

The Sword AND Staff

"Preach the Word" (II Timothy 4:2) • "Feed the Flock" (I Peter 5:2)

PART 1:

An Examination and An Overview of Ephesians 4:11

● *"And he [CHRIST] gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers."—The Apostle Paul*



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THERE IS MUCH to be learned in this short verse of Scripture. Ephesians 4:11 is a thumb-nail statement inserted in between repeated admonitions on how Christians ought to "walk" (Ephesians 2:10; <4:1; 4:17> ; 5:2; 5:8; 5:15). The immediate context involves the unity and oneness of the body of Christ, the church. (Study Ephesians 4:1-16). Each member of this body has been given "grace" (4:7) to help in the ongoing endeavor of the church (and the resultant unity that will come thereby). ("Grace" here has reference to the spiritual gifts and abilities that God has given Christians, Romans 12:6).

But, more in particular, this "grace" has also been bestowed upon specific men as leaders in the church (namely, "apostles," "prophets," "evangelists," and "pastor/teachers," 4:11) to equip the others to exercise their "grace" in the work of the church (4:11-13,16). In the process the unity of the Spirit will be maintained (4:3), and the unity of the faith will be realized (4:13).

And then, as that great old hymn goes, "Like a mighty army, Moves the church of God; Brothers, we are treading Where the saints have trod." What would make the church move like this? Why and how does this happen? Answer: "We are not divided, All one body we, One in hope and doctrine, One in charity." Next, the challenging admonition of the chorus enthusiastically resounds: "Onward, Christian soldiers, Marching as to war, With the cross of Jesus, Going on before."

In this article we wish to give an examination and an overview of Ephesians 4:11. Here we are introduced to the "offices" and consequently the work and functional life of the church.

"AND HE GAVE SOME, APOSTLES"

Let Us Notice "Gave"

The Lord "gave" some to be apostles. How are we to understand "gave"? "Gave" can be understood in reference to the "office" being given and in reference to those who fill the office. It can be understood as a gift to the person, and the "office" and the person being a gift to the church. In a sense all of these things are true, and Christ had a hand in all of it. The "office" was set up by him, and he chose those he wanted to fill the position.

What Did He Mean by "Some"?

When the apostle Paul said that the Lord gave "some" to be apostles, we can look at this two or three different ways. This "grace" of the apostleship was only given to a limited number (and it is called "grace," Romans 1:5; 15:15). Their "grace" is distinguished from that of the general "membership" of

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—THANK YOU—

Proverbially *SPEAKING...*

IF YOUR HEART is in the right place, eventually you will be.

Those who are wise enough to appreciate wisdom thereby enhance their capacity to become wiser.

Like it or not, God loves you and has your well-being in mind.

What we think about Christ determines what we think about anybody and everybody, as well as anything and everything.

For God so loved the world that he gave (John 3:16)—what distinguishes your love?

The greater the realization of our sins, the greater will be our love for Christ, and the greater our love for Christ, the greater will be the realization of our sins.

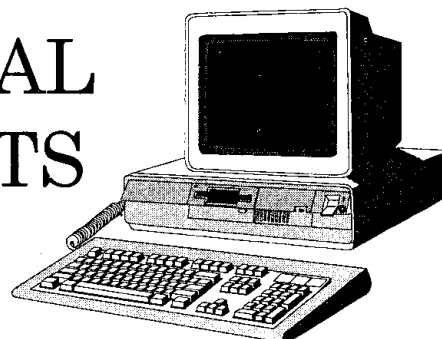
He who does not love his wife despises himself.

The person who falls in love with himself is ready to fall (Proverbs 16:18).

The investment of love pays great dividends.

"Quench not the Spirit," lest you put out the flame of love. □

EDITORIAL COMMENTS



NOT A "HOLY FATHER," "REVEREND," OR "DOCTOR" IN ALL THEIR NUMBER

IT IS INTERESTING to read the writings of the apostles and other men of inspiration in the New Testament. Of course the basic content of their documents is most important. But other incidental truths are apparent and very relevant. Unlike the way we write letters today, the writer's name and identity comes first. The unimposing way in which they identified themselves is most impressive. In Paul's earliest epistles, he doesn't even call himself an apostle (I & II Thessalonians). Later in dealings with church problems, etc., it was proper for others to be aware of his God-given authority. The term "apostle" was simply supplied. But this was not in arrogance, as he humbly equates this with grace (unmerited favor) that has been bestowed upon him (Romans 1:5; 15:15; I Corinthians 15:9,10). "Servant" was not an expression foreign to his use (Romans 1:1; Philippians 1:1). Even though James and Jude in the flesh were half-brothers of the Lord, they called themselves "servants [*douloi*, slaves] of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ" (James 1:1; Jude 1). Peter, although chief among the apostles, simply called himself, "Simon Peter, a servant [*doulos*, slave] and an apostle of Jesus Christ" (II Peter 1:1). And in his speaking of Paul, he called him "our beloved brother Paul" (II Peter 3:15). The apostle John in Revelation 1:1 makes reference to himself as "his [Christ's] servant [*doulos*, slave] John." Conspicuous in its absence in all of these writings of these Spirit-inspired men is the term "Reverend." There was not a "Holy Father," or "Doctor" in all of their number.

They wrote by the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and those who had been with the Lord could well remember how he came down heavy on the scribes and Pharisees in Matthew 23. Here Jesus said: "...[They] love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, *Rabbi*, *Rabbi*. But be not ye called *Rabbi*: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your *father* upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called *masters*: for one is your Master, even Christ."

The word "Rabbi" comes from "rab," which means great. "Rabbi" means "My Great One." "Rabboni" was a Galilean version of "Rabbi." But the Jews even had a more extended use of the word in "Rabban," which signified the greatest ones (reserved for Gamaliel, and limited numbers like him). All of this runs against the

grain of what Jesus said. We are all brothers (and sisters). There are no big "I's" or little "you's." Even as he taught that we should let our "yea" be "yea," and "Nay, nay" (Matthew 5:37), our names should not be embellished with such pretentious titles, religious or otherwise, in the ranks of the saints. The whole clergy concept coming out of the apostasy of the Dark Ages is foreign to the teachings of the New Testament.

And as far as the term "Reverend" is concerned, Psalms 111:9 says that "holy and *reverend*" (KJV) is God's name, not ours. This word "reverend" here is translated from a Hebrew word that means awesome. Is that what clergymen think of themselves? Something is strangely amiss.

Remember. We are all brothers and sisters in Christ in a priesthood of believers (I Peter 2:5,9), as we humbly serve the Lord and one another. □



Sermons from Nature and Human Experience...

REMINDERS FROM NATURE OF OUR IMPERFECTIONS

GOD GIVES His truths and that which is required of man in straightforward language as seen in the Ten Commandments. That is usually the case. However, at times for various reasons He has used other methods. Jesus taught in parables. Then there are certain truths that are self-evident in nature. Paul speaks of that which is against nature (Romans 1:26-28). And for those who know the Word of God, there are truths of that Word which are continually verified in nature. They actually explain the significance of natural phenomena. These verifications speak loud and clear of God's dealings with man and of what He wants man to be aware.

In times past, upheaval and irregular happenings in nature were used of God to bring judgment upon mankind. This was true with the Flood. This was true with the nation of Israel as God singled them out to unfold the revelation of His scheme of redemption for mankind. When they got out of step with His plan, going into sin and idolatry, judgment came in different ways to awaken them to their apostasy. Nature was His tool at times. These happenings were specific.

