

God's Word Lost

God's Word Lost Kansas City Transcript March, 2005

Introduction:

When I was asked to visit with you today, I initially wanted to bring you a teaching on the four levels of Hebraic study and understanding out of the first chapter of a new booklet I'm writing. It has a working title of "The Gospel in God's Festivals" and wonderfully demonstrates God's salvation plan in multiple dimensions of understanding through God's appointed "feasts" or festivals.

Or, I thought it would be profitable to give you some additional insights on "Overcoming The Fear Within," that would add depth to the book I wrote by the same name. I am always asking the Lord for greater discernment and revelation on how we get so entangled in Satan's deceptions.

Thus, when, on a seven hour ride back from Illinois, I began asking what God would have me speak upon today, the Lord began a stirring inside and opening my eyes to some things I want to bring forth this afternoon that point to the title I've given this message, "God's Word Lost." I'd like you to turn with me to:

(John 9:39-10:5 KJV) And Jesus said, for judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind. And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, are we blind also? Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, we see; therefore your sin remaineth. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not

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by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.

What Jesus was saying to the Pharisees was that because they said they could “see” and proudly held to their interpretation of God’s word and their own traditions, they were blind and remained in sin. In contrast His own beloved sheep know His voice and follow Him. In this hour the Lord is calling his true sheepfolds into the light of His word, restoring His truths within them, and setting them free from the bonds of Satan’s grasp. In this move of God, He is pouring out upon His sheep a greater discernment to recognize that there are those that Jesus called “thieves and robbers” who have entered in to take us captive. Don’t think these are necessarily always men, but rather as Paul says there are many deceiving spirits and the spirit of antichrist which is in the world. But Jesus said that (John 17:14) *we are not of the world, even as he was not of the world.*

In the time we have together some of your theological beliefs may be tested as I share some observations that I hope will challenge your thinking – and hopefully your beliefs and resulting actions. And, we are going to come into agreement with Jesus’ as He prayed for us in *John 17:15 (when He prayed to the Father) I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.* In the end, I believe that the Lord would have us pray for greater discernment that we may be better intercessory watchmen on the wall to which we are called.

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Prayer: Our gracious heavenly Father full of mercy and truth your word says that the sacrifices you accept are a broken spirit; and a broken and a contrite heart, (Psa 51:17). By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the LORD *men* depart from evil. (Prov 16:6) So we pray today Lord that by your mercy we might enter into understanding of your truths, be cleansed by your word and empowered by your Spirit. Give us a humble heart and stir up the fear of the Lord within us that we may receive wisdom and understanding, and a greater discernment to recognize your voice and the enemy's deceptions. Bring glory unto yourself only. We ask in Jesus name, amen.

Message: Down through man's history he has continued to lose and then sometimes to re-discover secrets revealed long ago. Solomon saw this and said, (Eccl 1:9 NIV) *What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun.* And so especially it is with the things that God has given to mankind for our understanding of Him, his plans, and the kingdom we can not see with our natural eyes.

For example, God gave Shem the understanding of the salvation plan in the mosaic of the stars. However, Satan has so perverted the meaning of the heavenly picture that most Christians are oblivious to that ancient understanding and are, in fact, more inclined to flee away from that revelation of God.¹ Likewise, God has given us a wonderful revelation of his plan in the festivals of the Lord, but most Christians having been unknowingly nurtured into an anti Semitic attitude toward the Jewish-ness of our spiritual heritage, call them only the "Jewish feasts." Most believers don't even understand the witness of Jesus in the spring feasts and the prophetic nature (AND

¹ See Witness of the Stars by E.W. Bullinger

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TIMING) of His second coming in the Fall festivals. This is truly God's Word lost.

We believe or want to believe that our pursuit of God is pure and holy, because not one of us doesn't love Him and want to be pure and righteous. But, have we been blinded by Satan's outworking in the doctrines of man that have been an integral part of our worship since before you and I were born? In order to answer that question we need to look at church history and the Word.

Church history!?! – That was the very class in college, more than 40 years ago, that I found to be absolute drudgery. We studied the doctrines of the early church fathers – people like Barnabas, Ignatius, Justin Martyr and Irenaeus in their old, archaic ways of writing. We had to memorize all the doctrinal shifts, church splits, councils and creeds that were little more than facts and figures which I thought I'd forgotten long ago. And yet, here I was merrily on my way back from Chicago and the Spirit of God was reminding me of all this history and showing me its impact on us – today! An abbreviated history can be read in the appendix.

My message for today's meeting is to share with you the observable results of church history on the 20th and 21st century church.

Before I get to that church review, let's understand that we are only the reflection of a pattern (see page 27) that has been going on since the beginning of time and actually brought Immanuel, God with us, the first time.

In the beginning God spoke directly to His creation. But only by God's divine intervention was a godly line preserved via Noah, through Shem (and even his seed fell away). But the

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understanding of God's plan and Word were lost or distorted through man's disobedience. Thus we lost the understanding of God's salvation plan in the stars and in the ordinances that had been given. Then God began his first restoration when he called Abraham out of his families' idolatry and established His covenant with him and his seed after him. But during their captivity in Egypt idolatry became rampant.

