in me (that is in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. 7:18).

"For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh" (Phil. 3:3).

God's estimate of mankind and sin is 180 degrees opposite anything you are going to get from the "educated class" of any country on six continents.

All men are commanded to love God *first* (Matt. 22:37–38). They are commanded to love God (not self) with all their heart, soul, strength, and mind (Luke 10:27). *They don't* – not in either Testament. Before we could love God, He had to love us (1 John 4:10), and the way He loved us was *through His Son*.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. 5:8).

That being the case, do you love God's Son? The Lord said, **"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him"** (Matt. 17:5). Have you heard Him? That is, do you listen and take heed to the words He said in His Book? The Son said, **"If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him"** (John 14:23); He said, **"If ye love me, keep my commandments"** (John 14:15). Have you done that? Have you obeyed His words? Do you even know what He said so you can obey them?

He said, **"For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God"** (John 3:17–18).

The Holy Spirit didn't come to convict of sin because of murder, adultery, theft, war, "oppressed minorities," or "man's inhumanity to man." He came

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What God Thinks of "Man"

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to convict of sin because *men don't believe on God's Son* (John 16:8–9). If men loved God, they would love God's Son but men don't love God.

All this talk about **"God is love"** (1 John 4:8). The average American (or European or Australian or Moslem or Catholic or Jew) doesn't know about what he talking when he repeats that mantra. God's love is measured by *His Son*. A man says, "Well, God loves me." *That's at Calvary*. In the person of His Son, God said to unsaved men, "I'll show you my love and prove it to you." That's why Jesus Christ, *God in the flesh* (1 Tim. 3:16), came down to earth and *died for your sins*. The love of God is *in* Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:39), and when you accept Him as your personal Saviour, the Holy Spirit puts you *in Him* (1 Cor. 12:13). Outside of Him, you are *outside the love of God*.

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36).

The standard cliché given at this point is: "Well, God loves the sinner but hates the sin." Really? From where do you get that? Chapter and verse? How do you know He loves sinners? You say, "By the way He treats me."

Listen, delayed judgment does not mean God loves you. It means God is *merciful* to you and *longsuffering* to you. It means God is giving you a chance (and usually *another* chance) to accept the love of God offered you through His Son.

You say, "Well, a God of love surely wouldn't hate anybody." Are you sure about that? How about these verses:

"As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated" (Rom. 9:13). God is so emphatic about that, that He said it *twice* (see Mal. 1:2–3).

"These six things doth the LORD hate . . . A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren" (Prov. 6:16–19). The two **"things"** in that last verse turn out to be the *sinner himself*, not his sins.

"All their wickedness is in Gial: for there I HATED THEM [the people, not just their wickedness]; for the wickedness of their doings I will drive them out of mine house, I WILL LOVE THEM NO MORE" (Hos. 9:15). Is that clear? Not only does God *hate* them; *He stops loving them*.

Unsaved men take an anti-biblical approach when it comes to verses like that. They throw out verses like those because it goes contrary to them justifying their sins. The queers will parade their filthy, perverted lifestyle and proclaim, "God loves gays too." Well, if that's the case, He must love fornicators, murderers, and atheists too because they are in the same list with the sex perverts (Rom. 1:26–31; look up the passage and READ IT!). The Bible says they *deserve death*, they *know* they deserve death, and they continue to *take pleasure* in those who continue to commit those sins (Rom. 1:32).

What does **"God is love"** have to do with that, I ask you? Not one

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What God Thinks of "Man"

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cotton-picking thing on the face of this earth. If you don't believe me, just continue on in your sin, rejecting God's Son, and see where God puts the sinners He "loves" (Rev. 21:8 — READ IT!).

God's estimation of you is that you don't love God on your own, you love your sin, and the majority of men reject the truth God revealed to them (John 3:19; Matt. 7:13). They reject it *deliberately, on purpose* (John 3:20; 2 Thess. 2:10–12). God's characterization of "man" doesn't line up with anything you have heard in any government school from kindergarten to "grad school."

We will continue next month with what God thinks of man.

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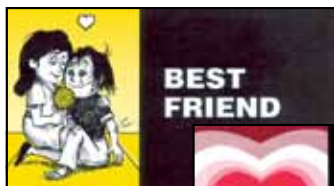
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Guarding the Apple

By Robert Militello

“He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as THE APPLE OF HIS EYE” (Deut. 32:10).

