

RIVERBANK NEWS

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HOLINESS OR HELL?

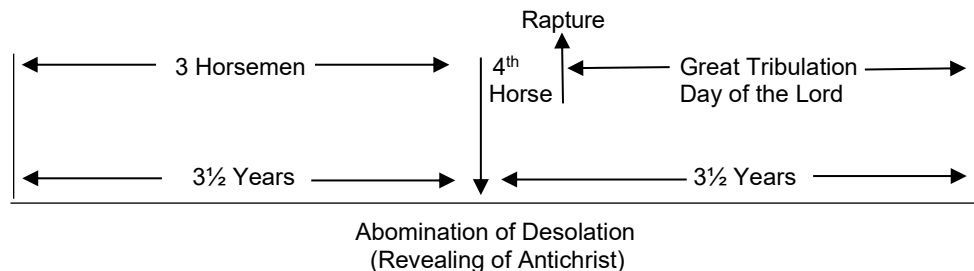
By Gordon F. Nelson

"Ye should earnestly contend for THE FAITH which was once delivered unto the saints." Jude 3

"Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand; a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness...Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: and rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and REPENTETH him of the evil." Joel 2:1-2, 12-15.

As we approach "the day of the LORD," mankind is contending with an angry God! Can men get God to repent "him of the evil"? This is the purpose of blowing the trumpet in Zion. *"WHO KNOWETH IF HE will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him...Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly. Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children...Let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O LORD, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is thy God?" Joel 2:14-17.*

The "Word-Faith" that teach the positive confession, and that they are "little gods," will be in for a great surprise as we approach the "day of the LORD." They could be asking the question, "Where is thy God?"



"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet BEFORE the coming of the great and dreadful DAY OF THE LORD: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children (away from their mothers) to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse!" Mal. 4:5-6. It is difficult for today's effeminate Christians to believe God would send a curse upon mankind. I believe AIDS is the

curse God has sent to the earth. Why? Due to women's rebellion over God's decree. *"And thy desire (Heb.- longing) shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee."* Gen. 3:16.

On the shores of the Red Sea, Miriam, Moses' sister, became the first Pentecostal prophetess. She *"took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances. And Miriam answered them, Sing ye to the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea."* Ex. 15:20-21.

Right after escaping the Egyptians by way of the Red sea, their very first stop was the bitter waters of Marah. These women, who for the most part were slaves to the very dead Egyptians being washed upon the shores of the Red sea, at the sight of these dead taskmasters, set them to singing and dancing.

"So Moses brought Israel...three days in the wilderness, and found no water. And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter...And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink?" Ex. 15:22-24. I believe these bitter waters of Marah were to be a reminder to the singers and dancers following after Miriam, of the original curse placed upon women which they so resent. *"I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee."* Gen. 3:16. In the expulsion from Eden, Eve lost her co-ruler status, or "dominion rights."

Until a woman comes to the waters of Marah (Heb.-bitter, or trouble), she is still like a caterpillar seeking to be turned into a butterfly. Women today, attempt to escape these bitter waters of Marah, and in some way blame God. By the use of pills and contraceptives, and even drugs, she seeks a cure of the curse of the waters of Marah. She'll even murder the unborn to escape this providential judgment by God. *"Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing (waters of Marah)."* 1 Tim. 2:15. Please, you'll be saved by these very waters of Marah, made sweet by the Lord, if only you can believe.

"And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression (Gk.- violation)." 1 Tim. 2:14. The man willfully sinned, yet the woman was charged with the violation. It seems unjust by our standards of judgment. Job, in speaking of God said, *"For he is not a man, as I am, that I should answer him, and we should come together in judgment."* Job 9:32. God is God. He doesn't require that a man agree with him. *"For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our King; he will save us."* Isa. 33:22.

"O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand." Jer. 18:6. *"If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them."* Jer. 18:8. A woman can come to the bitter waters of Marah and there find the Tree of Life, and the waters will be healed.

God is a God even of the bitter waters of Marah! I am not a woman's judge. God has His own controversy with women. The tree thrown into the bitter waters of Marah, is a type of the baptism of the Holy Ghost. God desires to sweeten the waters, even though He refuses to restore her lost dominion rights she so clamors for. Can't you accept this tree thrown into the "*bitter waters*"? "*For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people. To whom he said, This is the rest.*" Isa. 28:11-12. Can't you, as a woman, be content with His rest? "*Yet they would not hear.*"

I am not a woman's judge. God is the judge. But, from my viewpoint, a woman has very little scripture to base her argument upon that she is qualified to be an elder. Personally I believe the office of an apostle and the office of an elder are completely closed to a woman. All others are open.