Then some 3500 years ago came the restoration of His word and new covenant, when God gave Moses His book of instructions, or Torah, contained in the first five books of the Bible. For the next 1100 years, until about 400 BC, the Lord gave direction and spoke through the prophets and kings. Then the Word was silent until the time of our Savior's first coming. All through this 1500 year period between 1500bc to Christ, the Word was corrupted by two things 1) Israel's walking away from God's commandments and living the way they thought best and 2) the rationalization and systematic ordering of Pharisaic laws that substituted for God's directions to His people. But, all through this period, God, through his prophets, kept trying to call His people back unto Him from their repeated idolatry.

Thus, on the one hand we had man's sin blinding his way and on the other we had a priesthood that led the people astray from God and his ways, into a form of religion and worship that was directed by man's instructions and interpretations. In fact many of the "laws" of the Pharisees were contrary to the very Spirit of the written Word.

So after 1500 years God sent the light of the world, the very Word incarnate, and Jesus taught God's law with new understanding and authority, "*For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. (Mat 7:29 KJV)*" He taught that sin, the breaking of God's laws, were not just as a man did, but rather what a man thought – that which was in man's heart.

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Did he not say in (Mat 5:28 KJV) *But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.* He did His Father's work and healed on the Sabbath declaring that their man-made laws were not the intent of the Father's command to remember the Sabbath and keep it holy. In our modern vernacular, Jesus told them that they dotted the "I's" and crossed the "T's" when it came to preserving themselves and following their own laws, but negated God's commands. Jesus said, "*(Mark 7:12,13 NIV) Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like that.*" Jesus made it very clear that man's religious traditions nullify the word of God. In (Mat 23:23 KJV) Jesus judged the Pharisees of neglecting *the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith:* and the real meaning and obedience to God's laws.

Our Savior came to offer himself as the once for all sacrifice for our sins, glorify His father and make known the Father's name of Yahweh (which had been lost to the common people), begin building His church, establish His kingdom in our hearts, and much more including **to set His Word straight once again.** And then, He asked his Father to send the Holy Spirit to be our teacher. So God always had a plan to re-establish **God's word lost.** Up until now he has restored His word four times: through Shem, Abraham, Moses and finally Jesus,

Oh, how He loves his children. I tell you, that without His intimate love and guiding word, I would not be standing before you today. I would have never survived my foolishness, the many death attempts of Satan or the burnings of my soul that God has put me through. Certainly, I'd be six feet in the ground many times over from my youth on up.

The Fruit of 1900 years of church history

So what has happened to the Word in the 1900 years since Jesus' coming? As we consider the fruit of our church history and then highlight a few things, I think we will more clearly understand the apostle John's warning in 1 John 2:18: *Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.* He further warned us, (1 John 4:1 KJV) *Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.* Since the time of Christ there were those who tore down, deceived and twisted the way, truth and life that Jesus brought to us that we would be led astray and not produce the fruits of the Spirit.

Are we hearing the truth of the Word and God's voice like His sheep ought to be? Or do we believe in doctrines of men that have led His beloved church into accepting an anti-Semitic, humanistic, twisted message of an easy salvation and sinful actions without consequences? In order that we may discern our true state let's become fruit inspectors because Jesus said: (Luke 6:43 NIV) "No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. So let's see what tree we've been feeding from as we look at some of the fruit of the church over the last century.

While I'm going to focus on some bad fruit, let's keep in mind that the church has also produced much good fruit as well. Believe me that I don't speak of these negative observations without recognizing the great hand of God that has moved in the church to draw your soul and mine into salvation, feeding the poor, caring for the suffering and many good works. So I do not speak out of a heart of discord, but one that cries at the mixture that shouldn't be. But let us view some of these things and really ask ourselves what are we seeing: 1) a reflection of

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the Holy Spirit's move of intimacy or 2) an antichrist (instead of Christ) spirit at work?

The first church was simple. By 70 AD the church was so persecuted by the unregenerated Jews, they moved out of the tabernacles and went from house to house, allowing the gifts of the Spirit to teach them with the oversight of Apostles and ministers like Timothy and Titus. God's church "government" was gifted with the apostles, prophets, teachers, and pastors to help in bringing the body to maturity. The believers were so persecuted and generally poor, there was not a building or the traditional church sign out front to alert the Roman soldiers. (Have you ever wondered how we got from there to the church we have today? See the abbreviated church history beginning on page 27.)

I live surrounded by unregenerated bachelors ranging in age from 55 to 72. One of the greatest resistances to their accepting the gospel message is not Jesus Christ as Savior (because they can mentally ascent to that), but rather the reflection of the church which they see as morally more corrupted than their own walk of self survival, fornication and materialism. Furthermore, they believe the "church" portrays a dispeccable piety and "do what I say, not what I do" testimony. What do we see? Without embracing a critical spirit, let's honestly look at what I'll call the dirty dozen manifestations of the contemporary church.