That apple is Israel, and we that are saved are His bride. While the Holy Spirit continues to bring souls to Jesus in the Church Age, God the Father continues to direct the nations in a geopolitical chess game involving Israel's preservation. Our God is the God of history, and all that is yet future, regarding Israel, is written in our King James Bible.

Many explanations have been put forth as to why Donald Trump defeated Hillary Clinton last November. As far as I'm concerned, they all miss the mark. The most stunning political upset in the nation's history was clearly the work of the Lord. What caused our God to intervene in such a dramatic way and overturn the expected crowning of our first female Commander-in-Chief? The answer lies with Israel and what the United States was preparing to do regarding Israel and the United Nations had the Democrats kept the White House.

President Obama was preparing to put Israel in a corner by allowing a UN Security Council resolution calling for the recognition of the state of Palestine to pass without being vetoed by the United States. This would have been a dramatic departure of U.S. policy toward Israel, and the government of Benjamin Netanyahu was aware of it. The idea was to threaten Israel with an internationally recognized state of Palestine if Israel did not agree to a UN peace conference having power to force a settlement in the region.

“It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter” (Prov. 25:2).

Of all the books in our Bible, the book of Esther best presents our God working behind closed doors to keep **“the apple of his eye”** from being devoured by the devil. All the nefarious plans of men and the diabolical machinations of Jew haters are known to our God.

“Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep” (Psa. 121:4).

For months leading up to the election, there were articles in the Jewish press, the *Jerusalem Post*, and the *Times* of Israel hinting at a U.S. move to use the UN to intimidate the Netanyahu government. President Obama and the Israeli Prime Minister are not what you would call “good friends.” Former President Obama was infuriated by Netanyahu's address to a joint session of Congress in March of 2015. The Israeli Prime Minister called on the U.S. Senate to reject the Iran deal crafted by Obama, Secretary of State Kerry, and the terrorist-supporting government in Tehran. Remember, Obama was a congregant at the Chicago church of Rev. Jeremiah Wright, where, for twenty years, Wright preached a hatred for Israel that rivaled that of the Nation of Islam leader, Louis Farrakhan.

On Wednesday, November 9, 2016, the disbelief of the media pundits, the Hollywood phonies, the political analysts, the liberal college professors and the gullible students they teach was beautiful to behold. Washington, D.C. was in

Guarding the Apple

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shock. Something extraordinary had taken place. Even Donald Trump was surprised. This was not supposed to happen, according to all the political insiders. Hillary was featured on the cover of *Newsweek* magazine on November 9th with the headline, "Madam President."

"Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth" (Prov. 27:1).

Someone should remind "Madam President" of what the great Yankee catcher, Yogi Berra, said about celebrating prematurely: "It ain't over till it's over!" No doubt the Lord brought millions of Clinton voters to tears. Things can turn quickly, as Belshazzar, king of Babylon, found out when a hand out of nowhere wrote on the wall and ended his party abruptly. The Titanic, setting a record for crossing the Atlantic, was a "sure thing." Only what the Lord says is sure is really sure, and that's the Book I read every day.

"Put them in fear, O LORD: that the nations may know themselves to be but men. Selah." (Psa. 9:20).

Prime Minister Netanyahu took a huge gamble in accepting an invitation to address Congress over the Iran deal worked out by President Obama. John Boehner, the Republican Speaker of the House, had extended that invitation as part of a Republican strategy to embarrass the President and kill the deal. Many in Netanyahu's government asked the Prime Minister to reject the invitation, fearing the wrath of the Obama administration. Sadly for Israel, the deal was signed, and Iran received billions in payments and a cessation of the sanctions imposed upon the nation by the UN. Israel's mortal enemy had been immeasurably strengthened by the agreement which Donald Trump called the worst deal in U.S. history. Remember, Iran has repeatedly pledged to destroy Israel. The spirit of Haman is alive and well, and our government has fed that spirit with billions. Do you think our God is oblivious to all this? The fact that the book of Esther comes just before the book of Job (a type of the Jews going through the Great Tribulation) is highly instructive. It tells me that Persia, now Iran, will be a mortal threat to the Jews just before the Antichrist begins his reign of terror. Iran is developing nuclear weapons, although the deal calls for that development to cease for ten years. The Jew-hating Moslem clerics that run Iran cannot be trusted. But we decided to trust them like British Prime Minister Chamberlain trusted Hitler at Munich in 1938.