"But I suffer not a woman to teach (as an elder), nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." 1 Tim. 2:12. *"Let your women keep silence in the churches (as elders): for it is not permitted unto them to speak (with the same authority as a ruling elder); but they are commanded to be under obedience as also saith the law. And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak (with the same authority of a ruling-teaching elder) in the church...But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant."* 1 Cor. 14:34-35,38.

The church was intended by God to be a school to learn how to behave at home. Jesus chose twelve apostles and not one was a woman. I did not write this book called the Bible. I accept it as God's Word. The apostles and elders were all men! *"The elders which are among you I exhort,"* said Apostle Peter, *"who am also an elder. Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight (rulership)."* 1 Pet. 5:1-2.

Queen Esther, even while single, was under the direction of Mordecai, a Jew. Esther's father and mother had died (Est. 2:7) and Mordecai took Esther as his own daughter. Esther was under a male all the days of her life. She was not a "free spirit," as we have in Christendom today.

God called me to be a Captain! The Lord said, "I give unto you a ship and you are the Captain!" I challenge every husband to become the captain of his own ship (his own family).

This same order is carried over into church worship, *"How is it then, BRETHREN? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying."* 1 Cor. 14:26.

As I understand 1 Corinthians 14:23-40, women were the audience! Every male was to minister; *"the elders which are among you."* 1 Pet. 5:1. *"Let your women keep silence in the (worship services) churches: for it is not permitted for them to speak: but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law."* 1 Cor. 14:34.

I believe the church at Antioch is the supreme example of how church should be conducted. *“Now there was in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers,”* along with Apostles Barnabas and Saul. *“As THEY ministered to the Lord (collectively), and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.”* Acts 13:1-2. There is nothing to indicate a woman ministered in the church of Antioch, where believers were first called Christians.

The Jews cannot build a synagogue until they have what is called a “minyan.” A minyan represents the minimum requirement to have any religious service; 10 men! or to build a synagogue.

Christianity is supposed to have its roots in Judaism. If you’ll read Matthew 18:15-20, it is speaking of discipline and government in the early church. The Gentile church did not require the presence of a “minyan,” or ten Christian men. However, from Judaism’s government came the demand for two or three elders! *“For where two or three (elders) are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”* Matt. 18:20. These two or three elders are not “family members,” as compared to the three names on a non-profit religious incorporation”; President, Vice President, and a Secretary-Treasurer.

The *RIVERBANK NEWS* is primarily sent to Pentecostal believers in Jesus Christ. Why? *“They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.”* Matt. 9:12. To the sick it is sent without charge. Why us? Because you’re the church that is always breaking out with putrefying sores (Jim and Tammy Bakker), and bleeding wounds (Jimmy Swaggart) in our daily newspapers, tabloids, and TV shows across America. I’m glad to be able to apply a tourniquet or Band-Aid to relieve until the Great Physician arrives. The devil knows there is only one power that can utterly destroy his kingdom, and that is the power of the Holy Ghost. *“But ye shall receive power (Gk.-dunamis or where we get the word “dynamite”), after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you.”* Acts 1:8.

As a new convert, and still a baby in the Lord myself, I entered this race toward perfectionism. The preachers present an “either” or an “or.” The “either” being “Unconditional Eternal Security,” and the “or” being “Holiness or Hell”! As babies in the new found faith, we rely upon those who watch over our souls to direct us correctly. I was nurtured, cradled and rocked to sleep every night by Dr. Bebe H. Patten for five years with the pabulum of perfectionism, and the milk of outward holiness.

During the first twenty years of my listening to Pentecostal preachers, I never heard the word “grace” ever emanate from behind the sacred pulpit. It was always the same red flag that the preachers waved in front of us; “Holiness or Hell!” Red flags are for matadors, not preachers. Of course, it was left to each individual preacher to explain his particular brand of holiness. In practice, this “holiness doctrine” simply revived the law, or legalism.

In the 1940's, when I was first introduced to Pentecostalism, the Assemblies of God were the chief interpreters of holiness to the other Heinz 57 varieties of Pentecostalism. We believed that every woman wearing lipstick would go to hell! She was a Jezebel because she wore paint on her face. Jezebel *"painted her face."* 2 Ki. 9:30.

Like the date-setters on the return of Christ, Pentecostalism doesn't like to be reminded of its roots of extreme legalism. I could always tell which preacher was having the greatest impact upon my father by whether or not he wore a tie. He deeply loved two preachers. One preacher would preach against the wearing of a necktie, while the other thought you could go to heaven in spite of the necktie. My father would always be putting on or taking off the necktie as each preacher made their pro and con sermon regarding the wearing of a necktie.