1. How often have we seen preachers living in sin until the light of day shines upon their iniquities? No denominational representative has been exempt either. The news is full of child molestations in the Catholic Church, adultery in the protestant churches and divorce among preachers greater than in the world. To the world, there are precious few preachers who are

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perceived as not being hypocritical. (Incidentally, most of the worldly neighbors say Billy Graham is the exception to rule.)

2. Have we heard an abundance of out of context scriptural applications, or what is called “sound byte” theology, to support or elevate a preacher’s position? One example of this I’ve heard more than once from the pulpit in the prophetic/apostolic movement is Eph 2:20, 21. In speaking about a man’s role in building the spiritual church, Paul said, *“And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: (Eph 2:20, 21) Can you fathom the blind pride of individuals quoting this scripture and applying it to themselves - not realizing that Paul was talking about the apostles (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses) and prophets of old?!*

3. In that same context, have we, as part of the body of Christ, not repeatedly observed individuals building their own kingdoms or empires - under the guise of building God’s kingdom? The apostles preached that we were to follow their example as they follow the example of Christ (I Cor 11:1). But not one of them ever said “follow me” like many today do. They all said, follow Christ. Even Paul said follow my example of Christ. Are we witnessing a perponderance of building up of the body to bring us all into perfection or simply building buildings and idolization of men – isn’t that just like saying I’m of Apollos, I’m of Cephas (I Cor 1:12)?

4. Have we not seen the apostasy of homo-sexual spiritual leadership being established in the Church? I read an article just last week that stated “a group of more than 70 Maryland church leaders, representing eight Christian denominations, voiced support for same-sex “marriage,” which would be banned under a state constitutional amendment that is expected

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to be introduced in the House. Are not all these signs of **God's Word lost?**

5. Haven't we seen many prideful, man-centered prophecies so intent on building up the false and individual kingdoms that they conflict with biblical principles or the very character of God? Where does that leave us when we know the Word says in *1 Th 5:20 Despise not prophesyings*. I tell you where it leaves me. It leaves me remembering a childhood incident.

When I was a lad, I did as most kids and always wanted to "sample or sip" on my daddy's coffee. And even though it wasn't too good without cream and sugar, I'd make like it was real good anyway because this was my dad sharing his coffee with me. But one day we were out camping on our family vacation and dad made his coffee by throwing the grounds into a pot and letting them boil. After a few minutes, to let it settle he'd pour a cup and I was right there to snatch a sip. Well this time when I took my sip it was more spitting and "pisths" as the bitter grounds hit my tongue. That's what much prophecy is today – a bit bitter and heavy - along with drink. We must test the spirits to see of what spirit they are.

In regards to this, we need to see what God says our responsibility is when we follow an individual who would lead us the wrong way. Let us read (*Deu 13:1-3*) *If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth (test) you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.* In other words, a prophet may demonstrate signs and wonders, but if he teaches a doctrine that leads you to

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other gods (i.e. mammon/money, self determination, pride, external kingdom building, etc.), then we must not follow because the Lord is testing our love for Him.

6. And speaking of testing the spirits – are we closing our eyes to the repeated disclosure of well known prophets that have been led by familiar spirits² – even before their salvation and for years after – in the church? Why can't we, God's sheep hear the voice of Jesus?

7. Have we observed the rise (and sometimes fall) of questionable doctrines - such as universal salvation or the "gospel of inclusion" – which is the belief that everyone will be saved (This was popularized by Herbert W. Armstrong, and just recently Carlton Pierson.³ has led his followers that way.) and the prosperity/name it and claim doctrine of just the past decade? Why can't we see that we like these unscriptural theologies because they appeal to our flesh and don't require a crucified life?

8. Have we not seen much financial kingdom building abuse in the name of building the kingdom of God? Have we forgotten that the kingdom of God is within us? Is this **God's Word lost?** Does God really need to plead for your money, over and over again, to build His kingdom? Oh God have mercy upon us.

9. More recently we have seen many, many churches and church leaders endorse a pair of books that uses at least fifteen different translations of the Word to support its thesis. (Did you know there were that many translations?) This is a thesis whose proven result and inticement is church service and growth.

² Isaiah 8:19

³ Chrisma Magazine, May 2002

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When that thesis exalts being driven by a purpose - and not the Holy Spirit of the Living God is this not humanistic theology and the true **Word lost?**

10. Haven't we seen the doctrine of the Nicolations permeate the church of Jesus Christ? In case you're unclear, the Nicolation doctrine was a symbolic name of a group that believed in the hierarchy of a ruling class over the rest of the people, developing a "pecking order" of fleshly leadership. Through this leadership they brought apostasy into the early church. Jesus said he hated the deeds of the Nicolations. As I mentioned before, God gave us church order in the giftings of men. And yet we have blindly accepted these gifts to the church as demigods instead of respecting them as overseers as was in the early church. Instead of the Holy Spirit leading people into all truth, many have followed leadership that lords over them and tells them what truth is. Have we quit discerning, quit thinking, quit seeking the Lord and become only pew sitters? This is more of the Word lost.

