

ISSUE 041: Draw Nigh Unto Me Part 39

Issued: 19th December 2017

Defaced - Week 29

In the Garden, Man stood in, & fell from Righteousness, & the Way for Man & all men to desire innocence again rests in a heart acceptance:

Of Man's Inherent Wickedness**Genesis 2:16-17 KJV**

16 And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:

17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

Matthew Henry Commentary on the Whole Bible [Concise] says of Genesis 2 Verses 16-17 -

Let us never set up our own will against the holy will of God.

There was not only liberty allowed to man, in taking the fruits of paradise, but everlasting life made sure to him upon his obedience.

There was a trial appointed of his obedience.

By transgression he would forfeit his Maker's favour, and deserve his displeasure, with all its awful effects; so that he would become liable to pain, disease, and death.

Worse than that, he would lose the holy image of God, and all the comfort of his favour; and feel the torment of sinful passions, and the terror of his Maker's vengeance, which must endure forever with his never dying soul.

The forbidding to eat of the fruit of a particular tree was wisely suited to the state of our first parents.

In their state of innocence, and separated from any others, what opportunity or what temptation had they to break any of the ten commandments?

The event proves that the whole human race were concerned in the trial and fall of our first parents.

To argue against these things is to strive against stubborn facts, as well as Divine revelation; for man is sinful, and shows by his first actions, and his conduct ever afterwards, that he is ready to do evil.

He is under the Divine displeasure, exposed to sufferings and death.

The Scriptures always speak of man as of this sinful character, and in this miserable state; and these things are true of men in all ages, and of all nations.

End of Matthew Henry Quote.

Of Filthy Rags and Transformed Hearts**Romans 10:5-11 KJV**

5 For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.

6 But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven?

(that is, to bring Christ down from above:)

7 Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.)

8 But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach;

9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed

Matthew Henry Commentary on the Whole Bible [Concise] says of Romans 10 Verses 5-11 -

The self-condemned sinner need not perplex himself how this righteousness may be found.

When we speak of looking upon Christ, and receiving, and feeding upon him, it is not Christ in heaven, nor Christ in the deep, that we mean; but Christ in the promise, Christ offered in the word.

Justification by faith in Christ is a plain doctrine.

It is brought before the mind and heart of every one, thus leaving him without excuse for unbelief.

If a man confessed faith in Jesus, as the Lord and Saviour of lost sinners, and really believed in his heart that God had raised him from the dead, thus showing that he had accepted the atonement, he should be saved by the righteousness of Christ, imputed to him through faith.

But no faith is justifying which is not powerful in sanctifying the heart, and regulating all its affections by the love of Christ.

We must devote and give up to God our souls and our bodies: our souls in believing with the heart, and our bodies in confessing with the mouth.

The believer shall never have cause to repent his confident trust in the Lord Jesus.

*Of such faith no sinner shall be ashamed before God; and he ought to glory in it before men.
End of Matthew Henry Quote.*

Of Light and Darkness, Sin and Forgiveness

1 John 1:5-10 KJV

5 This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all.

6 If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth.

7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

8 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

10 If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.

*Matthew Henry Commentary on the Whole Bible [Concise] says of 1 John 1 Verses 5-10 -
A message from the Lord Jesus, the Word of life, the eternal Word, we should all gladly receive.*

The great God should be represented to this dark world, as pure and perfect light.

As this is the nature of God, his doctrines and precepts must be such.

And as his perfect happiness cannot be separated from his perfect holiness, so our happiness will be in proportion to our being made holy.

To walk in darkness, is to live and act against religion.

God holds no heavenly fellowship or intercourse with unholy souls.

There is no truth in their profession; their practice shows its folly and falsehood.

The eternal Life, the eternal Son, put on flesh and blood, and died to wash us from our sins in his own blood, and procures for us the sacred influences by which sin is to be subdued more and more, till it is quite done away.

While the necessity of a holy walk is insisted upon, as the effect and evidence of the knowledge of God in Christ Jesus, the opposite error of self-righteous pride is guarded against with equal care.

All who walk near to God, in holiness and righteousness, are sensible that their best days and duties are mixed with sin.

God has given testimony to the sinfulness of the world, by providing a sufficient, effectual Sacrifice for sin, needed in all ages; and the sinfulness of believers themselves is shown, by requiring them continually to confess their sins, and to apply by faith to the blood of that Sacrifice.

Let us plead guilty before God, be humble, and willing to know the worst of our case.

Let us honestly confess all our sins in their full extent, relying wholly on his mercy and truth through the righteousness of Christ, for a free and full forgiveness, and our deliverance from the power and practice of sin.

End of Matthew Henry Quote.

ISSUE 042: Draw Nigh Unto Me Part 40

Issued: 2nd January 2018

Defaced - Week 30

Previously, in Matthew Henry's Commentary on 2 Corinthians 5:16-21 he stated the following facts after describing the Regeneration & Reconciliation a believer undergoes:

1. **"The end and design of all this: that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."**
2. **"Our reconciliation to God is only through Jesus Christ, and for the sake of his merit:"**
3. **"As Christ, who knew no sin of his own, was made sin for us, so we, who have no righteousness of our own, are made the righteousness of God in him."**
4. **"So let us, therefore, note: on him, we must rely and make mention of his righteousness, and his only."**

Furthermore, last week again through Matthew Henry's Commentary of Genesis 2:16-17, Romans 10:5-11 & 1 John 1:5-10 [KJV] we saw the following.

That for us to fully embrace the meaning of Corinthians 5:16-21 in desiring innocence be restored to our hearts again there is a real need for us to earnestly attain to a heart acceptance of the following three facts:

1. **Our inherent wickedness**
2. **Our filthy rags & the transforming of our heart**
3. **Light & darkness, sin & Forgiveness**

Obedience to God's Word & to the Leading of the Lord in our hearts is the only way that we might hope for our personal engendering of the essence of these scriptures into the very deepest depths of our heart.

Disobedience defaced God's Image in us & it is only the Obedience of Christ Jesus that restores it.

Whenever we allow disobedience to take reign in the outworkings of our lives, we hamper Christ's work of restoration in us for obedience is a vital key, one continuously demonstrated by Jesus while walking in the flesh as the Son of Man.

As Churchgoers, we can so easily 'conform to the norm' & so quickly be 'moulded into shape' through the conformity humans naturally embrace throughout all walks of life.

From birth, we are taught to conform to all forms of culture, whether in the popularly accepted culture of our society generally or socially, whether at work, play, or as I mentioned, even in Church Life.

In Purity, to conform is a Godly Principle which brings about order & uniformity of purpose & promotes unified functioning.

Imagine, what a seething mess it would soon be if all the numerous parts of our human body suddenly decided not to conform to anything.

For who amongst us is not very well aware of the consequences at times when only one part of our body is not conforming to its proper function.

So it is that our human bodies are brought into conformity, albeit imperfectly, through the unfathomable workings of the human brain.

This is why the Bible refers to True Believers collectively as The Body Of Christ & declares that Christ Jesus is the Head of The Church.

Colossians 1:18 KJV

18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

Romans 12:1-2 KJV

1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

1 Corinthians 11:3 KJV

3 But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.

Colossians 2:10 KJV

10 And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:

Romans 12:3-8 KJV

3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

4 For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:

5 So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

6 Having the gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;

7 Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching;

8 Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

Commentary on Romans 12:3-8 [www.bibletools.org]

These six verses are all tied together by humility—that one should not think of himself more highly than he ought.

God has put us each in the body as it pleases Him, so we should not think that we, as, say, the toe are better than the knee because the toe cannot do the knee's job.

God thinks of the toe just as highly as He does of the knee, but if He has put us as a toe, why not in faith do the job of a toe because that is what God wants us to be?

If He had wanted us to be a knee, He would have put you in the body as a knee, but He made us to be a toe, so be happy as a toe! Do a toe's work in faith!

Paul tells us to think soberly, logically, seriously, that as God has dealt to each a measure of faith, that we in faith can consider our place in the church and deal with it.

So, whatever we are to do, do it!

Do it with all the gifts and skills that God has given—but do not try to do another's job.

It is his job to do diligently, not ours.

God put us in the body to do a specific job, our job not his, otherwise He would have given us his job!

If we have been given the job to exhort, then we should exhort.

If it is our job to minister and serve others, serve—but do not take another's job to prophesy.

Paul is saying, "In lowliness of mind, be content where you are because obviously, God has put you there for a reason.

If you do the job that God has given to you, you are fulfilling His will."

The church, then, can be united because the members are not competing over each other's responsibilities.

Reference: <https://www.bibletools.org/index.cfm/fuseaction/Topical.show/RTD/CGG/ID/1533/Body-Analogy.htm>

ISSUE 043: Draw Nigh Unto Me Part 41

Issued: 16th January 2018

Defaced - Week 31

Jesus Christ is not Coming Again to gather up a loose assortment of Christian individuals but rather to receive His Bride The Church, The Body Of Christ of whom He is Head.

One Body under His Lordship, being One Man in him, the Last Adam & the Second Man, sent by God Himself as the only suitable sacrifice for the sins of the world.

Ever since the first time that Cain & Abel came before God to worship Him a real problem has existed in the Body of Believers regarding deceptions of the flesh.

It overtook Cain & he, in turn, was led by evil to murder the one who gained God's Respect that day, his brother Abel.

Even after the murder of Abel, the one true believer, God still opened the way in which we continue to walk today.

Luke 3:38 KJV

38 Which was the son of Enos, which was the son of Seth, which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God.

Genesis 4:26 KJV

26 And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the LORD.

Cain, as I spoke of earlier, was not representative of the world of unbelievers, which he eventually became the father of in his fall to sin when he murdered his brother.

Rather, I believe there he represented the other side of believers, those who choose to stand in the shadows rather than have hearts that seek after the Fullness of Light.

Those who allow concerns of the flesh to be used by evil to cause division & offences in the Body contrary to Biblical Principles.