"Mixed bathing" was a sin in those days. Television, which brought Hollywood into the living room, was condemned by holiness preachers. No Christian attended the movies in Pentecostalism. Actually, if you enjoyed anything, you could find a Pentecostal preacher to condemn it. The late Dr. A.G. Canada, an Oakland, CA "Holiness or Hell" preacher on the radio during the 1960's, condemned all sex as lust, unless for reasons of procreation. But, he was never so holy as to prevent himself from being a *"lord over God's heritage,"* 1 Pet. 5:3, by way of his own family non-profit incorporation.

These holiness preachers became known as "clothesline" preachers. The skirts were too high, and the blouses too low. Many a woman was condemned to hell over a tube of lipstick! Instead of "Holiness or Hell," it was interpreted as "Lipstick or Hell" to many women folk! Many chose the lipstick!

Soon the Bible evolves into a legal law book, ever seeking more scriptures to condemn the guilty. What a horrible way to treat the greatest love story ever given to man. *"For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them upon men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers."* Matt. 23:4. The scribes and Pharisees sought ways to increase the burden upon the people, and enslave their minds to this task of obedience. *"While they promise them liberty, they (the preacher owning the church) themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage."* 2 Pet. 2:19. If a preacher owns the church, just stay out of it!

"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh of you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." 1 Pet. 3:15. "Holiness or Hell" and "Jesus Only" are compatible spirits, proven by the School of the Prophets that ordains both of them. In one sense, it is understandable because both doctrines are lies. It is "Holiness or Hell" lie, or the "Jesus Only" lie. Both teach they are the only ones going to heaven. In the spirit world, both are comfortable with

each other. The devil is the father of lies, and cares not which lie you believe; just so long as you believe a lie.

Perfectionism is a lie, whether you believe it or not. John Wesley proclaimed, "Give me one hundred men that truly love God and hate the devil, and I will rock the world." Methodism did that very thing with the great revival led by George Whitefield and the Wesley brothers. John Wesley chose as his successor in Methodism, a John Fletcher. John Fletcher lived such an extraordinary life of piety and outward holiness, that John Wesley said, "I believe you are a perfect man." John Fletcher answered, "I am." John Wesley was startled by his answer, but he said, "From that hour, I began to see the man's imperfections in abundance."

How do you get this message across to Pentecostal people? The only man declared perfect was Jesus Christ, and they crucified Him. If you were perfect, don't you think you'd at least spend one night in jail for the gospel?

The Apostle Paul said, "*Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers.*" Rom. 15:8. Do you believe that Apostle Paul knew who Jesus was? "*He came unto his own, and his own received him not.*" Jn. 1:11. "*I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*" Matt. 15:24. When Jesus sent the twelve, "*These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*" Matt. 10:5-6.

Isn't it strange that the disciples were warned to stay out of the cities of Samaria, but do not go into THE WAY of the Gentiles? The Way of the Gentiles was the worship of Caesar, for he ruled the known world. The Way of the Gentiles is to worship the state. You could choose any god, as long as that god was condoned by the state.

The Gentile's WAY OF RELIGION is to compromise with the State! It is never separated from the Secretary of State, President or Potentate. No part of Jesus ever was claimed by Rome, except the purple robe He wore. "*And when they had crucified him, they parted his garments, casting lots upon them, what every man should take.*" Mk. 15:24. Would you have been a part of this state lottery? You could thus own a piece of the purple robe that he wore? As an unbeliever, why would you want to win the lottery? That purple robe can easily represent a truth of scripture. You part the scriptures in exactly the same way as these Roman soldiers parted the purple robe of Jesus.

Purple is the color of royalty. It was a seamless robe, meaning it was not a series of patches sewn together. The robe was made from a single piece of cloth.

The Bible has a single story from Genesis to Revelation. It has 66 books, with about the same number of authors, yet it is a single piece of cloth. The single piece of cloth represents the single interpretation of scripture. *“Now I beseech you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the SAME MIND and in the SAME JUDGMENT.”* 1 Cor. 1:10.

As Christians, we are commanded, (You) *“study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman, rightly dividing (dispensational truth) the word.”* 2 Tim. 2:15. *“Let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.”* Rom 3:4.

I am against tradition, not women! *“Thus have ye made the word of God of none effect by your tradition.”* Matt. 15:6. According to Webster’s Dictionary, “tradition” means, “That body of Christian doctrine, handed down through successive generations - even if it may not be found in the Holy Scriptures.”