11. Have not we seen a renewed ecumenical movement that advocates unity and peace among the denominations under the umbrella of "love each other" and not the Spirit of Christ? Don't we know that it is Jesus and His Spirit that will bring us into the "unity of the Spirit" and not some man made doctrinal compromises?

12. Speaking of doctrinal differences – when will we learn to disagree and not judge with accompanying attacks and accusations? We must be very careful that our differences don't support a spirit of separation and judgment. Remember: ***Matthew 7:1,2 says: Judge not, that ye be not judged. 2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.***

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So instead of the church being the light throughout the entire world, can't we see why it has become the gazing stock to the world?

Now then, as intercessors on the wall, I hope your spirit is ready to wait for God's mercy and forgiveness, and ask for greater discernment. But, in case we'd like to attribute all this to "the other guy," let me touch on the "dirty dozen" observations and questions of our own individual situations that are not necessarily reflected in the wider picture of the church or church system.

It is easy to see the faults of the person sitting next to you, isn't it. However, our own individual faults are sometimes hard to identify. As I mention some of these things let it bring light and life. Don't think I'm condemning or judging anyone because I won't - out of the fear of the Lord and the truth of His word when it says: *(Luke 6:37 KJV) Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned.*

I'm the first one to recognize how easily we can fall into Satan's deception and not see the faults and controlling thoughts within ourselves. As some of you know I spent more than 30 years in corporate America. I rose to a esteemed position within my profession, and believed I was a moral and righteous man. I never thought that I would ever break one of the first commandments of God – Thou shall have no other gods before me. However, when I was called into full time ministry and found myself without a steady paycheck and some lousy thinking, I found out very differently. I did have things in my life that were gods – but unknown to my conscious mind or perception.

But, you may ask, "If I can't easily see my faults, how do I know what they are?" I believe one way to know our heart is

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to be honest about what pushes our buttons. If someone says something you disagree with – it's ok. But when your stomach knots up, anger, bitterness, rejection, offense, or any other manifestation comes forth that is counter to the agape love of God, recognize that there is a problem and allow – no, cry out for - God to deal with it. So let us look at ourselves.

1. I seem to observe that precious few Christians have the peace of God in their lives. God's people seem to be tormented by an inner nagging that something in them is wrong. As a result, their faith wobbles and the certainty of their salvation is shaken.

2. Are we seeing the absence of gossip in our lives?

3. Have we left our judgments/condemnations of others at the altar?

4. Are we absent of strife and contention in the body? Or is there a inner striving to be recognized and obtain position/control?

5. Are we so comfortable/insistent in our doctrines that when we hear a contrary belief or theology we attribute the internal conflict to an attack of the enemy? In other words, "blame, reigns."

6. Are we so resistant to change that when the Holy Spirit tugs at our heart we only let it affect us for the moment – letting the devil steal the thought or urging from us - with no resulting long term repentance and change.

7. Have we laid down all addictions?

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8. Are we so prideful of our denominational affiliations and doctrines that all others are wrong?

9. Do we know our way so well that we seldom ask God and neglect to test the spirits?

10. Has the fire of love in our hearts for Him AND His Word waned? Do you not remember that when the Israelites lusted in the wilderness, God gave them their way but sent leanness to their souls. (Psa 106:15) Is this happening to us?

11. Are we so busy with life that bible study and prayer are not a part of life every day?

12. Do we look at ourselves with love or disgust? Jesus summarized all the commandments of God contained in the law and the prophets into only two commandments. (*Mat 22:37-40*) *Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.* The author of Galatians says: (*Gal 5:14 KJV*) *For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.* On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. Now let me ask you again. Do we love our own self? If the devil has us snookered and we don't, then we cannot possibly follow the command of Jesus. Let me say that again because we often come under a false humility. You must love yourself – the beautiful creation that God made and is forming, in order to love your neighbor.

All these observations – some of which may have made you squirm, sad or nod in agreement - contain a fruit as a result of the tree we have been eating from. And these fruits which

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we've observed are from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil which Satan led our forefathers - and us - to eat from.

Let me say that again. How did we get here – to the things I just observed in the church and in the heart of the believer? Did the Spirit of God lead us into these sins or was it the enemy working through our thoughts derived from the tree of knowledge of good and evil? Well let me eliminate the first possibility for you if you think that it could have been God who led us: *(James 1:13 KJV) Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: (James 1:14 KJV) But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.* So if God didn't lead us here then Satan, through our lust, must have.

It is important for us to recognize that we are in a battle between two kingdoms – God's and the prince of the power of the air over this world. Not one of us wants to do anything but God's will, but every time we think the world's way, we support Satans's kingdom and dull our hearing to the shepherd's voice. Every time this happens the true word is lost.