It was again just as evident at the beginning of the Church Age when Apostle Paul wrote the following to the Church of Rome.

Romans 16:17-20 KJV

17 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.

18 For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

19 For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil.

20 And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

Paraphrased version of Matthew Henry Commentary on the Whole Bible (Complete) Romans 16:17-20

Now Paul was most concerned for the Roman Church, as to whether because of its fame its integrity may become compromised for it was a city on a hill.

With so many people having their sights upon the Christians there, any prevailing error on their behalf would set a very bad precedent, thus creating a wrongful influence to other churches.

Just as indeed it has since proved to be in fact, the great apostasy of the latter days taking its rise from that capital city.

The errors of leading churches are leading errors.

When the bishop of Rome fell as a great star from heaven,

Rev. 8:10 KJV

10 And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters;

his tail drew a third part of the stars after him,

Rev. 12:4 KJV

4 And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.

Because of the promise of God that we shall have victory, in the end, is given to quicken and encourage us not to renounce or relinquish our discernment and hearty undertakings in Him.

It is a very sweet promise.

Romans 16:20 KJV

20 And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet.

Even though this is a Spiritual fact, they were in danger from these seducers.

Paul suggested this with a great deal of humility and delicacy, not as one doubtful or sceptical of them, but as one having genuine concern for the furtherance & advancement in the outworking of their faith.

Romans 16:19 KJV

19 For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil.

Thus does he give understanding of their great acclaim, to strengthen & enhance the way for the caution.

A holy jealousy of our friends may very well be in accord or agreement with a holy joy in them.

"You think yourselves a very happy people, as I do too but though it is true you must not find your security in it:

I would desire that you all be wise to that which is good, and simple concerning evil.

You are a good-natured willing people, but you need to use your discernment to recognise what is being imposed upon you by those seducers."

A malleable disposition or temperament is most certainly a worthy attribute to possess when it is under good government but otherwise, it could easily ensnare you through implication & entanglements and so, therefore, Apostle Paul gives two general rules:—

To be wise to that which is righteous, that is, to be skilful and intelligent in the Truths and Ways of God.

Philippians 4:8 KJV

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

1 John 4:1 KJV

1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

1 Thessalonians 5:21 KJV

21 Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

There is a great need of wisdom in our obedient fidelity to good truths, a good yielding to worship & reverent fear, and good people, in order to avoid or prevent ourselves from being subtly imposed upon in misguided, misleading or deceptive ways.

Be, therefore, wise as serpents.

Matthew 10:16

16 Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.

Wise to discern the difference between what is really good and that which is imitation, fabricated or fake;

Wise to discern the things that are at variance, conflict, or opposed to what you know in your heart, & simply conceived in order to improve opportunities for others.

While we are in the midst of so many deceivers, we have great need of that wisdom of the prudent which is to understand his way,

Proverbs 14:8 KJV

8 The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way: but the folly of fools is deceit.

***To be simple in relation to evil —
being wise in order to not be deceived,
and yet so simple as to not be deceivers.***

***It is a holy simplicity,
to be totally unable to contrive,
nor disguise the seriousness,
nor carry on, any evil design,
In malice be you children.***

1 Corinthians 14:20 KJV

20 Brethren do not be children in understanding; however, in malice be babes, but in understanding be mature.

The wisdom of the serpent becomes Christians, but not the subtlety of the old serpent.

We, therefore, must in all things be harmless as doves.

It is a wise simple man who is ignorant of how to do anything against the Truth.

Colossians 2:8 (NIRV) New International Readers Version

8 Make sure no one captures you. They will try to capture you by using false reasoning that has no meaning. Their ideas depend on human teachings. They also depend on the basic things the people of this world believe. They don't depend on Christ.

2 Corinthians 4:8-10 ESV

We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies.

John 6:26 NIV

26 Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the signs I performed but because you ate the loaves and had your fill.

2 Corinthians 12:8-10

8 For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.

9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

Disobedience defaced God's Image & the Obedience of Jesus restores it.

Acts 14:22 KJV

22 Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

ISSUE 044: Draw Nigh Unto Me Part 42

Issued: 23rd January 2018

Defaced - Part 32

In the Bible, at the beginning of time, we see that Cain laid his heart down to a desire for superiority over his brother, & of what ensued because of it.

Then in the Book of Romans, the Apostle Paul wrote:

Romans 16:17 KJV

17 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.

"Now Paul was most concerned for the Roman Church, as to whether because of its fame its integrity may become compromised for it was a city on a hill.

With so many people having their sights upon the Christians there, any prevailing error on their behalf would set a very bad precedent, thus creating a wrongful influence to other churches.

Just as indeed it has since proved to be in fact, the great apostasy of the latter days taking its rise from that capital city.

The errors of leading churches are leading errors.

A malleable disposition or temperament is most certainly a worthy attribute to possess when it is under good government, but otherwise, it could easily ensnare you through implication & entanglements.

He implored us to be wise to that which is righteous, that is, to be skilful and intelligent in the Truths and Ways of God. - Matthew Henry [paraphrased]

Now, here we are, at the End of the Church Age, & the question is this: Has this trait that overcame Cain & was addressed by Apostle Paul as being an ever-present danger at the beginning of New Testament times still alive in the midst of The Church?

The Fascism of Modern Churches

By Brian Elroy McKinley

All people are not created equal.

And even if they are, as soon as they are born, some quickly become superior.

Some do not.

The superior people run the world, using the inferior ones to generate profits.

Superior people receive better educations.

The inferior ones get whatever education is provided locally.

Superior people hold desirable jobs and receive better pay.

Inferior ones fill those jobs least desired.

Superior people raise enough money to become elected officials, working with the superior owners of business and wealth to direct the lives of the inferior.

Superior people become celebrities, being loved, hated and respected by the inferior.

Superior people receive great rewards, while inferior ones pay the dues.

However, when superior and inferior people come face to face with the living God, the difference between them becomes irrelevant, or at least they should.

When God said that all of us have fallen short of His glory, and are guilty of sins before Him, He placed us in an equal category - a category of irrevocable need.

When God, through the death and resurrection of Christ, extended His hand of hope to this needy human family, He extended it to everyone, the "superior" and "inferior" alike.

This is grace, and anyone who wants it can have it.

As those who seek hope through God's grace gather in families and congregations, to worship and learn as Christ directed, we might assume that all seekers would be treated as equals.

Since each believer hails from the same category - need - all other categories should become irrelevant.

Sadly, this is not the case.

Having worked with various congregations for the last fourteen years, I have witnessed how churches not only allow inequality behind their doors, but how some actually enshrine it in their teachings.

Once we have moved inside God's grace, and have increased our ration of good deeds to bad deeds, we often come to believe we are a better class of humans.

We set ourselves apart from the rest of humanity and call it Christian "piety."

As a "better class of humans," we easily fall prey to making value judgements about those outside our class, those "inferior" to us.

Let me deviate for a moment to explain more clearly how this works.

Being somewhat of a science enthusiast, I like science fictions films.

A rather large majority are poorly done.

A few, however, are well made and even contain an understanding of the human condition.

Ridley Scott's futuristic Blade Runner fits this classification.

The details, action and photography make it captivating, but a quality more subtle and addicting compelled me to see it multiple times.

During my seventh viewing, the addicting attribute finally became clear.

A truth about humanity had been slipped under my nose, a mirror-like truth that forced me to see a blot on my own piety.

The truth was not revealed in the plot, which was merely a canvas, but through the characters.

The film takes place in Los Angeles in the year 2019.

Many humans have left to find a better life on other planets, but life still thrives on Earth.

A company that makes biological androids has supplied the off-world colonisers with "replicant" humans to do the sordid jobs no real human would want.

Noting that replicants occasionally escape and become violent, they are designated as illegal on Earth and are hunted by special police, Blade Runner squads.

The newest version of replicants is particularly hard to tell from humans.

Six of these escape from an off-world colony and return to Earth.

The movie follows one reluctant blade runner while he slowly tracks them.

As he catches up and "retires" (kills) each one, he becomes dogged by doubts.

He cannot understand what drives the replicants or why they become so violent.

The forthcoming truth found in the blade runner's hunt for the six runaways was manifested when I realised that the new replicants were indeed fully human.

They loved, dreamed, hungered, aged, hated, and were self-aware as any human is.

The characters in the film, however, did not realise this and treated them as less than human.

The replicants reacted the way most humans react when treated as sub-human: they become violent.

And the humans reacted as most humans react to the violence of perceived "sub-humans": they used force to restrain them.

The humans in the movie were not bad people; they simply did not believe the replicants were fully human and treated them accordingly.

Likewise, the replicants were not created to be violent; they turned to murder as an answer to their plight.

Blade Runner effectively reveals the logic that leads one group of humans to enslave another.

It shows how good people can do horrible things to other people they deem less human.

It shows how good people can become violent when placed in oppressive situations.

The key factor in this truth is the "sub-human" part.

For some reason we have ample ability to divide humankind into categories.

We use race, sex, age, skin colour, ethnic grouping, appearance, lifestyle, monetary value, occupation, language, philosophy, nationality and religion to define the boundaries.

But rather than making classifications equal, we tend to feel that people different from us are inferior.

The more different a person is, the more inferior he or she is.

We end up believing, though often not verbally acknowledging, that there are individuals walking this earth who are less human than we are.

This is the very catalyst that leads to fascism.

When others are less human than we, quite naturally we take it as a license to exert our will over theirs.

Even more than that, we easily convince ourselves that we not only have the option, but the right to impose our desires forcefully.

This is what I mean by fascism.

ISSUE 045: Draw Nigh Unto Me Part 43

Issued: 30th January 2018

Defaced - Part 43

The Fascism of Modern Churches (Continuation)

By Brian Elroy McKinley

When our world view leads us to believe we are better than other, we tend to feel we have more answers, and,

consequently, we feel a duty to bring the rest of humanity up to our level, usually enacting tight control over those who refuse.

