

Discerning the Simple Truth

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The din of mass confusion is increasing at such a pace that any attempt to make sense of it in our carnal minds leads only to further confusion. The voices of "reason" are many, coming from every direction and through every imaginable media. There are the "prophets," both secular as well as "Christian," all giving their spin on the events of the day. Then there are the truth seekers dedicated to exposing corruption in high places. And we have those who understand the "workings" of the evil forces and who expose how evil is forging ahead with its agenda. The clamor is escalating in intensity until even despair is coming upon many. Who do we trust? Where do we turn? Who will help us? Homes are being lost, families are hungry. And we are beginning to hear of once very wealthy and powerful men committing suicide when the thing to which they devoted their lives, and in which they trusted, has failed.

It is thoroughly mind-boggling the number of religions in the world. Even in what is considered the "Christian church" there are countless denominations, all espousing their own "truths" as being from the Bible. Is it remotely possible for truth to be so diverse? And how does it relate to what is happening all around us? Where do we go? What do we do? Who do we believe?

In answer to the disciples' question regarding "the end of the world," Jesus said, *"And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not disturbed; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet."* (Matthew 24:6 EMTV).

In this article, we will look at some current events and how they apply to us. We will follow the trail from the very early days to the present and beyond, bringing into perspective the "one thing" that is needful. Stay with me as we examine several issues, and at the end the point will be very clear.

Unity?

To begin with, let's look at the definition of "denomination." We need to look first at the word "heresy" which is translated from the Greek word "hairesis" and is defined as "*choice, a party, or disunion.*" The same word is also translated as "sect" which means "**denomination**" as well as "faction," a synonym of which is "division." How can there be unity in division? Whether denominational or non-denominational, the present day "church" is divided. How can we consider ourselves the Body of Christ when there is no unity?

Just as there are "wars and rumors of war" in the world, there are also wars within the so-called Body of Christ. This is not a new thing; the warring began before the ekklesia was born. It goes back to Ishmael and Isaac, the two sons of Abraham. Of course, the one was born according to the flesh, which is Ishmael and known today as the "Arab nations." The other was Isaac who was born according to the promise of God to Abraham and Sarah. We see war again in the womb of Isaac's wife, Rebekah, where the twins Jacob and Esau already struggled with each other before they were born.

As we shared in a previous article, Esau turned out to be the fleshly one of Isaac and Rebekah's twins who took up with the daughter of his uncle Ishmael, another man of flesh. These two began an unholy alliance which to this day has hated and warred against Jacob (Israel). We hear about it daily in the news media - some in favor of the Arabs and others in favor of Israel.

Two "faiths"

Many in the Arab nations have their own religion which is based on hatred and murder. They are promised wonderful things in a glorified death, as can be read at: <http://www.wnd.com/index.php?fa=PAGE.view&pageId=85512> This is the absolute opposite of the true Christian faith passed down from Abraham, through Isaac and Jacob, and consummated in the death and resurrection of the promised "Seed," Jesus Christ the Son of God. The true Christian faith is based on love and life, personified in God who is Love and His Son who is Life.

The "faith" of the descendants of Ishmael, the son of flesh, remains true to the death that is inherent in flesh. At the same time, the faith of those who received the promised Messiah of Isaac's son Jacob's descendants (Israel) remains true to the Life that is inherent in the Spirit of Jesus.

Because of Israel's rebellion toward God in earlier days, He responded to their unfaithfulness with these words:

They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities: and I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation.
(Deuteronomy 32:21)

We know from the bible that Israel was regarded as the "spouse of Jehovah," and He spoke of their unfaithfulness as being "adultery." And the "foolish nation" is the Gentiles of the world who would be offered salvation through faith in Jesus and His finished work on the Cross. We, the Gentiles, or "non-Jews," are God's instrument to provoke His beloved Israel to jealousy. But it does not stop there. Jesus, His Son, will have His own spouse, the Bride of Christ, who will be made up of every person who has put their trust in Him and remained faithful to Him.

We will get back shortly to the spiritual implications in these end times, but first we must look closer at . . .

Ishmael's influence

Abraham's son according to the flesh has greater influence in lives around the world than can be seen at first glance. Of course, we are talking about his descendants, the Arab nations. One of which has come to my attention at this particular time, and even tonight, January 8, 2009.