As a result, I believe that we, the body of Christ, have not entered into the fullness of the new covenant that God has provided for us through the blood of Jesus! Let me repeat that. I believe that we, the body of Christ, have not entered into the fullness of the new covenant that God has provided for us through the blood of Jesus!

Many parents, some even here, know the heartache of a child that strays from the godly guidance and the moral lifestyle we've tried to instill in our children. And though we never quit loving them and are always crying out for their return – just like our heavenly father – when they follow other's voices, they

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distance themselves from us and this breaks communication. I have walked here, so I know the father's heart. When my daughter went her own way, there was a two-year communications gap. She just didn't want to hear me. And in rebellion – or should I say deception, a child would rather listen to someone else's voice for the fulfillment of their own wants, desires and rationalizations, than ours which would restrict them to keep them out of some of life's difficulties. So our hearts break. So it is with father, God.

Yes, many Christians walk in faith and have believed in the blood bought, grace saving gift of eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of our sins, but we have not fulfilled God's covenant with us any more than Israel did. We have received the promise of eternal life, but have not apprehended daily salvation, which yields the fruits of the Spirit and lets us become fully Christ-like. Why?

As we entered into this new and better covenant we, just like the covenant makers of old, agreed to conditions and exchanged garments. We know that we gave Jesus our filthy sinful nature and exchanged it for His robe of righteousness. But, every covenant has conditions. Just what were the conditions? We know that our salvation was by His grace alone, but were there any conditions beyond belief? Or is the fullness of salvation unconditional as well as un-merited? What do the scriptures say?

Let us read from Hebrew 8:10,11 (which comes from Jer 31:31).

*For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my **laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts**: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying,*

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Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.

Ezekiel also affirms this prophecy of Jeremiah in (Ezek 36:26,27) *A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you (who has the Holy Spirit within? You and I do.), and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.*

So then, if we will hear it in our thoughts (mind) and agree in our hearts, to obey those commands of God, which we know, then will we please our Heavenly Father. But, as the scriptures say, (James 4:17 KJV) *Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.* But the law that is written on my heart - isn't this the law taught to me by the Holy Spirit who directs my footsteps in all righteousness?

So what are these laws, which God wants to write on our hearts? Do the laws Jesus taught us conflict with the Old Testament laws? Obviously not. He said (Mat 5:17 NIV) *"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.* And the author of Romans reiterates: (Rom 3:31 KJV) *Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.* And again Paul said, "(Gal 3:21 KJV) *Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid:*

Jesus came to teach the meaning of the laws and summarized them into the two we just read: love God and love your neighbor as yourself. He also said, (John 14:15 KJV) *If ye love me, keep my commandments.* This is the law of love, which we speak about. Then in Mathew 25 he gave us other examples of how we keep these laws.

But have we become so influenced by the world's standards (which are Satan's standards) that we cannot discern or perceive correctly any longer? We all hear the way we have been taught or are predisposed. In other words if we are mad at someone, then we will perceive what they say to be offensive, even when they had no intent to be offensive. Likewise, when we read the word we often hear only the physical aspect of what the spirit is saying instead of what the Lord is really trying to show us. Let me give you an example from this week in my own life.

Recently, we attended a conference that prompted me to read Matthew 25 regarding this law of love and following Jesus' commands. In the interest of time let's read Mathew 25:31-40. *When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.*

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As I read this I understood that this had multiple levels of understanding – both physical and spiritual. And by truly hearing this word, that the Holy Spirit directed me to, I was led from certain condemnation. But if I couldn't hear I would have been devastated.

A newcomer to our ministry was desperate for deliverance and mentoring recognizing her own unloving spirit. We welcomed her, began teaching her truth and ministered to her in a very powerful demonstration of the Lord's deliverance. This stirred up so many other demons that while we were away for a speaking engagement, I got an email from one of the ladies who was ministering to her. It was reported that the newcomer was going to leave because she didn't feel that we showed love.

But what did Jesus say? She was a stranger and we took her in. She was hungry for the meat of the word and we fed her truth. She was thirsty and we ministered the Holy Spirit through us. She was bound in the demons' prison chains and we visited and set her free by the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus says this is love. It is not love to embrace the devils that influence someone or coddle their sin – or their “quirks” – as we like to call them. It is love when it meets the standards of God.

So if Jesus taught us to keep the commandments to show our love, how did we ever get so far detached from the Old Testament instructions of God. If you were like me, we were correctly taught that because of grace we were no longer “under” or condemned by the Old Testament laws. And certainly we are not. However, somehow in that understanding we took that thought to the point that since they no longer condemned us, they had no meaning or had any place in the Christians' life. Isn't this more of the word lost?

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And yet when we study the Old Testament laws that pertain to us, and not the Levitical priesthood or those living in Jerusalem, we begin to understand that they are the same principles that our savior taught. From the first commandment to the last they reflect showing love to our heavenly father or our neighbor.