"The words of the wicked are to lie in wait for blood" (Prov. 12:6). Supposedly, there is a war on terror going on, but in February of last year, even Secretary of State Kerry admitted that lifting the sanctions on Iran will help fund terror. Now when Prime Minister Netanyahu addressed Congress in March 2015, the U.S. election campaign had already begun. Hillary Clinton had announced her candidacy, and her party went to work raising millions and conniving with the media to put her in the White House. To understand why the Obama team was not going to squeeze Israel at the UN until after the election, one must know the connection between wealthy Jewish donors and the Democratic party. In

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the end, it all boils down to money. Running for President of the U.S. is a very expensive proposition. In the past, wealthy Jews (many in Hollywood) have made their deep pockets available to Democratic candidates espousing liberal causes. Jews have voted Democratic overwhelmingly since Franklin Roosevelt. Actually, Donald Trump did better than most Republicans with Jewish voters, especially in south Florida. Orthodox Jews in Brooklyn voted strongly in favor of Trump according to the figures I checked. They liked his pro-life position and his pledge to move the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. God help President Trump to keep his word, unlike President Bush who promised to do so but reneged. I wonder if President Bush thought about the promise on which he went back when Moslem crazies hit the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Bush may be a born-again Christian as he claims, but he proved to be a biblical jackass and paid for it.

“The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death” (Prov. 21:6).

So to keep Jewish money flowing into the Democratic Party's coffers, President Obama, Secretary of State Kerry, and former Secretary of State Clinton dared not publicly discuss the diplomatic strategy the United States would employ at the UN to force Israel to negotiate a “peace deal” with the Palestinians. Netanyahu's government became more and more fearful as 2015 ended. Little did anyone in Israel know that some loudmouthed, politically incorrect real estate tycoon from Manhattan was about to set the political world on fire. The primaries were beginning in early 2016, and seventeen Republican candidates would make their pitch as to why they should be given the opportunity to face off against Hillary. She was already the presumed Democratic nominee, and the media was prepared to crush any Democrat who opposed her, including Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders. Mainstream media wanted the American voters to make history once again by electing the first female president as they had elected the first black president eight years earlier. The elites always know what is best for the uninformed, entertainment-loving voting public. These little gods who decide what is news and how best to “spin” it were committed to destroying any Republican in a race with Hillary. They were obviously not prepared for the likes of Mr. Trump.

“He that hateth dissembleth with his lips, and layeth up deceit within him” (Prov. 26:24).

Make no mistake, President Obama was confident that Hillary Clinton would succeed him and preserve his legacy. No one in the field of seventeen Republican candidates seemed really formidable. Ex-Florida governor, Jeb Bush, had name recognition and the support of the party faithful, but he was soon beaten badly by Trump in the New Hampshire primary in February and subsequently began to fade. The televised Republican debates were enormously popular with millions tuning in to see Donald Trump belittle and insult his opponents and make a mockery of how campaigns are usually conducted. The Republican Party establishment was bewildered, and many wondered if Mr. Trump would really

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be nominated by the party. Meanwhile, in Israel, the government was becoming ever more fearful as polls began indicating that Hillary would perhaps be impossible to stop. What men in power never seem to grasp is that all the planning and manipulation that takes place in the minds of men does not surprise the Lord and that the Lord alone is quite able to overthrow men's designs at any given moment.

Well, Mr. Trump went on to win most all of the primaries and vanquish one opponent after another. Christians had been split initially, some favoring Senator Ted Cruz of Texas and some leaning to Trump. As the weeks wore on, a stop-Trump movement in the Republican Party took root. Senator Cruz was to be the one to put Trump away. Yet, the billionaire businessman found allies among Christians who really believed that only an outsider stood a chance of overthrowing the Washington establishment. A man who is very wealthy and is beholden to no one is a man that makes career politicians fearful. So Trump crushed Senator Cruz in Indiana (Governor Mike Pence helped, and so did coach Bobby Knight), and the Republican who would take on Hillary had now clearly emerged. Netanyahu took notice, and his aides hurriedly began to comb through every statement Trump ever made about Israel and how he networked with Jews in New York and Florida.