We know God promised Abraham that both his sons would be blessed. It is interesting to note from this passage in Genesis that Ishmael's sons were called "princes." "*These are the sons of Ishmael, and these are their names, by their towns, and by their castles; twelve princes according to their nations.*" (Genesis 25:16)

We must not become complacent in thinking Ishmael's influence is restricted to his brother's descendants. Today, there is one of these "princes" who has incredible influence around the world. He is a Saudi Arabian prince, the grandson of the founder of Saudi Arabia. In **Freedom From Bondage – A Vital Lesson*, I gave two addresses to this prince's web site, which is "kingdom.com." He fills the role of executive chairman, as can be seen at this address:

http://www.kingdom.com.sa/en/mng_ExecChairman.asp (Please copy and paste it into your browser. I prefer not to link to it.)

Prince Alwaleed is the name, and for his 54 years has achieved unbelievable numbers of things. He gained his education from numerous US and other universities, he holds 14 doctorates - many of them "honorary," he has been awarded 41 medals, and the list goes on with dozens of outstanding "achievements" and honors world-wide. One such honor is this one from Kenya: "2005: The medal of "The Order of the Golden Heart of Kenya"; bestowed upon Prince Alwaleed by Kenyan President, Mwai Kibaki." 1

Among the prince's many business investments can be found this one in my country, Canada: "1994: Investment of \$120 million to acquire 22% of the Four Seasons Hotels Inc., a Canadian luxury hotel chain. In 2007, the Board of Directors of Four Seasons jointly agreed to the US\$ 3.8 billion acquisition deal by Prince Alwaleed and Bill Gates with Isadore Sharp (the founder)." 2 And we Canadians have believed all along that the *Four Seasons Hotel* chain is Canadian owned. On the Four Seasons web site there is no mention of the prince or Bill Gates' ownership.

Who is this "prince," and how has he so easily imposed himself upon the whole world in this fashion? Another alarming piece of news came out tonight (January 8/09) after a meeting of some US senators with *Citigroup*. They are hoping to include a proposal with the coming stimulus package. As the article on ***Reuters* web site says, "Financial giant Citigroup Inc will support a proposal in Congress to rewrite U.S. bankruptcy law to help

troubled mortgage borrowers avoid foreclosure." This begs the question, "What would that 'help' entail?" What would it really mean to those needing help?

Why are we talking about this? The answer can be found in this part of a paragraph from kingdom.com:

Perhaps no single transaction has catapulted Prince Alwaleed to the world's financial stage in as spectacular a fashion as did his acquisition in 1991 of Citibank (subsequently, Citigroup) stocks. Few people could then imagine that a Saudi Arabian, and a royal at that, would burst onto the international scene, seemingly out of nowhere, to invest so heavily in one of the major banks of the world and to help restore it to such health that it would become the leading financial institution in the world.

Further on in the paragraph we read more of this arrogant prince's bragging how "*as Citigroup's largest individual shareholder, that segment of his total portfolio now constitutes the biggest portion of his wealth.*" It makes one wonder what is behind this endeavor by a "son" of Ishmael to amass such vast wealth, and to be involved in companies on a global scale. He has invested millions upon millions of dollars in numerous businesses, many thought to be "American." A few such businesses are *Fairmont Hotels & Resorts, Saks Incorporated* (which operates Saks Fifth Avenue department stores), *New York Plaza Hotel, Apple Computers Inc., AOL Time Warner., eBay Inc., Procter & Gamble and Walt Disney*, among others. He is also involved in major media enterprises, including "News Corp., which encompasses Harper Collins, The Sunday Times-UK, Fox News, Sky, Star TV and many more."

What role does the Saudi Arabian prince play in the end time scheme? We may try to figure it out, as are many others who tell us who they believe "the Antichrist" is, but I don't believe the Lord is desirous that we know just "what, who or where." He has better things in mind for His own. Yes, we are to know the signs of the times, but He tells us simply to *look up, for our redemption is drawing nigh.* (Luke 21:28) His will for us is spiritual "discernment" - not carnal "figuring it out."

More confusion

With the world as large and populous as it is, with peoples, nations, languages, churches, denominations, races, religions, political leanings, Bible versions and prophecy interpretations; in addition to the multitude of things in the devil's arsenal, the confusion escalates. With so many "voices" telling us to "look here," "look there," or "listen to me, I have the answer," it is more and more difficult to maintain a sense of true direction if we tune in to the confusing babble.