However, God speaks through nature in more of a generic sense to all of mankind (even today). It is apparent that everything was created originally with man in mind, as man was the last to arrive on the scene. God placed man in the Garden home, paradise on earth, and in a world that was very friendly and accommodating to his happiness and well-being. But we know the sad story of paradise lost. With man's rebellion, sin and all of its reper-

cussions came into the world. As sinful and imperfect man was driven from the Garden of Eden, it was not fitting that imperfect man should live in a perfect environment. He needed continual reminders of his imperfection. Childbearing would be accompanied by pain (Genesis 3:16). The ground would be cursed, paradise became a jungle, and man would eventually return to the ground from which his body had been made (Genesis 3:17-19). Perhaps the earth originally enjoyed a universal weather pattern that was calm and even. And its geophysical features would later be changed even more radically in the Flood to never be the same. Yes, everything changed. The apostle Paul would later write in Romans 8:22, "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." These reminders would ever prod the mind of man, causing him to never forget that he is the sinner and ever suggesting the need of repentance and godliness on his part. He had lost so much. And at the same time these things would make him realize his need of a Savior and hope for a better day.

But are we getting the message today? God is still speaking to us. Upheavals in nature abound, and they even seem to abound more so. Earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, mud slides, radical changes in the weather patterns—all of these phenomena are much in evidence. Yes, God is speaking universally and generically to all of us. Has He gotten our attention yet? We are sinners and our lives are irregular and unharmonious before Him, even as the phenomena in nature. Our lives need to be straightened out and brought into harmony with His Divine will. Living in such a world should give birth to hope, hope for something better; hope for "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness"—for heaven (II Peter 3:13). □

Word Replacement in Article

WE WOULD LIKE to modify some words that were in an article in the last issue of this paper. On page 6 in the article about calling upon the name of the Lord, we wish the words in caps below to replace the words "Christ is sacrificed all over again." The following perhaps represents better what could have been written.

An Altar in the Church?

"...Could it be that the front of a church building being called an altar is a carry-over from Catholicism? We understand that these people believe when the priest says his ritualistic words in the mass, the emblems turn into the body and blood of Christ. **IN ESSENCE, CHRIST IS SACRIFICED ALL OVER AGAIN (ALTHOUGH IN THEIR DOUBLE TALK THEY WOULD SEEM TO SAY THIS, YET DENY IT).** Thus, the front of the church building would be called an altar where this takes place. Could this be the origin of this expression?..."

An Examination and An Overview of Ephesians 4:11



(Continued from Page 1)

the church where Paul said, "But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ" (4:7). This "grace" is more restrictive. It also distinguishes them from the others here that he gave to be "prophets," "evangelists," and "pastors." And, as we will notice, the nature of the work of the apostles made them uniquely "some" in the sense that they had no successors.

Now, The Term "Apostle"

Interestingly, the term "apostle" has several applications, generic and specific in usage. (1) In its literal meaning, its roots signify to send forth, or more exactly, one who is sent forth. In John 13:16 (KJV), the word *apostolos* is translated "he that is sent." (2) In its limited technical sense, the word means one sent on a mission. In II Corinthians 8:23, the "messengers" (Greek, *apostoloi*) of the churches illustrate this. They were being sent on a mission of taking the benevolent offering to the needy Christians in Palestine. Likewise, Epaphroditus had been sent from the church at Philippi to minister to the needs of Paul in prison at Rome (Philippians 2:25, "messenger" = *apostolos*). (The use of the term also in Acts 14:4, 14 [Acts 13:2,3] and I Thessalonians 1:1 [2:6] is to be understood in this light). (3) Then, without question, the twelve disciples and Paul are called "apostles of Christ" in a sense even more specialized. (And to add to the panorama of interest, Christ is called an "apostle" in Hebrews 3:1).

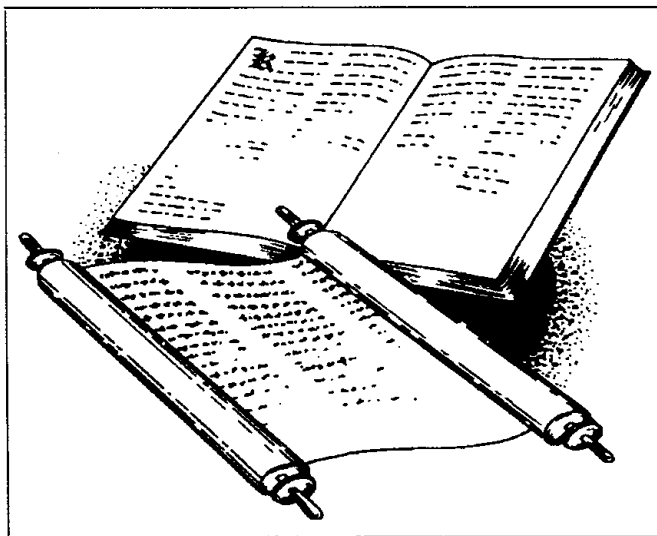
But How is the Term Used Here?

We believe the term "apostle" is used here in Ephesians 4:11 in the most specialized sense. It refers to the twelve and Paul. Information we find internally in this Ephesian epistle verifies this. Paul wrote in Ephesians 2:20, looking upon the church as a temple, that Christians were "built upon the foundation of the *apostles* and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." In the next chapter, 3:5, he writes about the gospel, "Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy

apostles and prophets by the Spirit." The Holy Spirit would guide the apostles into all truth (John 14:26; 15:26,27; 16:13). They spoke and wrote by the direct inspiration of the Spirit. What they said and their writings, along with that of "prophets," constitute the New Testament. The church is built upon this foundational truth.

The "Office" of An Apostle

Now that we have identified the apostles, what was actually involved in being one? We know the Lord selected twelve disciples (learners) to become the twelve apostles (ones sent forth). These men, as personal eyewitnesses of Christ and under the direct guidance of the Holy Spirit, were the official witnesses of Christ and his resurrection. This is true, whether talking about the twelve (John 15:26,27; Acts 1:2,8,21-22; 2:32; 3:15; 4:33; 5:32; 10:39-41) or the apostle Paul (I Corinthians 15:7-10; I Cor. 9:1; Acts 26:16,22,23). In addition to their personal testimony, the Holy Spirit further verified and authenticated what the apostles said by miracles and supernatural manifestations (Hebrews 2:3,4; John 15:26, 27; Acts 1:8; Acts 4:33; II Cor. 12:11,12). These inspired men got the church going and left us the Holy Scriptures to guide us. The church is built upon their foundation. There are no more apostles in the church today than there would be another Christ (Ephesians 2:20); all alike and together constitute the foundation. Their great work has been done. We have the New Testament. Witnesses have no successors, and consequently the apostles have no successors.



"AND HE GAVE...SOME, PROPHETS"

Both General and Specific

As we continue our examination of Ephesians 4:11, the word "prophets" is the next one that gets our attention (as it is closely tied in with "apostles"). Like "apostles," the use of the term seems somewhat elastic at times with several applications. But,

unlike “apostles,” the word is found throughout the Old Testament. We have a rich background to draw from in this study. These applications are both general and specific.

Prophets Throughout the Bible

The first person alluded to as a prophet in the Bible is Abel (Matthew 23:30,35). Enoch, not far removed from Abel, is said to have prophesied (Jude 14). The great patriarch Abraham is called a prophet (Genesis 20:7). Although king David had his own personal seer or prophet whom he consulted (II Samuel 24:11; I Samuel 9:9), the apostle Peter calls David a prophet in the New Testament (Acts 2:29,30). Amos, although he prophesied, said that he was not a prophet (Amos 7:14,15). Moses and Christ are presented together as prophets (Deuteronomy 18:15,18; Acts 3:22; 7:37). John the Baptist is called a prophet (Malachi 4:5; Matthew 11:9,10). So the word is diversified in use.