Even in our charity we often go into needy situations feeling we have more to give than we have to receive.

We easily fall into the mentality of being "saviours" of the world rather than seeing ourselves as equal members of the human family.

As the truth of our ability to dehumanise others and impose our will upon them penetrated my skull like David's stone in Goliath's forehead, I began to realise my own participation in this process: How easily I ignore beggars on the street; how easily I justify my action by believing they are weak, that they will only use my generosity to buy liquor or drugs rather than improve their situation.

How easily I avoid contact with leather-and-chain-clad youth, whose wild looking kids with spiked hair and heavy metal rock-band t-shirts that for some reason choose to rebel against the "nice" world we have created for them.

How easily I support the use of force against those "inhuman" Arabs, those animals that threaten civilised nations with their demands and their violence.

How easily I turn the channel away from programs showing those skeletons with children's faces, the babies of those foreigners that live in the dirt in some far away country whose name I cannot pronounce nor find on a map.

How easily I judge atheists and Muslims, Jews and Hindus, Mormons and Catholics as bad because they have not accepted God's grace the way I have.

How easily, as a youth worker, I only become friends with those youth who like to sing, who attend my classes, who do not do drugs, who do not have sex, and who look like nice clean-cut, middle-class kids.

How easily I discriminate against those who were different than me.

I admit here that I did not joyfully accept the truth of my discrimination.

Truth is sometimes hard to swallow, and I found it easy to justify my mental "enslaving" of those different than me.

It really was not enslaving, I thought.

I was simply a way to protect myself from the unknown danger of "different" people.

After all, it was quite natural to seek out only those people who are like me, is it not?

We naturally divide humans into categories, and we naturally stick with those most like us.

But as a servant in the worshipping family of God, I should not be following that which is natural, but that which is beyond natural.

I am not called by God to live safely - to live within a safely net of people who will tell me I'm okay because they are just like me.

**I am called to open my arms to all strangers.
This brings us back to the church.**

When we enter into God's grace, we usually seek out fellowship with others in the process of seeking God.

In the Gospels, Christ told us to function as a family, and we usually do.

But within that family we do not boldly seek to encourage all to join us.

No, instead we usually seek people who fit the categories we have deemed safe.

In the churches in which I have worked, we usually sought out "nice" middle-class families with "nice" children to fill up our "nice" youth groups.

In one church there was one black family.

The daughter told me how church officials had asked her why her family did not go to the "black" church the denomination had established to meet the needs of black believers.

In some youth groups for which I've worked, the church leaders wanted us to bar rebellious or even rebellious-looking kids from our activities.

One church wanted us to have larger numbers of appealing teens because, so a church leader said, it made the church "attractive to new families."

And if that is not bad enough, weekend retreats were often scuttled because the youth choir would be unable to sing in the mail Sunday morning service, thus diminishing the quality of that morning's performance.

Performance.

Doing all the right things.

Saying all the right words.

Being all the right people.

This is the legacy of many modern churches.

Rather than being a family of needy people corporately seeking God's grace, we have become "attractive" organisations where "neat" people like us can worship through our performances.

We have become the "pious good people" who do not tolerate non-conformity to our standards.

We have become organisations with Ph.D.'s at the helm and rich donors pulling at our puppet strings.

We have become superior in our own minds, unwilling to look at the "refuse" that blows past our doors, reluctant to appear controversial, unable to help those in need and yet satisfied that we are right.

How it can easily be argued that organisations, Ph.D.'s, performances and donors are required to get people in the pews and to keep our churches functioning.

We need an organised approach for dealing with the large number of people in our modern world.

We need educated people to teach and pastor us.

We need quality programs that relay the Good News in the vernacular of modern media and entertainment.

We need people with a vision of giving toward ongoing ministry needs.

None of these things are inherently wrong, but too often our organisations, Ph.D.'s, performers and donors are seduced by the attitude that they have a "corner on the market" of what is right and good.

As in the movie, Blade Runner, this mentality precipitates categorisation and the feeling of superiority over other needy humans that inevitably leads to discrimination against them.

It is the fascism of modern churches.

As a race of needy people, and as congregations that exist solely under God's grace, we need to acknowledge that none of us has a right to our positions.

None of us has the right to discriminate.

None of us has the right to judge because all of us are the slave, in Christ's parable, who should have been willing to forgo his fellow slave's debt after having been forgiven his own debt by his master.

We all are equal under God's grace.

When we fail to extend the very grace extended to us through his sacrifice, we do nothing less than make a mockery of his gift.

By doing so, we place ourselves in the position of being demigods rather than servants, effectively trashing our part of God's Kingdom with our pride, and enslaving others and ourselves to the inequalities that create so much misery amongst humans. End.

ISSUE 046: Draw Nigh Unto Me Part 44

Issued: 6th February 2018

Defaced - Part 44

Over the past two weeks, I have shared with you Brian Elroy McKinley's writings on "The Fascism of Modern Churches."

So who is this man, & from where did I acquire his word on this particular subject?

The simple answer to both questions is, I honestly don't know.

Recently I had to move our home some 200kms from the Regional Centre in which we had lived for 30 years, back to the Capital City of our State.

I was working under considerable pressure to sort & clear decades of paperwork when I came across this single printed copy of his writings amongst my papers.

At my very first sighting of it, & despite having already destroyed a multitude of very worthy old notes & articles, I immediately felt urged to keep it separate & close at hand.

Nevertheless, having my mind set firmly into 'culling mode' my first natural reaction was to resist this hoarding notion & immediately add it to the 'condemned to destruction' pile.

I attempted to do precisely that three or four times consecutively but found myself unable to let it go.

Every time I attempted to add it to the condemned pile, the confidence that had caused my arm to outstretch quickly to resist senseless hoarding, now turned into total lack of self-assurance of what I was about to do.

I had no idea why, but I finally relented & obeyed the urging & set it aside in a safe place.

Some weeks later I was to feel an even stronger urge to make time actually to read & study it.

It was then I realised that in the midst of the escalating chaos of our preparations to move everything had now been moved around so many times that I was no longer aware of the 'safe' place in my office where I had set it aside.

Some days passed before it suddenly presented itself to my sight again.

Now, after finally reading it, I felt it was an appropriate & timely piece to include in our weekly journey here together & now felt assured of from where the urging to set it aside had come.

Fascism is a word that readily evokes a strong negative sentiment even in secular life much less in any Christian context.

I believe it was this fact that also contributed to my reluctance to obey the urging to keep it aside immediately.

However, as I meditated in the Lord with the essence of this message the correlation with our subject matter over the previous weeks now became apparent to me & hopefully to you as we continue in this weekly step by step journey.

That which we saw birthed in Cain & was still evident as something to be both aware & wary of, according to Apostle Paul in Romans 16, was now again being brought to our attention in the context of our present-day Church environment.

Cain came before God with his family feigning equality with them, but in his heart, he felt he was superior to his brother, a fact that soon became plainly evident after God showed respect for Abel & his offering but not for Cain & his.

In Romans 16 Apostle Paul acknowledged the Church in Rome for its fame that had spread abroad while at the same time warning them to beware of how evil works.

To not let any sense of superiority prevail in them but rather to respond to their newfound fame with humility & a keen sense of equality in light of everybody's need for the Gospel.

It is only in the close examination of McKinley's writing that we discover what he meant by "The Fascism of Modern Churches":

"When God said that all of us have fallen short of His glory, and are guilty of sins before Him, He placed us in an equal category - a category of irrevocable need."

"But rather than making classifications equal, we tend to feel that people different from us are inferior.

The more different a person is, the more inferior he or she is.

We end up believing, though often not verbally acknowledging, that individuals are walking this earth who are less human than we are.

This is the very catalyst that leads to fascism.

To regard others as being less human than we are, quite naturally we take it as a license to exert our will over theirs.

Even more than that, we quickly convince ourselves that we not only have the option but the right to impose our desires forcefully.

This is what I mean by fascism.”

For us to hope to begin to understand why he chose to use the term ‘Fascism’ would now require us to come to some understanding of what fascism means.

The only official definition of fascism comes from Benito Mussolini, the founder of fascism & here following is a small excerpt from the exact words (translated) as written by Mussolini for the Italian Encyclopaedia in 1932:

“The foundation of Fascism is the conception [the forming or devising] of the State, its character, its duty, and its aim. Fascism conceives [devises a plan] of the State as an absolute, in comparison with which all individuals or groups are relative, only to be conceived of in their relation to the State.”

This concept is of the anti-Christ spirit.

Now let me repeat Mussolini’s definition whilst replacing the word State with Church.

The foundation of Fascism is the conception [the forming or devising] of the Church, its character, its duty, and its aim. Fascism conceives [devises a plan] of the Church as an absolute, in comparison with which all individuals or groups are relative, only to be conceived of in their relation to the Church.

This concept of ‘Church’ opens the way for flirtation with the anti-Christ spirit.

Both the above statements, in essence, can only find a place or be wrought into the hearts of men who have not yet personally met Christ or those of us who have yet fail to understand what the Bible is telling us.

In one measure or another, we all fall into these categories for who amongst us can say we thoroughly know & understand the Ways of God?

Romans 12:3 KJV

3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

Romans 3:22-23 KJV

22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

The foundation of True Christianity is the Divine Conception of Christ’s Church, His Character, His Duty, and His Will. True Christianity conceives of Christ’s Church as an Absolute, in comparison with which all individuals or groups are relative, only to be conceived of in their relation to Jesus Christ.

Unfortunately, just as our Brother McKinley included himself amongst those who fail to recognise our equality in the category of irrevocable need, at times judging others as lesser than ourselves, I believe I along with every other believer needs to Seek the Face of God in these days more than ever.

For, in this, the End of The Church Age we might be awakened from our slumber to receive the fullness of Our Father’s Answer to Paul’s Thanksgiving & Prayer to the Church of Ephesus.