But you might say, “Pastor, there are some real weird commandments that don’t apply to us.” And I’d say “maybe,” or maybe you just don’t understand what they mean. For example, in Deu 22:11 it says *Thou shalt not wear a garment of divers sorts, as of woollen and linen together*. Is this really a command against my polyester sports coat of the 60’s, or is God trying to tell us not to mix the holy (linen) with the profane (wool) as He has so many other places. Remember the covenant garment exchange? Let us not defile our garments of righteousness that Christ gave to us. This commandment was a sign or example for the Israelites, for even our understanding.

The law showed the people of God how to walk righteously under God’s kingdom authority and to be “kept” or protected from Satan’s wiles. And when we show our love by abiding in His commands, we are blessed. And when we don’t walk in His kingdom principles, we support Satan’s kingdom and receive the consequences of our actions.

We are not under Moses Law because we have a Savior whom, by faith, we are assured will forgive us of all our sins. However, there are kingdom principles, which the laws of Moses address, that give us good reason to seek the Father’s law and do them. We are to do them as the Holy Spirit leads and convicts us not as man would tell us. That’s the difference between Pharisaic law and God’s laws/instructions. Man’s/Pharisaic interpreted laws can put us in condemnation while the other – God’s laws written on our hearts are for our edification and blessing. The author of Hebrews reiterates this

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when he says about Jesus: *(Heb 5:9 KJV) And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him*;

Let me wrap up this discussion of “law” with an example one of our ETH ladies gives. She says it this way: My father has often told me he loves to eat steak but abhors pork. So on his special day (birthday, father’s day, etc.), I invite him into my house to share my life and love with him. Now, if I love him, do I serve him pig, or do I serve him a nice juicy steak? Obviously, I serve him steak. Likewise, if I love my Heavenly Father, and want to please Him, as He lives inside me, do I show Him my love the way He has instructed, or according to my own thoughts? It’s just that simple. If I love him, I will do as he wishes and leads me. Didn’t Jesus say, (John 14:15 KJV) *If ye love me, keep my commandments?* Jesus’ taught the father’s commandments, not the thinking of man.

Let me say it a third way – my wife’s favorite. We are certainly not UNDER the law because we are not condemned by it. But neither are we ABOVE the law to do what we think is right and wrong. Because we have the Spirit’s leading we are to be AT ONE WITH the laws of God. Not under, not above, but in agreement or “one with” the law – we have been bought and brought into at-one-ment - atonement.

The “dirty dozen” evidences of the church and us as individual Christians demonstrate that we have lost obedience to the true word in many respects. Now, everyone is prophesying that the Lord is about to do a new thing – revival, restoration, end time harvest, and paradigm shifts. In all of these hopes there is one common ingredient – the establishment of an intimacy with God never before experienced. And Jesus is moving in this hour to prepare His own to be ready to love Him and become intimate as He commanded. But do the evidences we observe

show that we are hearing the voice of the true shepherd? Oh, how we must cry out for greater discernment.

I am not standing here to speak forth condemnation. We have enough of that coming from the world. But we must ask ourselves are we too prideful to recognize that we - you, me and the church that we are a part of – have been led into thinking, rationalizing and justifying our way into turning the grace of God into lasciviousness?⁴ “Lasciviousness!?” – that can’t be me – can it? That’s a big word that most of us don’t really comprehend so we certainly wouldn’t equate any application to ourselves. I always thought the word meant sexual lust, but when I looked at 1 Peter 4:3 I found that lasciviousness and lust were separate issues and different Greek words. This demanded a little word study to understand the word, and thus what the verse, really meant. According to Strong’s concordance the word means licentious and wantonness. Licentious: 1) disregarding accepted rules and standards, 2) morally unrestrained esp. lust. Wanton: 1) undisciplined, unmanageable (wanton child) 2) sexually loose 3) senseless, unjustifiable (wanton insult), 4) recklessly ignoring justice, decency.

While sexual lust might be applied, look again at the first definition of each of these descriptors. The first definition for licentious is, “disregarding accepted rules and standards.” The first descriptor of wanton is similar as it is, “undisciplined, unmanageable.” Thus the verse could better read something like, “*turning the grace of our God into undisciplined disregard for accepted standards (of the word)*” and *denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.*

In the midst of walking by our own standards we have seen several moves of the Spirit of God – the Welsh revival (1904),

⁴ Jude 1:4

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the Azusa Street Pentecostal movement (1906), the Charismatic movement (1960 Van Nuys), Latter Rain, Toronto blessing, etc. While I, a former Baptist Word man, believe these were genuine moves of God, I also observed they were perverted and often short lived as they mixed with the flesh of man and man's systems. I believe that the moves of the Spirit of God were/are primarily for three reasons 1) the re-establishment of the intimate relationship God desires, 2) restoration of truth that God desires (that we have lost by our enlightened intellectualism, rationalization and justification) and lastly 3) to prepare the way of His return to tabernacle with us. It is His soon coming time to move out of Pentecost and dwell with His people (Tabernacles).