To Foretell and to Forthtell

The root meaning of the word “prophet” signifies to *foretell*. Another word of more recent coinage, *forthtell*, placed along side of foretell more fully describes the prophet’s work. In this dual capacity, prophets were God’s spokesmen, representing God before men (Exodus 7:1). By direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit they spoke. They called men back to God, preaching righteousness, and foretold judgment and things yet to come. As the apostle Peter wrote in the New Testament, “For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost [Spirit]” (II Peter 1:21). This outstanding truth is always tied in with being a prophet.

Foretelling and Forthtelling

There seems to be some latitude in the way the New Testament uses the word, but the *foretelling* and *forthtelling* stay intact with the direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The apostle Peter on the day of Pentecost said that in God’s Spirit being poured out on all flesh their sons and daughters would prophesy (Acts 2:17,18). In the foretelling aspect, Agabus is twice mentioned as a prophet in the early church (Acts 11:28; 21:10,11). From the other perspective we read, “And Judas and Silas, being *prophets* also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed [encouraged] them” (Acts 15:32). The Corinthians were admonished to desire the gift of prophecy (in contrast with tongues) for “he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort” (I Corinthians 14:3). There seems to have been several prophets in the church there, and they got their message directly from God (I Corinthians 14:29,30). But some

who thought they had this gift needed the guidance of the apostle Paul. He wrote, “If any man think himself to be a *prophet*, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord” (I Corinthians 14:37).

Being An Apostle and A Prophet

As a matter of interest, although Paul was uniquely an apostle, we read that he was also classified with the “prophets and teachers” in the church at Antioch (Acts 13:1). He had before been called to be an apostle. He was an apostle, but he was this, too. The apostle John identifies himself as being a prophet in Revelation 22:9. This is no surprise for the apostles were the fountainhead of all the spiritual gifts (Hebrews 2:3,4). Christ gave the gifts through them.

Distinctly A New Testament Prophet

“Prophets” seems to be used in its most specialized sense as a position in Ephesians 4:11. “Prophets” are distinguished from “apostles.” We back up to Ephesians 2:20 and especially 3:5 to determine its meaning in the context of the book. Paul speaks of the gospel that was “now revealed unto his holy apostles and *prophets* by the Spirit.” Paul had revelation in mind. They were involved in the transmission of the New Testament to man. Paul said in I Corinthians 13:9 and 10, “For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.” The revelation of the New Testament was not given all at once, but step by step and part by part as the men of inspiration were guided into all truth. Now we have a written representation of this truth in its entirety in the New Testament Scriptures. That which “is perfect” (complete) has come. We thank the apostles and prophets for this and look to the Word of God, being “thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (II Timothy 3:16,17).

Closing Remarks

Fittingly, apostles and prophets have been mentioned first. As men of inspiration, they supplied the one plan and message from Christ spoken of in the first part of this chapter (Ephesians 4). Now through them, and the evangelists and pastors who are listed next, the church would be equipped for its great and eternal work. In the process, the oneness emphasized here would be accomplished. Everyone (every Christian) had a part in it, as the church would grow and edify itself in love (Ephesians 4:16). □

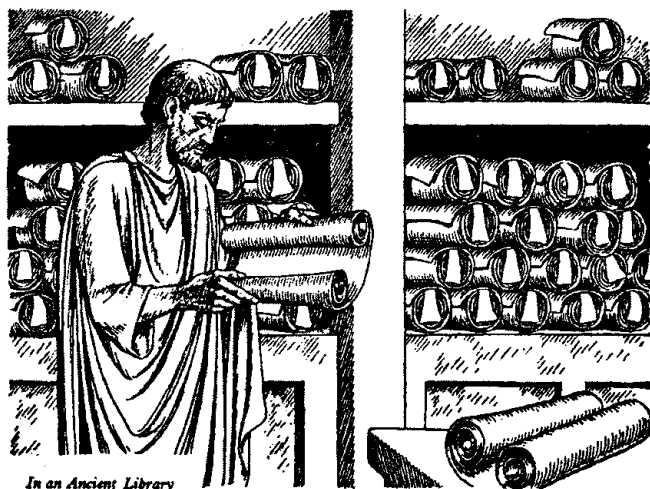


NOTE: Lord willing, the second part of this article dealing with preachers and elders will be presented in the next issue of this paper. □



A Series Involving the Bible and Prophecy...

"THE MAN OF SIN"



Part II: The History

(Note: The promised two-part series will now be in three parts.)

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PAUL WARNED that "the mystery of lawlessness is already at work" (2 Thessalonians 2:7). Thus the fulfillment of this prophecy began in the first century. Something was already working in Paul's day which in time produced "the man of sin...the son of perdition...the lawless one."

"All Roads Lead to Rome"

Most students of prophecy, from Paul's day to this, understand that the little horn of Daniel 7 and the beasts of Revelation 13 and 17 are related to Rome. Today there are three major views about when Rome is involved. The preterists place the fulfillment in our past. The historicists place it in our present. The futurists place it in our future.

Most agree that 2 Thessalonians 2 is part of the same prophetic picture. This means that "the man of sin" will be found in Rome. The evidence studied in the previous article points to the conclusion that "the man of sin" refers to the most outstanding apostate church. Add Rome to the equation and the fulfillment of the prophecy becomes obvious.

"I Told You... You Know"

The Bible was not sealed in a vacuum as soon as it was written, to be untouched by human hands until it reached each of us. To ignore the intervening centuries is shortsighted and egotistical. If we do not learn from others, why should we expect others to learn from us?

"I told you...you know," said Paul, "what is restraining" (2 Thessalonians 2:5,6). That is amazing. The saints in Thessalonica knew. Paul had taught

them in person. But the Holy Spirit prevented Paul from writing it down. Is there any other place in Scripture like this? The writer says his readers know what he is talking about, but he shrinks from writing it down. It becomes irresistible to scan early Christian writers to learn what they can tell us. Can you conceive that the first-century Christians would not pass the information on?

Before examining early Christian writers, we need to be aware of three things.

- 1 - They were not inspired. Therefore, they express many contradictory views on prophecy as well as other matters.
- 2 - Before a particular prophecy is fulfilled, we cannot expect Christians to understand it all. The apostles, for example, with Jesus in their midst, did not have correct views of many messianic prophecies.
- 3 - After a prophecy is fulfilled, there will always be those who will deny its fulfillment. The Jews, for example, to this very day, deny that Jesus of Nazareth is the promised Messiah.

With these precautions in mind, it is still very enlightening to discover what Christians through the ages have believed regarding various prophecies. Especially is this true in this case in which Paul said, "you know..."

Not Fulfilled in the First Century

The preterist view teaches that "the man of sin" appeared in the first century. They apply all the details of 2 Thessalonians 2 to events surrounding the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. They quote authorities with identical views, but never anyone earlier than the seventeenth century. Why not earlier? The reason is simple. There are none.

Not one writer prior to 1600 A.D. ever mentions anybody who believed that "the man of sin" prophecy was fulfilled in the first century. Notice:

- 1) The Thessalonians knew who was restraining.
- 2) Many Christian writers in the second to fifth centuries wrote in detail about this prophecy.
- 3) Not one early writer thought "the man of sin" prophecy was fulfilled in the first century.
- 4) The early writers often discuss views contrary to their own. None of them mention anyone who applied this prophecy to the first century.

In the 18th century, Thomas Newton, in his famous *Dissertations on the Prophecies*, discusses 2 Thessalonians 2 at length. He mentions five recent writers who claimed that "the man of sin" prophecy was fulfilled in the first century. He points out that they disagree with the majority of interpreters, and indeed disagree with each other as well as with all who were before them and after them.