Ephesians 1:15-23 KJV

15 Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints,

16 Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;

17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:

18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,

20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,

21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:

22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,

23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

ISSUE 047: Draw Nigh Unto Me Part 45

Issued: 13th February 2018

Defaced - Week 37

Until recently, I had absolutely no real knowledge or understanding of Fascism apart from being familiar with the term.

More than likely most of you could align with me in merely believing it to be just some kind of Dictatorship.

However, even in the limited knowledge I now have through focusing on the subject, I feel a strong leading to continuing looking at it here, at least in the short term.

Please seek to understand that this is a week by week journey we are taking together & I believe there may be more The Lord desires to reveal to us through it.

Allow me also to point out that I am not diverting into trying to prove that Fascism, as McKinley saw it, exists in Modern Churches for that is a matter for each of us to personally discern.

I feel to continue down the path that has been opened to us, believing that it will reconnect back to the main road we have been travelling.

The only way to find where & to what a new walking path leads to is to continue to walk it to the end.

As I have said, most of us would probably just bundle Fascism up as being a form of Dictatorship or Totalitarianism.

From what I have read however I have found that there are several stark differences between Fascism & any form of Totalitarianism.

What is the difference between Totalitarianism and Fascism?

Fascism is a type of political government where a single political party governs the state.

Fascism employs the mass communication and media which is controlled by the state to spread propaganda that works to provide favour to the ruling people of the country which allows rulers to avoid opposition from the general public.

Totalitarianism, on the other hand, is a political system in which the power to make all decisions of the state is under the control of an individual.

Totalitarianism political systems oppress the rights of an individual from the general public through the use of power. Reference: <http://www.differencebetween.com/difference-between-totalitarianism-and-vs-fascism/>

Or to put it concisely for simple minds such as mine, in Fascism the State itself is supreme & its rulers use propaganda to avoid opposition from the general public.

Whereas in Totalitarianism an individual [Dictator] is supreme & the general public suppressed through the use of power.

Furthermore, I have also read that in Fascism violence & war is seen as having a necessary significant role in creating a powerful nation.

From my limited readings, it would appear that Fascism started its journey in the late nineteenth century even though Benito Mussolini is known as being the founder of it & Hitler's Nazi Germany as a far more exact example of it.

Fascism is apparently now used more as a derogatory term rather than an ideology.

One other interesting thing I took particular note of also came from Benito Mussolini's definition he provided for the Italian Encyclopaedia in 1932:

"Fascism, now and always, believes in holiness and heroism; that is to say, in actions influenced by no economic motive, direct or indirect.

And if the economic conception of history be denied, according to which theory men are no more than puppets, carried to and fro by the waves of chance, while the real directing forces are quite out of their control, it follows that the existence of an unchangeable and unchanging class-war is also denied - the natural progeny [offspring] of the economic conception of history.

And above all Fascism denies that class-war can be the preponderant [dominant, predominant, prevalent or superior] force in the transformation of society...."

Apparently, & interestingly the word 'Fascism' actually originates from the Ancient Roman 'Fasces'.



A Roman lictor carrying the fasces, symbol of magisterial authority.

Definition of Fasces:

The fasces were a bundle of rods and a single axe which were carried as a symbol of magisterial and priestly authority in ancient Rome. They featured prominently in important administrative ceremonies and public processions such as triumphs. The symbol was adopted by later cultures to represent order and strength through unity, notably the fascist movement in Italy in the 20th century CE. The fasces are still visible today in many official contexts as a symbol of Republican principles, for example, in the United States' House of Representatives and on the cover of passports of French nationals.

Reference: <https://www.ancient.eu/Fasces/>



A perched eagle clutching a fasces was a common symbol used on Italian Fascist uniforms as shown above worn by Mussolini.

May I now share with you all once again from my limited understanding the following.

As stated above the fasces were a bundle of 12 wooden rods bound around a single axe merely as a symbol of magisterial and priestly authority in ancient Rome.

Within Mussolini's Fascism movement of the early Twentieth Century, it apparently was used to symbolise its ideology.

Being that the State's exalted above all with violence & war seen as necessary to create a powerful nation.

This is symbolised in the fasces by the single longer central rod bearing an axe head.

Twelve shorter rods are bound around the central one to symbolise the belief that all individuals & groups are relative, only to be conceived of in their relation to the State.

The ancient Roman fasces became in modern times the graphic depiction of the ideology of 'El Fascimo' or Fascism in early Twentieth Century Italy.

There ends my limited history of the physical side to Fascism.

Now let us ponder the spiritual, for in all things there is a spiritual side as nothing exists except through God.

As I stated last week the ideology of fascism is an anti-Christ spirit & also said that should fascism be present in the Modern Church then it is flirting with anti-Christ spirits.

I am not talking of 'the Anti-Christ' that Scripture tells us is coming but instead of those subtle things that creep up on us to play with our human weaknesses & delude us into being at peace in our souls with behaviours that are contrary to the Ways of God.

ISSUE 048: Draw Nigh Unto Me Part 46

Issued: 20th February 2018

Defaced - Week 38

At this time I feel a need to attempt to discover & hopefully thereby clarify, to myself & you, why I may have felt led to use the term anti-Christ in the past few weeks while looking at the roots of fascism.

Last year in Issue 7 I shared the following about myself:

"I hold no recognised position, title or credential & you can call me whatever you want, for I don't know what to call myself either, as only God Knows who we Truly are."

To me, I see myself as an ordinary everyday man with the same problems we all face, but hopefully, like you, I have loved the Lord Jesus Christ from the first moment He was revealed to me, for to Know Him is to love Him.

I most certainly have not always obeyed or served Him well, but I know He Loves me no matter what I do or don't do.

My journeys with Him have surely bruised me [flesh], but All Praise be to God, Our Father, for He Promised that my Saviour would never break me [spirit].

Matthew 12:20 KJV

20 A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory.

2 Corinthians 4:8-9 KJV

8 We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair;

9 Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;

So, every week, I battle on down this path the Lord opened to me on the 14th of March 2017 & welcome you to continue along with us.

The Bible speaks of a mysterious character called the antichrist, the false Christ, the man of lawlessness, or the beast.

I can hear the purists shuffling about, but as such, I do not believe this is what we have been referring to here over the past few weeks as being of an anti-Christ spirit.

But instead I believe, it is more in terms of the spiritual seeding into our minds of subtle untruths & ways of thinking designed to encapture & promote us into behaviours & habits of being that in Truth are 'anti' as in against or opposite to the Teachings of Christ.

Ever since they ate of the forbidden fruit, man's greatest nemesis or inescapable agent for downfall has been our selfish desires for when we follow them they lure us into diluting or disregarding The Truth.

Article: Evil behaviour when people follow their own selfish desires. Revelation 18:3

There are two kinds of evil behaviour in the world.

One kind is when a person chooses on purpose to do evil acts.

For example, a person might decide that he hates God.

Therefore, he serves the devil, and on purpose, he carries out every kind of evil deed.

This is the kind of wicked behaviour that antichrist (Christ's great enemy) will carry out.

Like the devil, he will want everyone to behave in this awful manner.

The other kind of evil behaviour is the natural result of our human nature.

It appears whenever people follow their own selfish desires.

People may not intend to do anything wrong, but their wrong desires cause them to do evil things.

James 1:13-15 New International Readers Version

13 When you are tempted, you shouldn't say, "God is tempting me." God can't be tempted by evil. And he doesn't tempt anyone.

14 But your own evil longings tempt you. They lead you on and drag you away.

15 When they are allowed to grow, they give birth to sin. When sin has grown up, it gives birth to death.

For example, people drink too much alcohol and then they act foolishly.

Or, people carry out wrong sex acts because of their strong desires.

Or, people love money and so they do evil things.

1 Timothy 6:10

10 Love for money causes all kinds of evil. Some people want to get rich. They have wandered away from the faith. They have wounded themselves with many sorrows.

Paul gives a list of such behaviour:

Galatians 5:19-21 New International Readers Version

19 What the sinful nature does is clear. It enjoys sexual sins, impure acts and wild living.

20 It worships statues of gods. It also worships evil powers. It is full of hatred and fighting. It is full of jealousy and fits of anger. It is interested only in getting ahead. It stirs up trouble. It separates people into their own little groups.

21 It wants what others have. It gets drunk and takes part in wild parties. It does many things of that kind. I warn you now as I did before. People who live like that will not receive God's kingdom. He explains the reason for it.

People are serving themselves and not God.

They are following their own desires and not God's Holy Spirit.

Paul warned Christians strongly against such behaviour

1 Corinthians 10:6-10 New International Readers Version

6 Now those things happened as examples for us. They are supposed to keep us from longing for evil things, as the people of Israel did.

7 So don't worship statues of gods, as some of them did. It is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink. Then they got up to dance wildly in front of their god."(Exodus 32:6 NIRV So the next day the people got up early. They sacrificed burnt offerings and brought friendship offerings. They sat down to eat and drink. Then they got up to dance wildly in front of their god.)

8 We should not commit sexual sins, as some of them did. In one day 23,000 of them died.

9 We should not put the Lord to the test, as some of them did. They were killed by snakes.

10 Don't tell your leaders how unhappy you are with them. That's what some of the people of Israel did. And they were killed by the destroying angel.

It is the behaviour of this kind that Revelation 18:3 refers to.

Revelation 18:3 New International Readers Version

**3 All the nations have drunk
the strong wine of her terrible sins.
The kings of the earth took part in her evil ways.
The traders of the world grew rich from her great wealth.**

It may not sound as terrible as the antichrist's acts, but it is still the cause of some very wicked acts

Revelation 18:4 New International Readers Version

**4 Then I heard another voice from heaven. It said, "Come out of her, my people. Then you will not take part in her sins.
You will not suffer from any of her plagues.**

Wrong desires even cause murders.

This kind of wrong behaviour has spread throughout the whole world.

It affects the nations, and it even affects their kings or rulers.

Trade is not wrong, but it often encourages people to follow wrong desires.