“For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and he pondereth all his goings” (Prov. 5:21).

Now, Netanyahu had known Donald Trump for quite some time and was aware that Mr. Trump was a friend of Israel. Still, the question was, could Trump really get elected. Israel's prime minister could not afford to be seen favoring any candidate. Many in Israel felt he had blundered badly by going to Washington, D.C. to address Congress. There isn't a soul in Israel that minimizes the importance of U.S.-Israel relations. Anything that may harm that relationship keeps Israelis up at night. Actually in 2012, Netanyahu made it clear that he favored Romney over Obama, and that hurt him because he wasn't too discreet about it. President Obama never forgot that. So once you understand the reasons for Obama wanting to sandbag Israel at the UN, you can appreciate how badly the government of Israel wanted Trump to defeat Mrs. Clinton. There was something more than what the average voter thought was really going on to move the Lord to shock and amaze the political establishment and give the White House to a total outsider. Remember how the Lord moved Esther into a position of favor with the Persian king Ahasuerus when many maidens were gathered together in Shushan the palace. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob knows just when to intervene and surprise the Hamans of this world.

My interest in politics began in the summer of 1960 when I watched, with my dad, the Democratic Convention in Los Angeles on black and white TV. I was just fourteen, and I found myself drawn to the way we select someone to lead our nation. The process fascinated me, and when I reached eighteen, I was thrilled to cast my first vote for President of the United States. LBJ appeared to me to be a skillful liar, and he said Senator Barry Goldwater of Arizona was dangerous and wasn't fit to be president. So I voted for Senator Goldwater.

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Years later, I ran into a Christian who told me to beware of Dr. Ruckman of Pensacola. This Christian said that Peter S. Ruckman shouldn't be in the ministry. Whenever I get warned this way, my antenna goes up. Having a suspicious nature served me well all through my career in New York City government. Our society is loaded with wolves who dress up every morning as lambs and go out to practice their devilment. This is especially so among politicians. It's in their DNA. The ministry also is a favorite grazing pasture for pious hypocrites, deceivers, and con artists. **"Good words and fair speeches"** are their stock and trade (Rom. 16:18). Be suspicious, brothers and sisters; it's healthy for your soul. Sinful human nature is not washed away by the new birth. Your sins are, thank God, but not the proclivity we all have for dissembling and hypocrisy when it suits us, amen?

"For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the LORD our God is in all things that we call upon him for?" (Deut. 4:7).

The answer to that question is not the United States, with or without Donald Trump as president. Christians need to pray that this administration will work closely with Israel and let Iran know that we have Israel's back. This will do more to lift America economically than any tax or stimulus plan coming out of Congress. Millions of believers do not do well; they struggle to meet their bills. Our middle class has taken a severe beating these past thirty years. Christians who want to give more to missionaries, can't. The gospel suffers because of this. Without heaven's blessing, President Trump will not be able to lift the working people of this nation out of the hole in which they have been for years. This administration now governing in Washington, thanks to the goodness of the Lord, should let the hypocritical, Israel-bashing UN know that our support for the Jews is a cornerstone of American foreign policy.

Jared Kushner, who is Donald Trump's son-in-law, is one very smart orthodox Jew. He has his father-in-law's ear. Who put him in the Trump family and **"for such a time as this"** (Esth. 4:14)? Who put Esther in the palace at Shushan? Who made America powerful so that we could protect tiny Israel when it was born as a sovereign state on May 14, 1948? We serve a God who holds the world in His hand and has every hair on your head numbered. He alone knows what sins keep many of His blood-bought sons and daughters from being zealous for their Lord. It's such a shameful thing that so many believers, like Demas, love **"this present world"** (2 Tim. 4:10) more than the world to which they will soon be taken.

"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:1-4).