Then he remarks: "If this prophecy [2 Thessalonians 2] was fulfilled, as these critics conceive,

before the destruction of Jerusalem, it is surprising that none of the fathers [early Christian writers] should agree with any of them in the same application, and that the discovery should first be made sixteen or seventeen hundred years after the completion. The fathers might differ and be mistaken in the circumstances of a prophecy which was yet to be fulfilled; but that a prophecy should be remarkably accomplished before their time, and they be totally ignorant of it, and speak of the accomplishment as still future, is not very credible" (page 400).

The Early Christians Speak

A study of early Christian writings reveals that the believers did know what was restraining.

Irenaeus: 120 to 202 A.D.

Irenaeus was born 20 years after the apostle John died. In his extensive work, *Against Heresies*, Irenaeus devoted several chapters to Daniel 7, Revelation 13 and 2 Thessalonians 2. Typical of believers in all ages, he understood that the three prophecies are related. Irenaeus wrote:

"Daniel too, looking forward to the end of the last kingdom, i.e., the ten last kings, amongst whom the kingdom of those men shall be partitioned, and upon whom **the son of perdition shall come**, declares that ten horns shall spring from the beast, and that another little horn shall arise in the midst of them."

"In a still clearer light has John, in the Apocalypse, indicated to the Lord's disciples what shall happen in the last times, and concerning the ten kings who shall then arise, among whom **the empire which now rules [Rome] shall be partitioned**" (*Against Heresies*, Book 5, chapter 25, paragraph 3; chapter 26, paragraph 1; bold emphasis supplied).

Tertullian: 145 to 220 A.D.

Not many years later, Tertullian, quoting and commenting on 2 Thessalonians 2, wrote the following. He blends "the man of sin" prophecy with the prophecies of the ten-horned beast.

"Again, in the second epistle he [Paul] addresses them with even greater earnestness: 'For that day shall not come, unless indeed there first come a falling away,' he means indeed of this present empire, 'and that man of sin be revealed,' that is to say, Antichrist, 'the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God...And now ye know what detaineth, that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work; only he who now hinders must hinder, until he be taken out of the way.' **What obstacle is there but the Roman state, the falling away of which, by being scattered into ten kingdoms, shall introduce Antichrist upon (its own ruins)?**" (*Of the Resurrection of the Flesh*, Chapter 24, bold emphasis supplied).

Hippolytus: 170 to 236 A.D.

A few years later yet, Hippolytus wrote *A Treatise on Christ and Antichrist*. While discussing Daniel 2 and 7, he wrote:

"The golden head of the image and the lioness denoted the Babylonians; the shoulders and arms of silver, and the bear, represented the Persians and Medes; the belly and thighs of brass, and the leopard, meant the Greeks, who held the sovereignty from Alexander's time; the legs of iron, and the beast dreadful and terrible, expressed **the Romans, who hold the sovereignty at present**; the toes of the feet which were part clay and part iron, and the ten horns, were emblems of the kingdoms that are **yet to rise; the other little horn that grows up among them meant the Antichrist in their midst**" (paragraph 28, bold emphasis supplied).

Cyril of Jerusalem: 315 to 386 A.D.

Moving to the fourth century, Cyril, after quoting 2 Thessalonians 2, said the following:

"Thus wrote Paul, and now is the 'falling away'... now the Church is filled with heretics in disguise. For men have fallen away from the truth, and 'have itching ears'... This therefore is 'the falling away,' and the enemy is soon to be looked for..."

"But this aforesaid **Antichrist is to come when the times of the Roman empire shall have been fulfilled**, and the end of the world is now drawing near. There shall rise up together ten kings of the Romans, reigning in different parts perhaps, but all about the same time; and after these an eleventh, the Antichrist, who by his magical craft **shall seize upon the Roman power...**

" 'So that he seateth himself in the temple of God.' What temple then? He means, the Temple of the Jews which has been destroyed. For God forbid that it should be the one in which we are!" (*Lecture 15*, paragraphs 9,12,15, bold emphasis supplied).

Remarkable! Cyril recognizes that "temple" could be of the Jews or it could be a reference to the church. Living before the fulfillment, he liked to think that it meant the temple of the Jews, because he rightly dreaded the thought that the antichrist would be in the church of God!

Chrysostom: 347 to 407 A.D.

Later in the fourth century, Chrysostom wrote multitudes of homilies based on Scripture texts. In his Homily on 2 Thessalonians 2:6-9, he says:

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We need to rethink old truths, not for the purpose of discarding them, but to have a greater depth of understanding, commitment and appreciation of them.

"THE MAN OF SIN"

Part II: The History



(Continued from Previous Page)

"What then is it that withholdeth, that is, hindereth him from being revealed? Some indeed say, the grace of the Spirit, but others the Roman empire, to whom I most of all accede. Wherefore? Because if he meant to say the Spirit, he would not have spoken obscurely, but plainly...But because he said this of the Roman empire, he naturally glanced at it, and speaks covertly and darkly. For he did not wish to bring upon himself superfluous enmities, and useless dangers...

"Only there is one that restraineth now, until he be taken out of the way,' that is, **when the Roman empire is taken out of the way, then he shall come**. And naturally. For as long as the fear of this empire lasts, no one will willingly exit himself, but when that is dissolved, he will attack the anarchy, and endeavor to **seize upon the government both of man and of God**" (paragraphs 1-2, bold emphasis supplied).

Jerome: 340 to 420 A.D.

Jerome wrote this first letter in 396 A.D. and the second in 409 A.D. Already the Roman Empire was in deep trouble from the barbarians.

"I shudder when I think of the catastrophes of our time...**The Roman world is falling**: yet we hold up our heads instead of bowing them...

"Rome's army, once victor and Lord of the world, now trembles with terror at the sight of the foe" (*Letter #60 to Heliodorus*, paragraphs 16,17, bold emphasis supplied).

"But what am I doing? Whilst I talk about the cargo, the vessel itself founders. **He that letteth is taken out of the way, and yet we do not realize that Antichrist is near**. Yes, Antichrist is near whom the Lord Jesus Christ 'shall consume with the spirit of his mouth'...

"For thirty years the barbarians burst the barrier of the Danube and fought in the heart of the Roman Empire...Rome has to fight within her own borders not for glory but for bare life" (*Letter #123 to Ageruchia*, paragraphs 16, 17, bold emphasis supplied).

In summary, all these early writers considered 2 Thessalonians 2 to be a prophecy of events yet future to themselves. Most early Christians believed "the man of sin" would come after the fall of the Roman Empire. This belief was based on an understanding of the restrainer in 2 Thessalonians 2. It was also based on the ten horns of the beasts in Daniel 7 and Revelation 13 and 17.

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BIBLE QUESTIONS

(Random Questions Over the Bible)

1. How old was Abram (Abraham) when God changed his name to Abraham (from Abram) and gave him the covenant of circumcision?
2. What is the first recorded thing Abraham is said to have done after his name had been changed to Abraham?
3. What were the names of the magicians who opposed Moses before Pharaoh?
4. Although God didn't let Moses go into the Promised Land, from what place was he allowed to look upon it?
5. After the death of Joshua, why didn't God drive the rest of the Canaanites out of the land (immediately and ultimately)?
6. Which judge of Israel slew 600 of the Philistines with an ox goad?
7. The king of what other country assisted Solomon and was a great help in building the temple?
8. Instead of going to Nineveh and prophesying against them like God said, Jonah fled from the Lord on a ship headed where?
9. Which O.T. prophet said that he was not a prophet, nor a son of a prophet, but a herdman and a gatherer of sycamore fruit when the word of the LORD came unto him?
10. Which O.T. prophet saw a vision of living creatures with wheels?
11. After seeing the Christ child, what person said, "Lord, now letteth thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word"?
12. Levi is another name for which one of the disciples of Christ?
13. When confronted about paying their temple tax, where did the Lord tell Peter to go to get the money to take care of this?
14. Where did Mary, Martha and Lazarus, who were good friends of Jesus, live?
15. What were the distinctive doctrines of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees?
16. On the Day of Pentecost in the second chapter of Acts, who were addressed as "brethren"?
17. How had the apostle Paul learned about the division that was in the church at Corinth?
18. Where are the only two places in the New Testament where an allusion is made to the book of Job?
19. Which N.T. book (epistle) was written to the owner of a runaway slave who had become a Christian?
20. Which N.T. book (epistle) was written to a man by the name of Gaius?