Money and wealth are not wrong, but the love of money causes all kind of evil acts.

Political power is not wrong, but the desire for it often causes important people to act in the most evil manner."

**[Written by Keith Simons, leader Wycliffe Associates [UK] EasyEnglish Bible Commentary team for several years.]
Reference: <http://www.usefulbible.com/revelation/evil-behaviour-when-people-follow-their-own-selfish-desires.htm>**

ISSUE 049: Draw Nigh Unto Me Part 47

Issued: 6th March 2018

Defaced - Week 39

In Week 38, I shared an article that stated there are two kinds of evil behaviour in the world, one being where an individual purposely chooses to do evil & the more common one being a natural result of our human nature.

Let us now delve a little deeper into this statement, firstly in a secular sense & then the Spiritual.

Thankfully, for most of us, we don't choose to act in the vein of the first kind of evil behaviour, both toward ourselves or others around us.

Therefore we manage to live in a general sense of mutual acceptance through exercising a personal variable adherence within the limitations of our societies cultural & moral standards.

This course of action is majorly fuelled out of self-interest & self-preservation & indeed promotes some order in our general living which then allows us to go about our business with a personally perceived sense of well-being, freedom & safety that can become fragile at times.

Nevertheless, we all know & understand that all kinds of social & moral evils are being perpetrated around us every single day, from which not one of us could ever entirely absolve ourselves.

**Bad behaviours,
wrong behaviours,
angry behaviours,
hateful behaviours,
unpleasant behaviours,
repugnant behaviours,
repulsive behaviours,
spiteful behaviours,
revolting behaviours,
vicious behaviours,
foul behaviours,
offensive behaviours,
base behaviours,
vile behaviours,
low behaviours,
depraved behaviours,
harmful behaviours,
injurious behaviours,**

*corrupt behaviours,
to name just a few, can surround or
even fill our lives at times.*

*All these are synonymous with the secular meaning of the word evil,
which fundamentally means anything regarded as being
the opposite of what is perceived by individuals,
both in a corporate & singular sense,
as being right or proper.*

*Under such reasoning, the above perceived evil behaviours would be
negated if the corresponding opposite good behaviours were employed:*

*good behaviours,
right behaviours,
calm behaviours,
loveable behaviours,
nice behaviours,
inoffensive behaviours,
inviting behaviours,
forgiving behaviours,
unobjectionable behaviours,
humane behaviours,
mild behaviours,
pleasant behaviours,
moral behaviours,
wholesome behaviours,
refined behaviours,
honourable behaviours,
harmless behaviours,
safe behaviours
& honest behaviours.*

The major flaw in all of this is that judgement of what is good & what is evil lays in the hands of each & every individual.

This ability was never part of God's Perfect Plan for His Children & therein lies the root to most of the significant agitation in our lives.

Through deception, man chose to claim the freedom to be his own judge & had to disobey God's one specific Command to do it.

An act that brought all men to gain the knowledge of good & evil, opening a way for the enemy to make disobedience take root in the hearts of all mankind.

Now that man could judge for himself he also had to concede the same right to everybody else & soon found himself having to live surrounded with behaviours possibly not to his liking.

Self, the very agent that accepted the deception, & this prevailing circumstance often don't cohabit well which often causes us to become agitated & denies us ever being able to achieve a real & lasting peace deep within.

The need for this concession to others, being the price we pay for maintaining the concept of self, is in itself the highest barrier to any possibility of genuine unity forming between all men.

For how can we ever wholeheartedly agree as one while corporately we are holding such a vast level of variations in what we individually consider as being good or being evil.

Socially we can & do give leeway for personal likes & dislikes, but significant differences of opinion are often the cause of many of the massive segregations between us all at every level of civilisation.

Of course, all that I have briefly tried to describe here relates to the secular or worldly aspects of self that have permeated through to form the basic fabric of human nature which was founded on the concept of 'self'.

Spiritually this is an exceptionally fertile field in which man's real enemy plies his trade of lies & deception, bringing his wiles & his adversities to all aspects of life to continually agitate souls in every way made available to him.

The basis of this was founded through Adam & Eve's disobedience when they ate of the forbidden fruit & its liveliness persists as all mankind continues to taste of it.

Through it, we all attained the knowledge of good & evil, & through our ignorance of the Fullness of Truth, we refuse even to contemplate, much less accept, that the knowledge of good & evil might just be all evil, mainly because all our secular thinking relies upon it.

What binds us in this falsehood is the very concept of SELF, which has no rightful place in the Kingdom of God, hence why the Bible strongly urges & encourages us to continually deny ourselves.

The following was written in the eido999words Issue 26:

"It was the absolute lack of knowledge of good & evil in which their innocence consisted, residing in & laid upon their total obedience to His Divine Will & Righteous Ways."

Genesis Chapter 3 reveals the subtle deception of the serpent upon Eve, that was to awaken in Adam as well the acceptance of 'the concept of self'.

It is a deception that blinds us to Truth by giving us a sense of having an inherent & innate right to be our own judge of what is good & what is evil.

But most of what it leads us into doing is often far from the Will of God causing us to do what pleases the flesh of our soul, being our mind, our will & our emotions.

Genesis 3:6-7 KJV 6

6 And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

7 And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

Self then became the core aspect & a common fundamental characteristic to be found in all humans, including Christians.

*To be religious is to serve God
by what one perceives is right or wrong
gained through a combination of reading God's Word
& the inherent knowledge of good & evil
rather than based upon surrender & obedience.
A perfect example is the Parable of the Pharisee & the Tax Collector. (Luke 18:9-14)*

Praise & Glory to God for His Forgiveness given freely to us.

ISSUE 050: Draw Nigh Unto Me Part 48

Issued: 13th March 2018

Defaced - Week 40

As True Christians, we need to be acutely aware of the fact that we still possess a human nature that was obtained naturally at birth.

It forms the expression of the tangible & visible ways of our bases of thinking, feeling, and acting.

A nature that, before our Conversion to Christ, was exclusively saturated & nurtured in this world's knowledge of good & evil upon which we founded our collective & individual ways of being.

A knowledge that, in Truth, is a bold disobedience & open resistance to the True Word, Wisdom & Way of God.

It continually leads us to face difficulty in making sense of our physical existence without a 'reward' in some form of pleasure or uplifting of self.

This perceived need can range anywhere from a need to find humour in life or taking a pleasure trip all the way to demonstrating obsessive overt need.

Bringing truth to the adage of "as long as there is something in it for me" that can become so profoundly hidden within our hearts that we fail to see it right through to it being openly displayed for all to see.

In reality, this caring for & indulging of the lusts of our flesh keep us from any real sense of unity, or oneness.

Mainly because of the individual rationale that permeates all we each do & our collective celebration & validation of 'our personal rights'.

In general, we make way for each other until each of our 'personal rights' crossover each other.

We enact this in contrast to the Kingdom Principle of Servanthood & Selflessness.

These cravings to serve self so easily retard or even halt our progress in attaining to a fuller & more profound revelation of God's Plan & Purpose for each one of us in the Spiritual realm.

For it has the innate ability to, & does, in fact, impede the necessary transcending of what is to our human mind the bewilderment of True Selflessness, for we only understand a selflessness enacted upon our terms.

Which is the fact that we desire to get something, even if minute, out of it in return, whether it be in the form of accolades, acceptance, admiration or merely another pebble added to the building of a kind 'reputation'.

In truth, this is the most common exchange or marketplace in which man trades.

We gather together in the highways & byways & talk oneness & community while, at the basest levels of our being, we are in the Light of The Truth seen as reacting from within individual emotions, needs & wants.

Whether in or out of Christ.

Outside The Truth it keeps us sleeping, within The Truth it keeps us slumbering.

Our real enemy is forever intent on placing pleasurable, instructional items, deeds or calls before us.

To encourage us into seeking a self-centred intellectual, moral or spiritual improvement, in the hope of binding us from The Truth of our real need through generating a false personal sense of contentment.

Mostly in the edifying of oneself in other's sight using pride to reassure ourselves that we do occupy a 'justifiable' place in this world.

This perception occurs in us as we struggle together in seeking some real meaning to this life that we can believe in, whether it be in the physical or spiritual realms or a mix thereof.

The 'concept of self' embedded within man since the disobedience in the Garden is our true foe's most valuable & practical instrument in keeping men distant from The Truth.

For those who have minds centred on the physical are not actively looking for God & so they find no other path than to avail themselves to all measure of fleshly desires & pleasures, both good & evil.

Though in general not consciously, they are consistently consumed in an incessant need to find self-satisfaction through trying to fill the void they feel deep within.

This void, of course, is the sign of the internal death that the Lord warned Adam would be the consequence of disobeying the command not to eat or even touch the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good & evil.

The Bible tells us that we are all made up of a body, a soul & a spirit but if Christ is not Alive in our spirit man, then we are spiritually dead just as Adam was following The Fall to Sin.

Just as darkness exists because of the lack of light, so it is that death of spirit exists because of lack of God's Presence.

This death then leaves us with only a body [flesh] & soul [mind, will & emotions] with which to try & find our way through this life without knowing the Righteousness of God Our Truth.

So then, in such a state, the vast ongoing deceiving through the 'concept of self' manifests into pride as there is now a great need to believe in ourselves & our abilities.

For we perceive a real need to struggle for our place in the sea of humanity that surrounds us.

And so the agitation begins: Where is my place in this world? How am I to attain it? How am I faring in this struggle for survival?

The competitiveness of our struggle rages on daily at all levels of life.

Such unanswered questions lead to an absolute innumerable mass of afflictions, trials, distress & suffering within the hearts of men, that has been witnessed throughout the history of this world.

Disharmony of spirit, restlessness, anxiety, abject fear, lack of self-worth, insecurities, lack of real identity, fear of loss in any form & numerous other such disorders plague the deeper recesses of our minds.

They surface in unpredictable behaviours of every kind with a vast variety of consequence to oneself or others.