People, we are no longer in the dark ages of enforced obedience to a structure of beliefs contrary to the scriptures that produce the fruits of sin. Jesus came that we might see and understand the truth through the enlightenment and teaching of the Holy Spirit. He is quickening our understanding of Him and ourselves. You are the temples of God. *(2 Cor 6:16-7:1 KJV)* *And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate (Separate from what? From the idols shown through our wrong thinking and acting), saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*

Do you see the shadows and patterns that I referred to in the beginning of this talk? Throughout the age of man, **God's Word lost** has been repeated over and over again. It was

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restored by Shem, Abraham, Moses and then Jesus. Soon and very soon Jesus will come to restore His Word once again as He reigns over the kingdoms of this earth.

In this hour the Lord wants us to quit eating from the tree of knowledge of good and evil and feast only on the Tree of Life, which He is. It is the hour that His Spirit is still wooing us to become obedient in love to His commandments and be “holy as He is holy.”⁵ Let us repent and not be as His people of old when he said, *(Ezek 33:31 KJV) And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness.* The apostle John in *(1 John 2:17 KJV) And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof:) but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.*

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. . *(John 1:1,2)* Jesus is the Word from the beginning to the end, from Genesis to Revelation. Will He come back to be received? Or will His own reject the Word as we have evidenced in the past. The Jews were looking for a conquering king over their Roman oppressors and missed the Savior. Are we so focused on receiving a Savior that we will miss the King. God is perfecting hearts to prepare us without spot or blemish for His coming to dwell with the bride. *Hebrews 13:8 says: Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.* Is the Word the same or not?

Soon and very soon Jesus will come to restore His Word lost once again as He reigns over the kingdoms of this earth. Let us hear the cry of the Spirit and rent our hearts – preparing the way

⁵ 1 Peter 1:6

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in us and in the land for His coming. Let's ask God for greater discernment and revelation of our own hearts that each one of us might be under the mantle of Elijah and "make straight the way of the Lord."

Prayer:

Tear the blinders off our eyes and recognize our sin.

Take responsibility for our sin of eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

Repent and ask forgiveness for ourselves and our spiritual forefathers.

Renounce and break the deceiving spirit and humanistic thinking over us in Jesus name.

Ask to make us ready to follow His commands and keep us on the way He made for us.

Ask forgiveness for, and refrain from grieving the Holy Spirit

Make us ready, and let us be a vessel for His glory.

Give us greater discernment of the spirits and of our own hearts.

Appendix Abbreviated Church History

Not thirty years after the ascension of Jesus, the apostle Paul had to admonish the Galatians not to be seduced to follow the man-made traditions of the Jews.

Also, in spite of the Apostles' urging to learn of God's ways in the synagogues (Acts 15:21) and Jesus' warnings against mixture (Rev 2:14), Nicolaition idolatry and immorality (Rev 2:6), there was much heresy and anti-Semitism that crept into the church and the writings of our early church fathers. By the time Emperor Constantine's rule began in 306ad, the Jewish Christians were persecuted by the church and the church was persecuted by the heathen and their dictators. The whole of his kingdom was in such disarray that Constantine professed to be a Christian, at least in name. I say at least in name because he was a Sun worshipper who called the Sun-diety "Lord (Kurios) of heaven and earth." The historian Paiva writes, "The first day of each week, Sunday, was consecrated to Mithra since times remote..." He also worshipped Mars, and Apollo (talk about mixture in the church).

In 313 Constantine held a conference at Milan (with Licinius) and issued the "Edict of Milan" where he declared a policy of universal religious freedom. This ended the long-standing persecutions of the Christians and put himself in premier influence over the church. Thus, the "venerable day of the Sun" (remember this was Mithros or Rah as known in Egypt) was legislated to be the rest-day by Constantine's decree in 321. The church change-over to Sunday took place in 336 (and was officially acknowledge at the Council of Laodicea, Canon 29 which states, "Christians must not Judaize by resting on the Sabbath, but must work on that day honoring rather the Lord's

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Day by resting, if possible, as Christians. However, if any shall be found Judaizing (observing Sabbath), let them be shut out from Christ.”⁶

And thus man discarded the fifth commandment of the marriage covenant recorded in *Exo 20:8* ***Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.*** And you and I always thought we met on Sunday because it was resurrection day – didn't we? Is not this **God's Word lost** – lost to our understanding?

We need to understand that this was only the first official change to God's commandments until the church of Rome finally declared that tradition stood above scripture and man had authority to alter adherence. This was declared by the Archbishop of Reggio at the Council of Trent in 1562 as he declared, “The authority of the Church could therefore not be bound to the authority of the scriptures because the Church had changed... the Sabbath into Sunday, not by the command of Christ, but by its own authority.” (Ref: *Canon and Tradition*, p 263).