(NOTE: Answers found elsewhere in this issue of the paper)

READERS'

...Response

APOLOGY: Please accept our humble apology for slowness in getting correspondence answered. "We" have no staff of secretaries, etc. to handle such, and this is done by the "editor" as time allows. Be it known that you are sincerely appreciated. □

FLORIDA:

■ "Prayers and best wishes for a good year. Thanks for *THE SWORD AND STAFF*."

GEORGIA:

■ "...I am still using *THE SWORD AND STAFF* to a good advantage in Bible study classes; especially your series on Daniel's seventy-week prophecy. It's amazing that so much material could come from Daniel 9:24-27. You have done an outstanding piece of work..."

NORTH CAROLINA:

■ "Keep up the good work!"

VIRGINIA:

■ "I am sending a check long over due. Thanks so much for the newsletter. It is the greatest. Wish all preachers would preach like this. Just finished reading the last one entitled meaning of expression to 'call upon the name of the Lord.'"

■ "Thank you so much for sending *THE SWORD AND STAFF* to me all these years, although I haven't sent you any money! Please forgive me. I guess God knew I needed these magazines. I am a Christian...I pray for you! Please send bound volumes I have checked. You have helped me so much!"

WEST VIRGINIA:

■ "I have just finished reading your article on calling on the name of the Lord. You have done a wonderful job in addressing this subject! Also, I thought your treatment of the penitent publican was excellent and concise, as well as the mention of the altars. I have long appreciated your humble, yet direct and thorough treatment of subjects such as this...Thank you for your continued work with *THE SWORD AND STAFF*..." (E-mail)

■ "...I want to thank you for your efforts to stand for God and His Word. Compromise only begets further compromise and compromise cannot save a soul, Christian or non-Christian.

"I would like to continue to receive this much needed publication once again. Also, I would like to request a copy of *POEMS OF THE SOUL AND PROVERBS*. May God bless your work as you continue to preach, teach, persuade and publish God's glorious Truth..." (E-mail)

PENNSYLVANIA:

■ "Please remove us [a church] from your mailing list."

■ "Please send me volumes 1997 and 98. I really enjoy this Christian literature and love to share it with others. My prayer is that you continue reaching souls and receiving the financial help you need to continue this good work."

MICHIGAN:

■ "Please remove my name from your mailing list. Thank you."

■ "Thank you for your work and labor of love! And your boldness in the truths of God's Word. Please keep us in your prayers as you are in ours. We are waiting for the next *SWORD AND STAFF*."

■ "Thank you for your article concerning the meaning of 'Calling on the Name of the Lord' in *THE SWORD AND STAFF*, Vol. 37, Num. 4. I have done some research to try to find out where the 'sinner's prayer' first came from—who first used it, when and why. So far I have come up empty. Do you have any information on this topic? It might prove to be an interesting follow-up article." (E-mail)

Origin of the "Mourners' Bench"

Editor's Reply: In answer to this, we present some excerpts of material and thoughts condensed from *The Sword and Staff*, Volume 5, Number 8, 1967 (which was a reprint from another publication at the time, *The Kentucky Evangel*):

Charles G. Finney, celebrated evangelist of the early 19th century (the 1800's) and President of Oberlin College, delivered a series of lectures on evangelism in 1838 which by popular demand, were made available to the general public in book form. Fleming H. Revell & Co. secured publishing rights. Following, reference is made to the second edition, entitled *Revivals of Religion* dated October 22, 1868.

(Continued on Next Page)

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This is our new address. It is very simple and easy to remember. Update your **BOOK-MARK**. Tell others about it.—Editor

READERS'...Response

(Continued from Previous Page)

Evangelist Finney, probably more than any other man, popularized the mourner's bench (or "anxious seat," as he preferred to call it) as he led the vanguard of revivalists in the Great Religious Awakening that swept Europe and America over a century ago. On pages 254-56 of the 1868 edition, Mr. Finney wrote in defense of the anxious seat. The following quotation is taken verbatim from page 254. Speaking of an "awakened sinner," Mr. Finney wrote:

"If you say to him, 'There is the anxious seat, come out and avow your determination to be on the Lord's side,' if he is not willing to do so small a thing as that, then he is not willing to do *anything*, and there he is brought out before his own conscience. It uncovers the delusion of the human heart, and prevents a great many spurious conversions, by showing those who might otherwise imagine themselves willing to do anything for Christ, that in fact are willing to do *nothing*."

"The church has always felt it necessary to have something of the kind to answer this very purpose. In the days of the apostles *baptism* answered this purpose. The gospel was preached and those who were willing to be on the side of Christ were called on to be *baptized*. It [baptism] held the precise place that the anxious seat does now, as a public manifestation of their determination to be a Christian."

This answer as to the origin of praying the "sinner's prayer," or the "mourners' bench," is not dogmatic. But it is altogether possible that it was (is) a product of the revivalism of the Great Religious Awakening that swept Europe and America in the 1800's. Rather than calling upon everyone to conform to explicit New Testament teaching, the populace with a diverse and contradictory religious background would more readily respond to the more generic requirement of just praying through at the mourners' bench. And "calling on the name of the Lord" in this way would lend itself more to the excitement of revivalism.

If any of our readers have a clue as to the origin of praying through, or the "mourners bench," you are welcome to share that information with us.

OHIO:

■ "I have just finished reading Vol. 4 (1999) of *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. Quite a paper! The two major articles, 'Calling Upon the Name of the Lord' and 'The Man of Sin' (2 Thess. 2) are exceptional. We are hearing a lot about the 'Sinner's Prayer' in this area..."

INDIANA:

■ "Please remove us [a church] from your mailing list. Thanks."

KENTUCKY:

■ "I really enjoy *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. It is really wonderful to hear the truth for a change..." (E-mail)

TENNESSEE:

■ "Please add me to your mailing list. I think you have a very good publication. Enclosed is a check to help with the cost."

Answers to: BIBLE QUESTIONS

1. Genesis 17:1-5,9-14; 2. Genesis 17:17; 3. Exodus 7:11, 12,22; 8:7,18,19; 9:11; II Timothy 3:8; 4. Deuteronomy 34:1-5; 5. *Immediately*: Deuteronomy 7:22; *ultimately*: Judges 2:20-23; 6. Judges 3:31; 7. I Kings 5; 8. Jonah 1:1-3; 9. Amos 7:14; 10. Ezekiel 1:3,15-20; 11. Luke 2:25-35; 12. Matthew 9:9; Mark 2:14; 13. Matthew 17:24-27; 14. John 11:1; 15. Acts 23:6-9; 16. Acts 2:29, 37—the people and the apostles (cf. Romans 9:3,4); 17. I Corinthians 1:11; 18. I Corinthians 3:19; James 5:11; 19. Philemon; 20. III John. □

■ "Please renew my subscription to *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. Enclosed is my contribution toward receipt of future papers. I appreciate the paper so much. It gives me strength and encouragement. Keep up the good work..."

ARKANSAS:

■ "Thank you so much for *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. I look forward to the time I receive each copy of your magazine. Each article is wonderful. Please keep up the good work you are doing. May God bless you and help you to have better health. Enclosed is a small amount to help with the cost of publishing the wonderful books and magazines. Thank you."