The manifestations of these personal quandaries may be deemed to be good or evil, by ourselves or others, however, in the Sight of God, they are all evil.

For He Knows The Truth of who is the real author of it all & the root problem that lies within the struggles man undergoes.

ISSUE 051: Draw Nigh Unto Me Part 49

Issued: 20th March 2018

Defaced - Week 41

"Why is there evil & suffering in the world?"

John 10:10a KJV

10a The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy:

Therein lies the True Answer to the ageless question of the human race.

This question is one that so many have struggled with throughout the history of this world & one not quickly answered.

For in our lives whenever we experience real suffering, we soon realise it's not intellect that can give any real answer to our question of why.

But it is in fact, a genuine cry of the heart for some comprehension when in the midst of real suffering.

This same need for an answer occurs whether the sufferings are affecting ourselves, ones we love or someone for whom we have much concern.

Very often it is felt toward complete strangers when we hear of their plight.

These feelings can be either founded on basic human compassion and/or the fear that can so quickly enliven in us with a realisation that it could have just as easily happened to us.

Each & every one of us will encounter true personal suffering many times over throughout our lives on this earth.

It is at such times, many of our self-perceived sufferings of life quickly relegate themselves to positions of insignificance with the realisation that the perceptions of those 'sufferings' were based more on unfulfilled expectation & want.

To merely believe that to suffer is to not get what we feel we deserve or want, & the realisation of missing out is considered to be an act of real suffering would, in general, be accepted as being selfish & naive, yet we all continually do it in one form or another.

[I would assert here that as Christians we at times are even more prone to react in such ways through mistakingly understanding having been made Worthy & Justified in Christ with personal worthiness & justification.]

Whenever true tragedy & suffering occur, our standard somewhat unrealistic view of life soon undergoes a shift of perspective under realisation of what real pain is, even if often its effect only lasts as long as the pain.

Another most common & unanswerable question for most is a Spiritual one:

"Does God exist?"

Most tend to answer this question with a question:

"If God is real why is there evil & suffering in the world?"

This common form of reply, birthed outside of a valid heart profession of Faith in God, is indicative of the inherent inability to give an adequate answer when all reasoning is based on & relative to 'the concept of self'.

Such statements reveal that outside The Truth of God, human wisdom is 'blinded' by the concept of good & evil firmly embedded within the human nature.

Firstly, in the applied assumption that the person found asking the question 'Why' is unquestionably considering themselves worthy & 'good' enough to assess & judge what amounts to evil & suffering.

Secondly, in the further applied assumption that if God existed then because of our judgement of ourselves as being 'good', then 'evil & suffering' could not exist anymore & we the 'good' would be left to live in peace.

This human reasoning rooted in 'the concept of self' & founded upon 'the knowledge of good & evil' has no basis whatsoever in The Fullness of Truth.

Instead, it's bases are firmly founded upon a contorted reflection of it.

In living out our lives, this deceit of reliance on self-awareness outside of God's Righteousness relegates us into a personal fight for survival with the 'pride of self' intrinsically judging ourselves to be foundationally 'Good'.

The sin nature of man then makes it impossible to escape the relentless agitator of the lusts of the flesh continually spinning us to & fro between so many levels of 'good & evil.'

This continual unrest & stirring, having been instilled by way of the great deceit of the Garden, is ultimately designed only to steal, kill & destroy each person's destiny in God.

Only being in Christ can help us to run the good race toward Victory, as good morals & behaviours only serve to run us into a 'self-righteous goodness' delusion of our own making.

All deceit contains elements of truth that can make up even quite a significant portion of any deception.

I believe that through Holy Spirit it is possible to recognise the contortions of The Truth embedded within the deceptive foundation of the knowledge of good & evil.

In unity with seeking His Divine Guidance, revealing of the enemy's contortions of The Truth can be found in using a kind of 'reverse psychology' principle to peel back the reflected lie to expose the deflected Truth.

This uncovering, I believe, can genuinely lead to a deeper understanding & comprehension of God's Truth by first having the contortion that we once accepted now revealed to us.

The Bible tells us that there is nothing new under the sun & God is the Creator of all thing & all creativity stems from Him.

Worldwide we continually marvel at the creative talents of so many people, yet in the Fullness of Truth, every ability & skill comes from God.

Our enemy lacks creativity & so resorts to merely deflecting the True Word of God away from man, & is driven by necessity to distort The Truth then reflect contortions of it onto man.

Thereby, through lies & deceit he upholds & exalts himself upon his throne of self & through it tirelessly works at destroying those made in God's Image.

Who outside of Christ either accept his evil deeds & work with him or live in the lie of 'self goodness' & work for him.

Deflect good & then reflect it as evil, deflect evil & then reflect it as good.

The absolute basest form of deceit & manipulation reveals itself in this strategy of our real enemy that originated in the Garden of Eden, resulting in the Fall of Man.

This ploy is still employed today within the evil actions found in every level of disobedience.

It is 'self' & the satisfying of it that appeases us into a false security that in turn leads us to readily accept the contamination in ignorance by way of 'tickling the ears' with half or contorted truths.

For it convinces us through the concept of 'self' of our inherent 'goodness' in turn creating an assumption that we truly deserve only 'good things' or even 'the best of things' that please us.

The fullness of The Truth is absent from it, but a contortion is actually to be found within the employing of the deflection/ reflection principle of deceit.

The curse of the knowledge of good & evil embedded in human nature took deep root through disobedience and so now a constant agitation exists in all men.

The Truth is that in any given moment of time should I consider my current actions as good [nice] then at that time I hate what is evil [naughty] even though at times I partake of it.

On the contrary, should it be that at another given moment of time I should consider my current actions as evil [naughty] then at that time I hate what is good [nice] even though at times I partake of it.

If honest with ourselves every last one of us can relate to that!

These are the constantly shifting parameters we attempt to vindicate ourselves with which only result in deep-seated guilt within the soul that then in turn agitates away at any peace within us with guilt.

For we as men naturally see ourselves as being good [self pride] & regard 'evil' as being only to do with an evil force, power or personification far removed from the lives we lead.

Therefore we perceive our 'sins' as genetic aberrations or lapses of character being the result of the trials of life or lusts of the flesh that overcome us at times rather than the truly evil acts they are in the Sight of God.

Therein lies the quandary of a life-based on the knowledge of good & evil.

Trying to live a life of personally perceived rights & freedoms supposedly given by the same world that requires we simultaneously walk within the corporate boundaries of universal rights & liberties.

Yet another agitation to us, set to play against 'our self' & its right to have what it wants when it wants it.

A life based on lies formed in a crucible of self & pride, being the twin impurities of our enemy's contortion of The Truth.

To God, all our ways are evil having not been founded upon His Word, but instead upon disobedience

Even for those of us who Know Him, the struggle ensues in the battle against our natural disobedience & will continue to do so as long as we still occupy these bodies in this world.

Thank God once again for the Redeeming Blood of the Lamb, knowing that as believer's we still sin but no longer have a sin nature, that in & through Christ we can be more than Overcomers.

Take heart, for we are not alone in such struggles as in Romans Chapter 7 the Apostle Paul described his fight against the body of this death.

Romans 7:21-25 KJV

21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.

22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with themind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

Diligently Seek God for He sees & knows the author of our deception, the one who came only to rob, steal, kill & destroy.

The one whose works He wants to reveal to us through an awakening from our slumber in Accordance to His Divine Will & Purpose in this, the End of the Church Age.

ISSUE 052: Draw Nigh Unto Me Part 50

Issued: 27th March 2018

Defaced - Week 42

In Romans 7 we see that Apostle Paul truly desired to no longer walk after the flesh but after the spirit.

In so doing, he was to find that his most significant struggle was coming from a warring within the very members of his own body.

A struggle so infinite it caused him to declare himself a wretched man, and a battle, known in varying degrees of limited understanding by all who have walked genuinely in the Spirit since.

Romans 7:24-25 KJV

23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

A genuinely startling statement to those who lean upon their own understanding, it having been founded upon the Knowledge of Good & Evil.

Proverbs 3:5 KJV

5 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

A human understanding that convinces so many who call themselves Christian, that the warring is just a battle between the Kingdom of God [Good] & the Kingdom of Darkness [Evil].

Meaning that the more good [righteous] acts I do, the less evil [unrighteousness] will be accounted to me, thus somehow elevating me to being somewhat 'righteous', in my own mind.

My prayer is that we all might receive deeper Inspired Revelation that The Tree of the Knowledge of Good & Evil is in fact, in our hands, all evil to us, so that the remaining 'self' in us might no longer keep us slumbering in an area of half-truths.

Particularly in regard to our receiving a more in-depth personal disclosure of the real gravity of the lie & deception [evil] embedded in our human reasoning through the knowledge of good & evil.

That we might genuinely learn to lean not upon our own understanding, but upon Christ given us.

Apostle Paul was drawn deep into such Spiritual Understanding & discovered the body of sin alive in the members of his body, warring against the law of his mind, bringing him into captivity to the law of sin within those members.

This Truth led him to not only ask but also answer the question "who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Verse 24[b]

This is a very difficult piece of scripture to take hold of deeply.

Even for Apostle Paul it was only revealed in the deepest depths of his answering the astounding Call on his life.

So without reaching such depths in God how can we hope to fully understand, in Truth, what Apostle Paul was sharing?

I believe it is the foolishness of men to dismiss it as merely too hard to fathom.

And, the absolute foolishness of men, to try to measure one's personal understanding of it in an alignment with that of Apostle Paul without True Divine Revelation.

All scripture is Divinely Inspired, ready to Timely reveal its most profound Truths by the Divine Will & Purpose of God.

Just as throughout history, explorers have gone forth into the unknown to open the way for others to follow, so Apostle Paul, in Christ, was used by God to pave a way to deeper Spirit Inspired Understanding.