The fifth century and the fall of Rome marked the beginning of what historians call the “dark age” for some 900 years. During this period the battle over control of the ignorant masses or “laity” raged while both ignorance of the fundamentals of faith and the ignorance of scripture grew. During the later Protestant reformation of the 16th and 17th centuries Protestant authors wrote about this time as a period of Catholic corruption.⁷

Then the Spanish Inquisition began in the 1400's. It was a time when Spain was on the verge of becoming one of the wealthiest

⁶ ref. Mansi II, pp 569,570, also CC Richardson, *The Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible* vol 3 pg 153

⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dark_Ages

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nations of the period in large part due to the Jewish community. As a result of renewed persecution, many Jews were forced to - or professed to - convert to Christianity. However, in 1478 when one of these converted Christians were caught observing Passover, Queen Isabella, a pious catholic, requested that Ferdinand, “purge the kingdom of heretics.” The king saw a chance to gain great lands from the rich Jews and professing former Jews, thus, we saw the beginning of the most horrific, torturous anti-Semitic persecutions since before Constantine.⁸

Another one of the Catholic church's edicts the believers in Jesus abandoned was the observance of God's festivals – specifically Passover in this case. After all, in talking about Passover, **after the resurrection of Jesus**, didn't the apostle Paul say, (1 Cor 5:7,8) *Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our **Passover** is sacrificed for us: **Therefore let us keep the feast**, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.* Is not this not again **God's Word lost** – lost to our understanding?

In mainland Europe the middle ages of the 14th 15th centuries were steeped in humanism. In 1517 Martin Luther came against the Roman Catholic practice of indulgences or buying forgiveness and posted his 95 point thesis on the door of Wittenburg Castle Church. He brought back some of lost Word re-establishing the grace of God and only faith as a fundamental doctrine. However, he was extremely anti-Semitic and thus perpetuated the beliefs that anything to do with “those lying Jews” was to be detested.

⁸ (<http://www.bibletopics.com/biblestudy/64.htm>)

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The middle 1500's brought forth the Geneva profile of Christianity as fashioned by John Calvin. Calvin literally transformed the philosophical, political, religious, and social landscape of Europe, on the insistence on the literal reading of Christian scriptures. We would call this fundamentalism today. Additionally, anything not contained explicitly and literally in the scriptures was to be rejected; on the other hand, anything that was contained explicitly and literally in these scriptures was to be followed unwaveringly.⁹ While this may have helped to abolish Jewish pharisaic rules, it gave rise to another set of social behaviors just as strict. While Calvin is most associated with the doctrine of pre-destination, he also brought forth the doctrine of eternal security and election through belief as evidenced by obedience¹⁰ (a Jewish concept). While many endorse the former (eternal security), does the church of today really embrace the latter, i.e. obedience? Or is this too part of God's Word lost?

The 16th and 17 century was the reformation of both the world and many denominations which had split from the Catholic Church. But one of the most serious events for the "common man" was the printing of the King James Bible, making God's word at least somewhat available to the "laity."

However, during the age of Enlightenment of the 18th century, religion was seen as being in opposition to reason (Isn't it still?). Thus, in the light of man's rational thinking, belief or faith was downplayed even in the church. It gave rise to a renewed system of works-righteousness based on service to the assembly and appearance of piety/holiness. And, of course, the Word was interpreted by the clergy.

⁹ Richard Hooker: <http://www.wsu.edu/~dee/REFORM/CALVIN.HTM>

¹⁰ R. L. Dabney (1820-1898):

http://www.reformed.org/calvinism/index.html?mainframe=5Points_Dabney.html

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The 19th century gave rise to a greater formalization and emphasis on dispensational teaching that again further deleniated the church and Jewish roles in God's plan. Along with the dispensational theology came the replacement theologies (church substituted for Israel – only for blessings or British replacement theology – Britain/Americas replaced Israel) and the pre-trib rapture theory popularized by Margaret MacDonald in 1830. Whether we personally agree or disagree with any one of these theologies is irrelevant. What is relevant is the question: have these theologies helped or detracted in our walk of holiness with God? Have any obscured or negated the word of God?

I submit that some of these theologies have rationalized faulty reasoning of the scriptures for God's grace and protection and given us a concept of an easy escape plan that negates portions of the Word like: (*Dan 7:25 KJV*) *And he (speaking of the anti-Christ) shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.* Jesus said of the tribulation, (*Mat 24:22 KJV*) *And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.*

Have we lost the understanding of the scripture (*Phil 3:10, 11 KJV*) *That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.?* Can we really ascribe all prophesied suffering of the elect saints in the end time to the suddenly enlightened Jews - who have not yet seen Messiah - or is this again, God's Word lost?

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The late 19th and 20th century marked “new knowledge” with authors like Freud, Nietzsche, and (John) Dewey. They brought science to bear upon philosophy and religion to “alter or abolish older knowledge and belief systems.”¹¹ Its result was a further degradation of scriptural validity, knowledge and faith - more and more of God's Word lost.

¹¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/20th-century_philosophy