■ "I picked up the mail at the church today and found a copy of *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. At the first opportunity I began to read and was not satisfied until I had read every word. I will be mailing a donation to have our home address added to your mailing list... Thank you so much for your *SOLID* work for our Lord and Savior. As we are blessed by your publication, so I know the Lord will richly bless you. Again may God bless you..." (E-mail)

ILLINOIS:

■ "My address for *THE SWORD AND STAFF* is...Do you have a bound book of all those articles from the past? If so, let me have the details about it. Thank you and I like your [web] site." (E-mail, web page response)

IOWA:

■ "...May the Lord bless your writing and paper to reach many people, causing them to better understand His will..."

■ "It's about time to send a contribution to keep your good paper coming to us. Enjoy your many articles and gain so much from them...Keep up the good work and may the Lord surely bless you in every way as you serve Him."

MISSOURI:

■ "Thank you for adding my name to your mailing list. I really enjoy *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. It is full of Biblical facts and information. I love the way you use so many Scriptures to explain everything. It reminds me of the way the sermons used to be when I was a child. Now we hardly hear the plan of salvation or fire and brimstone—because all of the sermons are so watered down—I feel I'm spiritually starving to death."

"Enclosed is a money order for my subscription and for all of the bound volumes you have listed..."

KANSAS:

■ *"I just received a copy from a friend of THE SWORD AND STAFF. I really enjoyed your articles. Could I please be put on the mailing list?..." (E-mail)*

NEBRASKA:

■ *"Dear Mr. Gibbons, ...I read some of your front page article in Volume 37, Number 4, 1999 of THE SWORD AND STAFF [about calling upon the name of the Lord]...It is good to go to God's Word and examine it, then examine ourselves. Unless you are different...you will reply to [my] opposition with fiery indignation.*

"In Acts 10:43 there is a verse I have never heard...addressed: '...that through His name, whosoever BELIEVETH in Him shall receive REMISSION OF SINS'! Also, in Acts 9:17, Saul (not yet Paul), before he was baptized was called BROTHER Saul by the preacher Ananias.

"I'm not arguing against baptism, but against the...doctrine of baptismal regeneration. Clearly baptism is left out of many churches and they are wrong about it, but worse than the doctrinal error of including baptism in some sort of 'process' of salvation, is the spirit of pride which accompanies those who hold the view.

"After reading the account of Jericho, many people today would write a handbook on how God conquers cities, and yet God never used that method again! God probably saved somebody after they heard, believed, repented, confessed and were baptized, but don't assume that is the only way God can save a person. God's instructions on salvation varies from Jew to Gentile to Samaritan. The accounts in Acts 2, 8 and 10 are not the same! So, why do Christians go to the Jewish account? One would think Gentile Christians would consult the Biblical account of Gentiles becoming Christians, not the Jewish account of Acts 2! It wouldn't matter if there was a difference, but there is much difference.

"To be thorough, one must consider many other passages of Scripture than the one you dissected. I John 1:9 requires mere confession to receive forgiveness and cleansing...

"I read your stuff, so I hope you will take a moment to read mine. Thanks and God bless. A Christian in Nebraska, Pastor _____."

FAITH AND BAPTISM FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS (AND RELATED QUESTIONS)

Editor's Reply: I appreciate your forthright letter. But obviously you are not a regular reader of *The Sword and Staff*. You don't seem to know where I am coming from. We seek to expose unspiritual shortcomings irrespectively of where they are. Consequently, it seems you have made a straw man and are attacking it. You warn me about possibly having "fiery indignation" in answering you, and then you proceed with heated statements and exclamation marks [and we have deleted some of our correspondent's words].

The words that follow are written in the context of love, kindness, and humility. Take them that way. And as a matter that might be of interest to you, I came "out" of the Methodist denomination to take the stand as a simple, undenominational, New Testament Christian. I had gone the "praying through" route, but a deeper study of God's Word brought me face to face with many Scriptures that I didn't know were even in the Bible. Being a believer, I had to accept them.

Addressing Acts 10:43

You present Acts 10:43 as a verse that needs "addressing" ("...that through His name, whosoever BELIEVETH in Him shall receive REMISSION OF SINS"). What is the problem you are imposing here? Are you trying to say this nullifies baptism in the name of Christ for the remission of sins as found in Acts 2:38? There is no problem. Baptism is simply the out-working and expression of faith. We believe in the heart and we obey from the heart (Romans 6:17). We believe in the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. As we accept these truths and identify with them, we repent and are baptized for the remission of sins. Acts 6:7 tells us that a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith. Paul repeatedly talks about "obedience to the faith" (Romans 1:5; 16:26). Paul says in Colossians 2:12, "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the FAITH of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." To separate faith from baptism would seem to be a sectarian ploy. Acts 10:43 is the over-all picture that includes Acts 2:38. In Acts 2:41, "they that gladly received his word were baptized..." Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God (Romans 10:17). They believed. They were baptized. The Ethiopian could be baptized if he believed with all of his heart (Acts 8:36,37). Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved..." (Mark 16:16). What kind of faith is it that supposedly believes in a person, but doesn't believe what that person says? Our faith in Christ must be real, and if it is, we should have no trouble in having faith in His Word when it says we are to be baptized for the REMISSION OF SINS (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Colossians 2:11,12). All of it is of faith.

Was "Brother Saul" a Brother?

You point out that Acts 9:17 has Paul being called "BROTHER Saul" before he was baptized. Again, what is the problem? Are you trying to say he was called "brother" by Ananias and thus was a Christian before he was baptized? It is common knowledge that use of the term "brother," or "brethren," has wide latitude in the Scriptures. (1) It can be a physical brother, or kinsman. (2) It can be a spiritual brother, as a Christian. (3) It can be a word of endearment. Fellow Jews greeted and addressed one another as brothers, or "brethren," not even in the context of Christianity. Peter addressed his audience on the Day of Pentecost as

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READERS'...*Response*

(Continued from Previous Page)

"brethren," who were not Christians (Acts 2:29), and they in response to him and the other apostles said, "Men and **brethren**, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37) In Acts 3:12, Peter again addresses them, "Ye men of Israel," and in verse 17 he calls them "brethren." Stephen called the men who were to stone him, "brethren" (Acts 7:2). Paul and Barnabas, in being introduced to speak in the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia, were called "brethren" by their fellow Jews (Acts 13:15). Then further on in his speech Paul says, "Men and **brethren**, children of the stock of Abraham..." (13:26). Then he points out to these "brethren" that forgiveness of sins could be theirs through Christ (13:38,39). Paul, in defending himself before the hostile Jews, addresses them as "brethren" (Acts 22:1; 23:1,5,6). Likewise Paul calls the non-Christian Jews "brethren" who came to visit him while prisoner at Rome (Acts 28:17). Then Paul wrote these impressive words in Romans 9:3 and 4, "For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my **brethren**, my kinsmen according to the flesh: **Who are Israelites...**" There is no problem in understanding that Paul was addressed as "brother Saul" because he was a fellow Jew. He became a brother in Christ when he was baptized into Christ, believing and being in a state of repentance. One must be "born again," of water and the Spirit (John 3:1-5; Acts 2:38), before he can be called a child of God, and subsequently a brother.

"Baptismal Regeneration"—*What's That?*

As far as your reference to the "doctrine of baptismal regeneration," I have never found this doctrine in the Bible and it is not part of my religious vocabulary. We are not talking about a sacramental doctrine, an isolated act, an empty form, nor a mechanical "step" to become a Christian. We are talking about the converging of faith, repentance and baptism in being born again (of water and the Spirit). Again, it would seem that you are battling with something in your own mind, something of your own making. Not anything that I believe.

Are There Different "Plans" of Salvation for Different People?