Now let us take a moment to examine these few revealing, yet somewhat controversial, verses from Romans a little closer:

Matthew Henry's Bible Commentary (concise) Romans 7:23-25 KJV

"This passage does not represent the apostle as one that walked after the flesh, but as one that had it greatly at heart, not to walk so.

And if there are those who abuse this passage, as they also do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction, yet serious Christians find cause to bless God for having thus provided for their support and comfort.

We are not, because of the abuse of such as are blinded by their own lusts, to find fault with the scripture, or any just and well warranted interpretation of it.

And no man who is not engaged in this conflict, can clearly understand the meaning of these words, or rightly judge concerning this painful conflict, which led the apostle to bemoan himself as a wretched man, constrained to what he abhorred.

He could not deliver himself; and this made him the more fervently thank God for the way of salvation revealed through Jesus Christ, which promised him, in the end, deliverance from this enemy.

So then, says he, I myself, with my mind, my prevailing judgement, affections, and purposes, as a regenerate man, by Divine grace, serve and obey the law of God; but with the flesh, the carnal nature, the remains of depravity, I serve the law of sin, which wars against the law of my mind.

Not serving it so as to live in it, or to allow it, but as unable to free himself from it, even in his very best state, and needing to look for help and deliverance out of himself.

It is evident that he thanks God for Christ, as our deliverer, as our atonement and righteousness in himself, and not because of any holiness wrought in us.

He knew of no such salvation, He was willing to

and disowned any such title to it. action all points agreeable to the law, in his mind and conscience, but was hindered by indwelling sin, and never attained the perfection the law requires.

What can be deliverance for a man always sinful, but the free grace of God, as offered in Christ Jesus?

The power of Divine grace, and of the Holy Spirit, could root out sin from our hearts even in this life, But it is suffered, that Christians might constantly feel, and understand thoroughly, the wretched state from which Divine grace saves them; might be kept from trusting in themselves; and might ever hold all their consolation and hope, from the rich and free grace of God in Christ."

**if Divine wisdom had not otherwise thought fit.
End of Matthew Henry Commentary**

It is my personal belief that to this day, in all truth, none of us could fully understand what Apostle Paul described, being his genuine & tangible struggle deep within himself.

A struggle in the shadow of which, even those indeed not walking after the flesh can only hope to relate in a limited degree of understanding & within a myriad of variableness.

For in the fullness of the subject, is embedded a great depth of wisdom & revelation not wrought out of intellect or personal experience with Christ, but rather out of Living The Word, having been Called into the knowledge of Him.

Apostle Paul was Called to Draw Nigh through the Power, being the Grace of God.

Paul, Servant of God, was Called for the benefit of all to follow, that he might tell us of his ordained understanding of what The Word is Saying to us.

To tell us that we are no longer a slave to sin

Romans 6:6 KJV

6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

To tell us that we are now servants of righteousness

Romans 6:18 KJV

18 Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.

To tell us that we are to no longer live after the flesh.

Romans 8:13 KJV

13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

In profoundly considering all this, I believe we need to Seek the Face of God for ever-deepening wisdom & revelation in the knowledge of him.

For this is what Apostle Paul himself prayed for the Church of Ephesus.

Ephesians 1:15-23 KJV

15 Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints,

16 Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;

17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:

18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,

20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,

21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:

22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,

23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

God Willing, may it be made so unto us in these perilous days ahead that by the Grace of God we might stand & continue to stand, to run our race to the end, for the sake of all those gone before us & yet to come, all destined to be made His Church & Truly One in Christ.

ISSUE 053: Draw Nigh Unto Me Part 51

Issued: 3rd April 2018

Defaced - Week 43

As we previously saw in Romans, Apostle Paul declared himself a wretched man & then asked, who shall deliver me from the body of this death.

He had posed this question after declaring that he sees another law in his members warring against the law of his mind & bringing him captive to the law of sin.

Romans 7:23-24 KJV

23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

It would do every Christian well to understand that the only thing that ever does or ever will, differentiate them from the unredeemed, is having a Living Hope in Christ resulting from Belief in the Redeeming Power of the Blood of Jesus.

For we ALL are sinners & All fall far short of the glory of God.

Romans 3:21-31 New International Readers Version

Becoming Right With God

21 But now God has shown us how to become right with him. The Law and the Prophets give witness to this. It has nothing to do with obeying the law.

22 We are made right with God by putting our faith in Jesus Christ. That happens to all who believe. It is no different for the Jews than for anyone else.

23 Everyone has sinned. No one measures up to God's glory.

24 The free gift of God's grace makes all of us right with him. Christ Jesus paid the price to set us free.

25 God gave him as a sacrifice to pay for sins. So he forgives the sins of those who have faith in his blood. God did all of that to prove that he is fair. Because of his mercy he did not punish people for the sins they had committed before Jesus died for them.

26 God did that to prove in our own time that he is fair. He proved that he is right. He also made right with himself those who believe in Jesus.

27 So who can brag? No one! Are people saved by obeying the law? Not at all! They are saved because of their faith.

28 We firmly believe that people are made right with God because of their faith. They are not saved by obeying the law.

29 Is God the God of Jews only? Isn't he also the God of those who aren't Jews? Yes, he is their God too.

30 There is only one God. When those who are circumcised believe in him, he makes them right with himself. When those who are not circumcised believe in him, he also makes them right with himself.

31 Does faith make the law useless? Not at all! We agree with the law.

Of course, the answer to Apostle Paul's question was, is, & always will be Jesus Christ, being the only Answer to this dilemma that is inherent to all humankind.

Romans 5:19 KJV

19 For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

I now feel led to take a closer look at what Apostle Paul identified as 'the body of this death'.

For myself, I have to confess that until doing this current study I always quoted it as 'this body of death' & in fact just had to edit the previous line purely because of this old habit of mine.

In fact, on my first realisation of the actual wording my instant thought was, I must be reading a modern version that has tampered with it because I was so sure it was wrongly worded.

It had always rolled off my tongue that way through merely interpreting Apostle Paul's comments as referring purely to his fleshly body as a vessel of death & that only Christ could eventually deliver him from it into a new spiritual body.

This concept, of course, bears a sense of The Truth but now I am questioning whether there might be more to discover by investigating why Apostle Paul was led to refer to 'the body of this death' rather than as I had always referred to it 'this body of death'.

So let us now look closer at what he might have truthfully been referring.

Early in my Walk, I heard a Pastor say: "Sin is held together only by the 'i' in the middle."

As Christians, we should well understand that there is only one real death, that which Adam experienced, which is separation from God through sin.

Apostle Paul discovered & shared what he had personally found to be Truth, that no matter how deeply he applied The Law to his life, his 'i' remained firmly in the middle of his sin.

So let us try & discover what 'body' & what 'death' he may have been referencing.

Romans 8:1-4 KJV

1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. [my emphasis]

2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Verse 3 tells us that Jesus Christ condemned sin in the flesh to death, an act that we now know opened The Way for us to become One through & in Him within the Body of Christ.

For in Verse 2 Apostle Paul tells us that the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set him free from the law of sin & death.

Let us remember that in Romans 7:24 in declaring himself a wretched man, Apostle Paul asked 'who shall deliver me from the body of this death?'

For me at least, I now see that in Romans 8:2 the Apostle Paul not only declared his deliverer but also revealed the body of this death & its inherent penalty from which Christ had set him free.

For the body of the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus had set him free from all consequences of the law of sin holding him captive to it & this particular death that should have ensued.

Christ had bridged the great divide he saw he had no way to cross.

Therefore I no longer see Romans 7:24 as I previously had as being merely a reference to 'his body of flesh'.

But now I see it is about the law of sin & death, 'the body' of it that held him captive to 'this death' that would surely bring separation from God without a deliverer.

***To put more simply I now see some revelation of what Apostle Paul was saying:
Who shall deliver me from this body of the law of sin alive in me that ensures my spiritual separation from God for Eternity? For I now see that even my very best efforts in fulfilling The Law can never do it? So who shall deliver me?***

In Romans 8:3 he answered:

3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

In the Garden of Eden stood two trees, one brought Life & the other death.

Now in this life, because of those trees now stand two laws, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus that brings True Life & the law of sin & death, that brings separation from God which is true death.

What separates the two is the sin, & it is the 'i' in the middle that keeps us away from God & His Ways.

Only a true faith in Christ Jesus & the Power of His Blood can deliver us from the body of this death.

So a question now arises in me 'where exactly did sin originate'.

In my childhood, the Catholics taught me about the 'original sin' of Adam, yet there is absolutely no exact reference to 'original sin' in the KJV.

In fact, a reading of Genesis 3 shows us that indeed the first fall or sin of man indeed was enacted by Adam, but was it the 'original'.

For Genesis 3 also reveals a serpent who subtly beguiled Adam in the situation.

Therefore, now begs two questions, what exactly is sin & from where did it originate?

Before Creation, a significant incident occurred in Heaven of which the Bible tells little & its interpretation is somewhat controversial.

Let us investigate further & pray that discernment come forth from Holy Spirit to enrich our souls with Deeper Truths.

ISSUE 054: Draw Nigh Unto Me Part 52

Issued: 10th April 2018

Defaced - Week 44

When was the fall of Satan, and how did it happen?

Reference: <https://www.compellingtruth.org/fall-of-Satan.html>

In eternity past there was God alone, and there existed only one will at that point – God's.

Then God chose to create the angels.

This apparently was done before the creation of our world.

Job 38:6-7 KJV

6 Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof;

7 When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

At the outset, at least, the angels' wills were perfectly aligned with God's.

There was, in effect, still just one will in God's creation.

But then something happened that changed everything.

Using poetic language, the Bible describes how one of the angels rose up against God, rebelled, and introduced a second will into the created order.

Scripture chronicles the events in two Old Testament passages: Ezekiel 28 and Isaiah 14.

Although some Bible commentators believe these portions of Scripture do not refer to the fall of Satan, many other theologians are convinced they do.

At the start of Ezekiel 28, the prophet first addresses a "ruler" of the land of Tyre.