It matters not how many millions there are in Ishmael and Esau's lineage, or to what extent they have insinuated themselves into our lives. There is much "babbling" within the ranks of those who name the Name of Christ, believing they are a part of His Body.

As the coming of the Lord approaches, it is more and more important that we exercise keen discernment, especially **within the Body**.

Jesus' main concern is our relationship with Him and one another, but as the days, months and years progress, we will see much distress among those who name His Name.

We have been talking about Ishmael, the son born according to the flesh, and how this "blessed son" of Abraham has forged ahead on a destructive path against Isaac's descendants Israel. Paul spoke about this in Galatians, chapter 4. He showed how Ishmael's mother, Hagar, is a type of the Law of Moses, given at Mount Sinai. This "Hagar" bore children into slavery under the Law which pertained to flesh, with adherence in the strength of flesh. Sarah is representative of "Jerusalem which is above" - the free ones, born of the Spirit and not under any law. Galatians 4:29 tells us, "*But just as then the one who was born according to the flesh persecuted the one born according to the Spirit, so it is also now.*"

Until Jesus returns, this battle between flesh and Spirit will intensify and affect every one of us. As we've said many times in other articles, the devil's temptation of mankind to acquire the knowledge of good and evil precipitated the fall of man to a mere creature of flesh. It is through flesh that Satan gains influence, which was his plan at the outset. We're not talking about the flesh covering our bones, but the "self" life of every person. As Paul the Apostle said, "*For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; . . .*" (Galatians 5:17) Within every one of us there is the flesh (self) that must always submit to the Spirit if we are born of the Spirit and desire to walk by the Spirit. But here we will be talking about the flesh of the legalists against the Spirit in those born anew.

The devil loves legalism. You see, he works in the realm of flesh. Yes, he is the prince of the power of the air, ruling in the evil spiritual realm, but he accomplishes his work on earth through the unregenerate crowd. He especially loves those who name the Name of Christ but are not truly born of the Spirit. To be brutally honest, such pseudo-Christians are liars, just like their father the devil who, in essence, "fathered" flesh in the Garden of Eden.

The letter kills, but the Spirit makes alive

Second Corinthians 3:6 speaks of the Law as being the "letter that kills." In that chapter, Paul was saying how the Law was the "ministration of condemnation" but the "ministration of the Spirit" is the "ministration of righteousness." The Law could never give life because in reality it was the "law of the flesh," given as a guideline for "flesh" to live by. Paul addressed this in Galatians 2:21, when he said "*I do not annul the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died for nothing.*"

The "ministration of condemnation" exposed Israel's guilt in their inability to fully obey every part. Another quote from Paul's writings tells us, "*Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.*"

(Romans 3:20) Since sin is the "transgression of the Law," (1 John 3:4) and Jesus "put away sin" by the sacrifice of Himself, fulfilling the Law once and for all, why do we still hear so much about sin? And why is it the focus in "evangelizing," when Jesus came to give Life?

This preoccupation with "sin" has so permeated the "church" that countless numbers of people, having asked "forgiveness for their sins," believe they are "born again" and go about using the New Testament as a book of laws. The result is that thing of which Paul spoke regarding the two covenants symbolized in Hagar and Sarah, as we spoke of earlier. The pseudo-believers are in conflict with the true believers. Not only does the pseudo crowd put themselves in bondage to "law" but they desire to place others in bondage. This wallowing in self and flesh gives them a feeling of great satisfaction. They "feel" a sense of accomplishment when they can "convert" another to adherence to their perceived "book of laws," which is how they view the New Covenant.