Your reference to God having several "plans" of salvation is different, to say the least, and very bewildering. I have heard of people saying that God had one plan for the Jews and another for the Gentiles. Peter and Paul had two different messages. The Jewish plan was Acts 2:38, and the Gentiles' plan was simply faith in Christ, minus baptism, etc. Indeed, this would seem to be a strange way to approach the Scriptures. The Lord said, "Go ye into **all the world**, and preach the gospel to **every** creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved..." (Mark 16:15,16). This plan was for everyone. According to Matthew's account of the Great Commission, this matter of going, teaching, bap-

tizing, and teaching men (**all** men) to observe all things, was to continue unto the "end of the world [age]" (Matthew 28:18-20). You imply that Acts 2:38, where men were commanded to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins, was for the Jews only (and not for us today). That doesn't seem to make sense to me, for Peter said in Acts 2:39, "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to **all** that are **afar off**, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Not only was this promise of Acts 2:38 for the Jews on the Day of Pentecost, but for their children, to "all" that were "afar off," and to as many as would ever become Christians. Paul is plainly talking about the Gentiles in Ephesians 2:13 when he says, "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were **far off** are made nigh by the blood of Christ." Then again in verse 17 of this same chapter he speaks of Gentiles being "afar off." Read all of Ephesians 2:11-22. No, I don't believe God had different plans for different people in the gospel age. Ephesians 4:4-6 stresses the oneness of God's plan today.

Applying Scripture that Has Reference to Brothers to Non-Christians

How surprising that you would use I John 1:9 in a general way, applying it also to the non-Christian. The epistle of I John is written to "brethren" (I John 2:7; 3:13,14,16). John is talking about Christians confessing their sins in this manner (I John 1:4-10), not non-Christians. It is very confusing. In one place, you apply the term "brother" (in Christian usage) to a man who was not a brother in Christ yet. And in another place, I John, you apply a Scripture that has reference to brothers to people who are not brothers.

As you were forthright with me, so I have been with you. Kindly regard the words I have written to you.

IDAHO:

■ "Greetings in the name of Jesus the Risen Lord. I have just received your **SWORD AND STAFF** newsletter, which, while not addressed to me, was quite interesting and educational. I enjoyed the article, 'What Is the Meaning of the Expression to Call Upon the Name of the Lord,' and I liked how you ended it with Matthew 7:21, 'Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven...', which is a verse that many people nowadays tend to forget about..."

OREGON:

■ "We do appreciate your publication very much. Many in our area are reaping the benefits of it. May God bless your every effort."

CANADA:

■ "Had an opportunity to see your web page and did some browsing—**GOOD STUFF!** Certainly good to be able to read some Bible-based material...Thanks again for **THE SWORD AND STAFF**." (E-mail)

■ "Thanks so much for your insightful web page. I am so tired and upset with the pages that tell people to

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What Will Money Buy?

It will buy a bed, but not sleep.
It will buy books, but not brains.
It will buy food, but not an appetite.
It will buy finery, but not beauty.
It will buy medicine, but not health.
It will buy a house, but not a home.
It will buy amusement, but not happiness.
It will buy preaching, but not the truth.
It will buy a Bible, but not salvation.

—Selected



BARBS...
with a Point



IMPULSIVE people sometimes are repulsive.

Love is cheapened when used as a veneer for compromise.

There is something worse than religious division, and that is compromising the truth to bring about an unscriptural unity.

It is always nice to be nice, and it is never nice to be otherwise.

The “authority” of an evangelist is in the Word, the Word lived and the Word preached, not in thinking and saying, “I’m the boss.”

If your Christianity doesn’t work when you are at work, it doesn’t work.

No one wants to go to hell, but neither would most of these same people really want to go to heaven; they don’t even want to go to church now.

Many who used to stand for the truth now won’t even sit down and listen to it.

Let us not become so preoccupied with one aspect of the teachings of the Bible that we fail to present the total picture with all of its important aspects.

Some people are more concerned about “church growth” than they are New Testament evangelism.

Many who seem to have a strong and authoritative personality really may be insecure, and this outward display is a means of trying to compensate for the inadequacy of their inward feeling.

A dishonest person has a basic flaw in his character that spills over into all aspects of life.

Ceasing to grow religiously doesn’t necessarily mean that we have reached maturity and there is no more growing to do; people who are dead have ceased growing, too.

The best translation of the Bible is that which is translated into everyday living.

When you end everything you have to say with an exclamation mark, how will you get your point across when you really want to emphasize something?

A lot of people’s concept of Christianity is about like a lot of these modern translations of the Bible, kind of fuzzy.

Because grace covers a *multitude* of sins, we should not use this as an excuse to *multiply* sins, but rather to forsake them.

You know that your religion is wrong when it makes you act irreligiously.

Some people have exchanged the concept of the *Lord’s day* for the *Lord’s hour*, and even then if the services run overtime, they are unhappy.

You cannot expect the best out of life unless you give it your best.

The preaching of God’s Word should be a lot like the Day of Judgment (John 16:7-11; Acts 2:37; Hebrews 4:12,13), but today it is more like an open forum where men indifferently vent diverse and indefinite sounds.

To pray for “daily bread” and then not work to help bring it about is to tempt God.

Parent, if you would “train up a child in the way he should go” (Proverbs 22:6), you must first go that way yourself.

The life that counts must be more than counted. □



Friendly Obstacles

For every hill I’ve had to climb,
For every stone that bruised my feet,
For all the blood and sweat and grime,
For blinding storms and burning heat,
My heart sings but a grateful song—
These were the things that made me strong.

For all the heartaches and the tears,
For all the anguish and the pain,
For gloomy days and fruitless years,
And for the hopes that lived in vain,
I give thanks, for now I know
These were the things that helped me grow.

—Anonymous

"THE MAN OF SIN"

Part II: The History

(Continued from Page 8)

The Greatest "Theologian" Didn't Know

It would be difficult to name a "theologian" who has had more influence on "Christian thought" than Augustine (345 to 430 A.D.). As one writer said, "He had a creative and decisive hand in almost every dogma of the church." He entered the great debates of his day and came out victorious. Catholics and Protestants alike hold him in high esteem. But there was something Augustine did not know.

In his famous *City of God*, he wrote: "I can on no account omit what the Apostle Paul says, in writing to the Thessalonians, 'We beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,' etc.

"No one can doubt that he wrote this of Antichrist and of the day of judgment, which he here calls the day of the Lord, nor that he declared that this day should not come unless he first came who is called the apostate...Then as for the words, 'And now ye know what withholdeth,' i.e., ye know what hindrance or cause of delay there is, 'that he might be revealed in his own time;' they show that he was unwilling to make an explicit statement, because he said that they knew...I frankly confess I do not know what he means. I will nevertheless mention such conjectures as I have heard or read.

"Some think that the Apostle Paul referred to the Roman empire, and that he was unwilling to use language more explicit, lest he should incur the calumnious charge of wishing ill to the empire which it was hoped would be eternal...But others think that the words, 'Ye know what withholdeth,' and 'The mystery of iniquity worketh,' refer only to the wicked and the hypocrites who are in the Church, until they reach a number so great as to furnish Antichrist with a great people, and that this is the mystery of iniquity" (book 20, chapter 19, paragraphs 1-3).

It is remarkable for a man of Augustine's knowledge and influence to say he did not know who the restrainer was. He was aware that others believed it to be the Roman Empire. The Roman Empire was crumbling before his eyes. In his lifetime, the Goths looted even Rome. His contemporary Jerome, seeing the Empire collapsing, declared, "yet we do not realize that Antichrist is near." In contrast, Augustine said, "I frankly confess I do not know."