For as long as we remain on this earth, we should thank God for the privilege of living here. We should pray for honest government. We should consider how blessed

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we have been because past presidents opened the door to welcome Jews to our shores. I have lived in New York City for most of my life, and I have seen the Lord make good on His promise to bless those who bless the seed of Jacob. Now we have a president from New York City (we are only a month apart in age) that loves Israel and Jews. Thank God! There were many in my own extended family who thought Trump reached too high. Because I had for many years followed Trump and his battles with New York City city hall, for whom I worked, I told all who would listen, "Do not underestimate this man." You cannot tell that man that what he wants to do cannot be done. President Trump will do things his way.

What I am now sure of, that I was not sure of some months ago, is that many

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THE CREED OF THE ALEXANDRIAN CULT

1. There is **no final authority** but God.
2. Since God is a Spirit, there is **no final authority** that can be seen, heard, read, felt, or handled.
3. Since all books are material, there is **no book on this earth that is the final and absolute authority** on what is right and what is wrong, what constitutes truth and what constitutes error.
4. There **WAS** a series of writings one time which, **IF** they had all been put into a **BOOK** as soon as they were written the first time, **WOULD HAVE** constituted an infallible and final authority by which to judge truth and error.
5. However, this series of writings was lost, and the God who inspired them was **unable to preserve their content** through Bible-believing Christians at Antioch (Syria), where the first Bible teachers were (Acts 13:1), and where the first missionary trip originated (Acts 13:1-52), and where the word "*Christian*" originated (Acts 11:26).
6. So God chose to **ALMOST** preserve them through Gnostics and philosophers from Alexandria, Egypt, even though God called His Son **OUT** of Egypt (Matthew 2), Jacob **OUT** of Egypt (Genesis 49), Israel **OUT** of Egypt (Exodus 15), and Joseph's bones **OUT** of Egypt (Exodus 13).
7. So there are two streams of Bibles. The most accurate—though, of course, there is **no final, absolute authority** for determining truth and error; it is a matter of "preference"—are the Egyptian translations from Alexandria, Egypt, which are "almost the originals," although not quite.
8. The most **inaccurate translations** were those that brought about the German Reformation (Luther, Zwingli, Boehler, Zinzendorf, Spener, et al.) and the worldwide missionary movement of the English-speaking people: the Bible that Sunday, Torrey, Moody, Finney, Spurgeon, Whitefield, Wesley, and Chapman used.
9. But we can "tolerate" these if those who believe in them will "tolerate" US. After all, since there is **NO ABSOLUTE AND FINAL AUTHORITY** that anyone can read, teach, preach, or handle, the whole thing is a matter of "PREFERENCE." You may prefer what you prefer, and we will prefer what we prefer. Let us live in peace, and if we cannot agree on anything or everything, let us all agree on one thing: **THERE IS NO FINAL, ABSOLUTE, WRITTEN AUTHORITY OF GOD ANYWHERE ON THIS EARTH.**

This is the Creed of the Alexandrian Cult.

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in Israel are sleeping a lot better because Obama, Kerry, and Hillary are gone. They know they have a friend in President Trump, and that's a relief. A peace deal will eventually be signed between Israel and her neighbors, but that won't happen until the UN crowns the false christ. All other attempts have failed, and no American president was allowed to pull it off, the last one being Obama. President Trump may try to do it himself, but he'll fail also. Our God has already appointed the time and the players involved for Israel to fall prey to Satan. God help those poor Jews whose spiritual blindness will lead them to receive a king coming in his own name and not the name of Jesus. In the meantime, until the Lord comes for us, there is work to do. The gospel of salvation is the gift that keeps on giving. We have to put it out here and everywhere around the world. Our Lord gave us this charge, and we will answer for it at His judgment seat. Don't expect a Jew who has adopted you and given you a place at His table to smile when He sees that you neglected His business because you were too busy catering to your own interests. Slothfulness in business is something the Jews that I have known clearly detest.

Fear God!

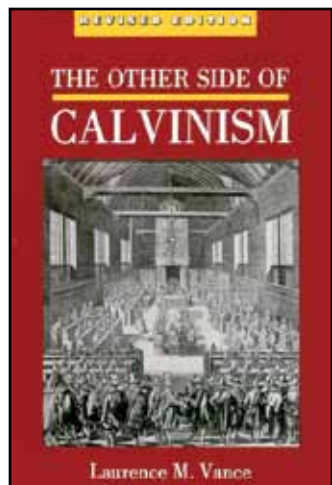
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