Again, we quote Paul with this passage from Galatians:

As many as wish to make a good showing in the flesh, these compel you to get circumcised (abide by laws), only so that they should not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. For not even those who are circumcised keep the law themselves, but they wish you to be circumcised that they may boast in your flesh. Gal 6:12-13 EMTV (Bracketed text added)

Paul's next words convey a message we all must keep in mind. *"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. **For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision (obeying laws) avails any thing, nor uncircumcision (not obeying laws), but a new creature.*** Galatians 6:14-15 (Bracketed text added)

Do we hear what Paul is saying? As true believers, the only glorying we should do is in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is by Him that the world is put to death in us, and we are crucified to the world. There is ONE THING that is EVERYTHING - and that is being a "new creature" in Christ Jesus! Hear Jesus' word in John 3:6-7. *"That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'" (EMTV)*

For these thousands of years, there has been the battle between flesh (Ishmael) and spirit (Israel and his Seed). The Law was given to Israel to point them to their Messiah who would put to death flesh on their behalf, as well as on the behalf of the rest of the world. *"For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil."* (1 John 3:8b)

Now, in these closing days of time, the battle between flesh and Spirit will intensify. We already see an intensifying of battle between the Arab world and the Jews. But we will see a painful "battle" between the would-be bride and the true Bride of Christ. The devil will empower all who have not received the love of the truth that they might be saved. I believe we can expect there will be warring of flesh against Spirit such as has never

before been seen. Paul spoke words of comfort to the Thessalonians of his day, and we too can take comfort in the same.

Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which you have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle. Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, who has loved us, and has given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and establish you in every good word and work. (2 Thessalonians 2:15-17)

Many accounts have been coming in from folks who are grieved at what they see happening all around. I believe we all are experiencing the same in some measure. Although the earlier paragraphs may have been a bit harsh in tone, they come from a grieving heart. Others have said similar things, but for myself I have had first-hand experience in seeing how the "legalists" attack those operating in the Grace of God. We will likely witness some who have been in sweet fellowship with others but will be drawn back into the strong current of flesh that comes through New Testament "law abiding." This is the time when walking by the Spirit will have to be our very life-line. In those who walk by the flesh, there will come increasing blindness to the truth. Only the Holy Spirit can open their eyes. But with the separation of true and false, tares and wheat, wolves and sheep, the day will come when it is too late. Nothing we can do will reach them.

The reality of such should break our hearts and move us to intercession for any whom the Spirit can yet reach. He is the only One who can! The flesh can only talk - it is the Spirit who prays, and who must pray through us. Let us offer ourselves as living sacrifices unto God, that He might be Light shining through us.

For all the billions of souls on this planet, and for all the confusing facets that abound, God holds the world in the palm of His hand. He **breathed** life into man at creation. In Him we will be one, with Jesus and one another - His body.

Christ's Bride - His Body

In John, chapter 17, we find Jesus' prayer to the Father. He begins with these words:

Father, the time has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, just as **You have given Him authority over all flesh**, so that He will give eternal life to all You have given Him. And **this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ**, whom You have sent. (Verses 1-3 EMTV).

Later on He says, "*And I am no longer in the world, yet these are in the world, and I am coming to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name which You have given to Me, that they may be one just as We are.*" (John 17:11 EMTV).

All we who have come to Jesus make up His corporate Body. Because we are born of the Spirit, that makes us "brothers and sisters" in Christ. Do we resemble our Father? Is His Son being formed in us? "*We know that we have passed over from death to life, because we love the brothers. He who does not love his brother abides in death.*" (1 John 3:14 EMTV).

All this time, Ishmael has been trying to take by force the inheritance given to Isaac's son Israel. And in the "religious" world, creatures of flesh have attempted to "reach Heaven" through their own efforts. In both camps there is hate - not love. The end will be death - not Life.

We bear the mark of the Lord Jesus. His Spirit lives within us, joining us to one another, and will be our salvation when all around us are taking the mark of the beast in order to survive. Believers in Jesus, having true faith in Him, need not take the mark. He is our Sufficiency! He is our Life!

And that, my Friends, is the simple truth! No more confusion, no more complexities - just Jesus and Life in Him, the One whose **breath** will consume "that Wicked" one as Paul told the Thessalonians. (2 Thess. 2:8) Man's life began with the breath of God, and the ultimate manifestation of man's fallen flesh will end with the breath of Jesus.

And He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying out; neither shall there be any more pain, for **the former things have passed away**. Revelation 21:4 EMTV

1. English_CV_May_2008.pdf - page 3 (found on kingdom.com)
2. English_CV_May_2008.pdf - page 11 (found on kingdom.com)

* http://www.ekklesia4him.net/freedom_from_bondage_vital_lesson.html

** <http://www.reuters.com/article/2009/01/09/us-mortgage-citigroup-senate-idUSN0854743320090109?feedType=RSS&feedName=topNews>