However, from Augustine's voluminous writings we learn that he "knew" that baptism took away the "original sin" of babies. He "knew" that sacrifices and alms of Christians benefited the dead. He "knew" that the "Virgin Mary" lived without committing sin. He "knew" that Mary was a perpetual

virgin. He "knew" that sex in marriage is at once legal and yet a carnal lustful act. He "knew" that war could be holy. He "knew" that it was good for the state to persecute those who did not hold to the teachings of the church.

Augustine "knew" all of this and yet he did not know, like many others knew, that when Rome fell, the antichrist would appear. It is this writer's belief that there is a definite connection between what he "knew" and what he did not know. It is the same Augustine who was so influential in formulating Catholic doctrine who at the same time was ignorant regarding "the man of sin" prophecy!

The Reformers Knew the Truth About Rome

Rome fell. The bishop of Rome stepped into the vacuum and took the place of the Emperor. As the years went by, the popes gained incredible powers over the bodies and souls of men. Popes crowned emperors. In a clash between Emperor Henry IV and Pope Gregory VII, the Emperor was left standing barefoot in the snow for three days in January 1077, until Gregory withdrew his excommunication. This style of power lasted for centuries.

As early as the 13th century, if not before, one voice after another began to cry: "The pope of Rome is antichrist"; "the pope is the man of sin." The voices grew louder and louder until a full-blown Reformation Movement took shape. From that day until recent times, Protestants have been united in calling the Roman Pontiff "the man of sin."

Rather than prove this with endless quotations from Protestants over the centuries, let us rather see that both preterists and futurists admit this historical fact.

Gary DeMar, a modern preterist, totally rejects the idea that the pope is "the man of sin." He thinks 2 Thessalonians 2 and related prophecies were fulfilled in the first century by Nero and the Jews. Nevertheless he admits:

"For centuries the papacy was the unanimous candidate for the Antichrist. The papal system was identified as 'both "the man of sin" and the Babylonian whore of which Scripture forewarns (2 Thessalonians 2; Revelation 19). In the conviction of the sixteenth-century Protestants, Rome was the great Anti-Christ, and so firmly did this belief become established that it was not until the nineteenth century that it was seriously questioned by evangelicals'" (*Last Days Madness*, page 207, 208).

Again: "The Reformers, almost without exception, believed the 'man of lawlessness' to be the Roman Pontiff. In their dedication to the King James Version of the Bible (1611) the translators identified the Pope as the 'man of sin' of 2 Thessalonians 2:

"The zeal of your majesty toward the house of God doth not slack or go backward but is more and more kindled, manifesting itself abroad in the farthest parts of Christendom by writing a defence of the truth which hath given such a blow to that man of sin as will not be healed" (page 330). You will find this in the "Dedicatory" in the front of your King James Bible. Later in the same "Dedicatory," the translators speak of "Popish Persons" on one hand and "Brethren" on the other hand.

Dave Hunt is a well-known futurist. He does believe that the Roman Catholic Church is the "whore" called Babylon in Revelation 17. However, being a futurist, he believes that the beasts of Revelation 13 and 17 are in the future, as are also the little horns of Daniel 7 and 8 and the man of sin of 2 Thessalonians 2. He believes the antichrist is probably alive now but will not be revealed until during "the tribulation" after "the rapture." With all these beliefs, he yet admits:

"Early Protestant creeds unanimously called the Pope Antichrist."

"It is only after the Russian Revolution that Christians began to view Communism as the Antichrist system. Yet for 400 years before 1917, Catholicism was so identified by Protestants" (*Global Peace and the Rise of Antichrist*, pages 108, 136).

Turning Their Backs on History

History shows that the early Christians understood that the antichrist would arise when Rome fell. History shows that they were right. History shows that when the Reformation came, preachers, politicians and the populace declared that the pope was "the man of sin," the antichrist. History shows that the vast majority of Bible believers continued in this conviction until recent times. History shows that modern evangelicals are preaching a new doctrine when they refuse to believe that the pope is "the man of sin."

To reject the pope of Rome as "the man of sin" is to fly in the face of the martyrs and Bible-believers of all ages. It is to forget those who were burned at the stake because they dared translate or even possess a Bible in any language but Latin! To deny that the pope is "the son of perdition" is to turn one's back on the thousands of martyrs whose bodies were twisted and wrenched by the "Holy" Inquisition. To deny that the Roman Church is "the falling away" (apostasy) is to minimize the gross perversion of sound doctrine that still emanates from the Vatican.

Among the hottest items in the religious marketplace today are the sensational books and videos about "the rapture," "the tribulation" and the "antichrist" which the producers openly advertise as fic-

tion. Instead of prophecy-fiction, it would be a far more beneficial use of time, money and energy to produce historical documentaries on the church in the Middle Ages. Truth is stranger and more startling than fiction. Those who think that a future, mere seven years of tribulation could possibly be worse than the realities of the Dark Ages need to brush the dust off their history books. □

Note by author: Look in the next issue for "Part III: The Reality." Do the doctrines of Rome fulfill the details of the 2 Thessalonians 2 prophecy? Lord willing we will examine this vital question in the light of Scripture.

(Scripture in the preceding article is taken from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.)

READERS'...Response

(Continued from Page 12)

pray the sinner's prayer or only to ask Jesus into their heart. There is so much to read here. I have printed off some to read later...I'm so pleased to know you have a web page and that the Restoration Movement is alive and online.

"Keep up the good work!" (E-mail, web page response)

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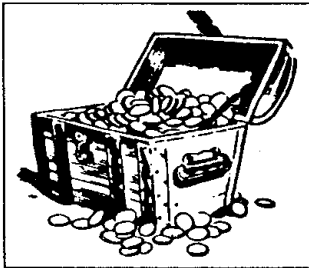
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"FROM the cowardice that shrinks from new truths, from the laziness that is content with half-truths, from the arrogance that thinks it knows all truth, O MIGHTY ONE OF TRUTH, deliver us."—Selected □

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Just Who Are These?

Just who are these I now behold
With garments purged and white as snow
Who look refreshed, renewed, and bold;
With shining faces all aglow?

These are the ones who know the Lord;
His blood has washed away their sin;
Their lives are now in sweet accord,
With peace of God and love within.

—By *James E. Gibbons*

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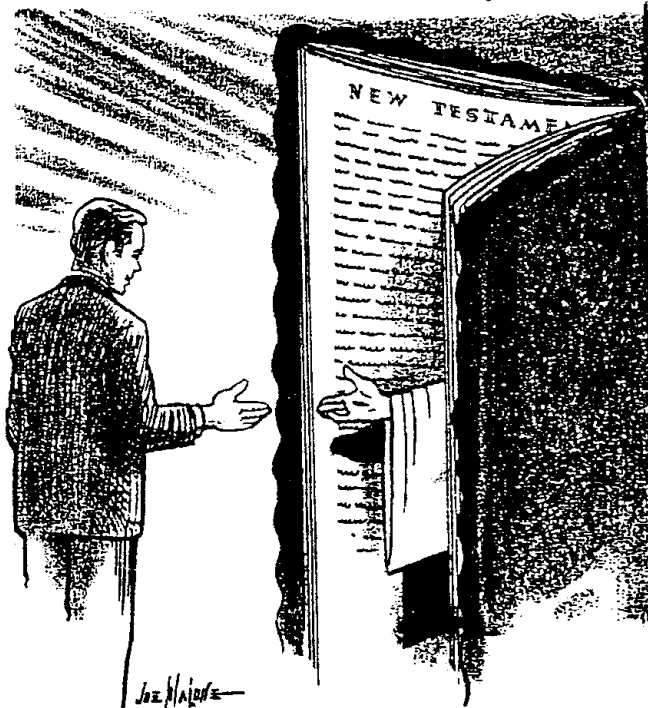
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