The historical Tyre was a city of unscrupulous merchants, as well as a centre of religious idolatry and sexual immorality.

The ruler in question was a man named Ethbaal III, who ruled Tyre from about 590 to 572 B.C.

Ethbaal (whose name literally means "living with Baal") is described this way: "your heart is proud, and you have said, 'I am a god, I sit in the seat of the gods, in the heart of the seas' "

Ezekiel 28:2 KJV

2 Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyrus, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, I am a God, I sit in the seat of God, in the midst of the seas; yet thou art a man, and not God, though thou set thine heart as the heart of God:

After denouncing Ethbaal, the Prophet Ezekiel is then directed by God to deliver a second condemnation to the "king" of Tyre; this time, the description seems to be of a completely different type of being, one that is not a mere mortal.

It appears God used the occasion of Ethbaal's fall to describe the original condition and fall of Satan.

Like Ethbaal, Satan had raised his heart up against his Creator, declared that he would be a god, and was the spiritual king of Tyre and all its idolatry.

Ezekiel describes Satan's initial state this way:

"Thus says the Lord GOD: 'You were the signet of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering, sardius, topaz, and diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, emerald, and carbuncle; and crafted in gold were your settings and your engravings. On the day that you were created they were prepared. You were an anointed guardian cherub. I placed you; you were on the holy mountain of God; in the midst of the stones of fire you walked. You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created, till unrighteousness was found in you" (Ezekiel 28:12-15).

Ezekiel describes Satan as a being created in perfection.

Also, Satan is a "covering cherub," an order of angels with the closest access to God and who guard His holiness. cf. Ezekiel 10:1-14

His location on the "holy mountain of God" speaks of his being involved in the government of God. Walking "in the midst of the stones of fire" communicates a nearness to God in a place just beneath the glory at the footstool of God (cf. Ezekiel 1:27).

However, Ezekiel then explains Satan's fall, and in doing so provides insight into how evil entered God's creation:

"You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created, till unrighteousness was found in you. In the abundance of your trade you were filled with violence in your midst, and you sinned; so I cast you as a profane thing from the mountain of God, and I destroyed you, O guardian cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Your heart was proud because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor. I cast you to the ground; I exposed you before kings, to feast their eyes on you. By the multitude of your iniquities, in the unrighteousness of your trade you profaned your sanctuaries; so I brought fire out from your midst; it consumed you, and I turned you to ashes on the earth in the sight of all who saw you" (Ezekiel 28:15-18).

Here we have the answer to how sin came into creation.

Created a free creature, Satan possessed the ability to choose his actions.

Evidently, because of his beauty and splendour, he chose to rebel against God.

His sin was a self-caused action that led to his losing his position, his place, and his possessions.

The Prophet Isaiah provides more details on Satan's aspirations:

"How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn! How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low! You said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far reaches of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High'" (Isaiah 14:12-14).

The five "I will" statements made by Satan in Isaiah 14 each take a step toward God, with each new step being greater than the previous.

Satan's desire to "climb the ladder" and ascend to heaven may mean that his rebellion began on earth.

He desired to raise his seat above that of all the other angels.

Isaiah's reference to the "mount of assembly" corresponds to the government hierarchy also spoken of by Ezekiel.

Satan's longing to ascend above the heights of the clouds means he wanted to usurp the glory of God (God is sometimes pictured in Scripture as coming in the clouds, e.g., in: Daniel 7:13 KJV

13 I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.

Finally, Satan's desire to make himself like "the Most High" makes use of a name for God – El Elyon – that literally means "possessor of heaven and earth."

Simply put, Satan wanted it all.

Instead of getting it all, Satan lost it all.

He was reminded that he was but a creature, and his application to join the Trinity was refused.

With his rebellious act, Satan introduced a second will into God's created order.

Now, sadly, there are billions of wills that differ from God's among the human race and among the demonic legions that followed Satan's rebellion.

cf. Revelation 12:2-4 KJV

2 And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.

3 And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.

4 And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.

However, God's Word says that a day of full restoration is coming.

The curse brought upon fallen humanity and the earth itself will be undone, and the only will in creation will be that of God's again:

"No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever"

Revelation 22:3-5 KJV

3 No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him.

4 They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.

5 And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

Satan will one day be eternally assigned his place in the lake of fire, as will all those who follow him.

Revelation 20:15 KJV

15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

Put your faith and trust in Christ so that you can avoid Satan's deceptions and escape his fate.

End of Article: When was the fall of Satan, and how did it happen?

Reference: <https://www.compellingtruth.org/fall-of-Satan.html>

ISSUE 055: Draw Nigh Unto Me Part 53

Issued: 17th April 2018

Defaced - Week 45

Last week's article finished with the following statement:

"Put your faith and trust in Christ so that you can avoid Satan's deceptions and escape his fate."

So let us now ponder a little on what it is that causes us to retain varying levels of self-justification within our innate tendency to hold onto too much trust in ourselves rather than give complete surrender to the comforting hope found in the freely given Grace of God.

Having our actions clothed in personal favour that we bestow upon ourselves, we then become much less accommodating to others even though we all stand upon the shifting sands of our own fragile lives.

This living in a self-centredness then, in turn, keeps us a world away from fully understanding the True Righteousness of God.

So what causes us to remain in such a state.

In the physical, it's our flesh & the lusts thereof & in the spiritual, it's the lack of True Belief & the resultant lack of True Faith.

By Faith We Understand

Hebrews 11:1-3

1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

2 For by it the elders obtained a good testimony.

3 By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.

Our independence prevents us from recognising the great need we all have for God & His Righteousness to touch our lives again.

In our prideful selfishness, we substitute the one real need with a multitude of false ones, by consistently seeking fleshly pleasure & enjoyment through futile attempts to counterbalance the inner workings & struggle within our minds & emotions.

All to convince ourselves that this existence holds hope for greater & better things so that optimism can remain alive in us.

Furthermore, to satisfy our pride nurtured within our concept of self, a further need arises for a compensating balance to our inherent lack of reason for existence that forever requires some form of feeding.

A sense of morals, or lack thereof, dictate in each & every situation whether we seek satisfaction in areas commonly considered to be good or ones deemed to be evil or play around in the vast array of 'greyness' in between the two extremes.

The continual satisfying of self, even if momentary, bolsters pride & thereby maintains a separation by not seeing any need for the One & Only True God or leads to seeking out false spirituality especially if 'self' is elevated & well catered for within its outworking.

To ones that seek Life's True Spiritual meaning, they need to guard themselves against the spirit of religiosity, in all its facades including Christian forms, which encourage you to plant 'self' influences of your human nature firmly in between you & God.

This falsehood in so many ways can quickly lead to distorted views of the Truth of God & His Ways, misleading not only individuals but proven more than capable of forming into vast well respected religious groups.

A typical example is to have your sight set on the Church Leader or the Church itself rather than on God which causes you to be hiding in the bushes from God as Adam & Eve did.

Self-breathes & lives on well if we shift the responsibility for our personal spiritual welfare to another person or institution.

God sent Jesus to seek out those who would desire in their hearts a personal relationship with Him as Adam & Eve did before The Fall to Sin.

You can just as efficiently fulfil the enemies work in self-righteousness, piousness or even religious observances as much as in binding yourself to a life of blatant sin, for both keep you away from the Truth of God, thereby maintaining the very objective of the enemy.

To keep you at a distance from God, for God desires that His Children come into Faithful Personal Relationship with Him.

I, for one, have always loved & appreciated the way Jesus just 'instantly slipped' into my life so naturally to become an essential & predominant influence to my way of thinking, feeling & acting, manifesting Emmanuel in me - God within.

So that now we can walk together throughout the rest of this life while learning of my Father in Heaven & His Kingdom.

That hopefully one day I may be found on the other side of this existence, Eternally in Jesus.

Standing in Him as but one part of the One Body of Christ in the Presence of God.

For in the Second Adam, the First shall return.

For such He came to me, leaving my memories, knowledge & understandings intact, not demanding that I change my ways of thinking, feeling or acting but rather to present The Way, The Truth & The Life to me, that the Knowledge of Truth might set me free.

That I may no longer be captive to the 'self-concept' that consists within the knowledge of good & evil.

Now with, in & through Him, to come to know enablement to experience real Spiritual liberty, that I might be transformed not by Law but by Grace, the Power of God freely given to those that Believe in Him.

Beloved now that is True Love.

All of the above is True for every one of us who have Come to Jesus through His Calling.

It does not describe any one of us as we are, or are 'seen' in our physical lives, for we all fall far short of the Glory of God, sinners still but no longer captive to a sin nature, no longer required to pay the price for our sins.

Instead, its descriptive of who we are in Christ in the Spiritual Realm, for when God looks to us, He Sees Jesus.

For in Him we have been washed cleaned & redeemed through the Blood of The Lamb that was shed to pay the price once & for all.

Reconciliation has begun in us as we now stand before God clothed in the Garments of Christ's Righteousness through which His Innocence is bringing about our Restoration.

Now, whether we know it or not, remotely understand it or not or can, believe it or not, His Obedience instantly Defaced our disobedience, being the central ingredient to our human nature, the moment we received Jesus as Lord of our life.

The Truth of this is our defence against the spirit of religion that can so easily deceive us through contaminating the Word of God through the subtle caressing of self through the tickling of the ears as he did with Adam & Eve.

Preach the Word

2 Timothy 4:1-5

1 I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom:

2 Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.

3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers;

4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.

5 But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

Now let us finish off where we began:

"Put your faith and trust in Christ so that you can avoid Satan's deceptions and escape his fate."

ISSUE 056: Draw Nigh Unto Me Part 54

Issued: 24th April 2018

*Defaced - Week 46**Are We Living in the Last Days?***KEY TEXTS ON THE COMING OF CHRIST***Article by David Mathis Executive Editor, desiringGod.org**I was driving our twin six-year-old boys to school when one of the guys asked, out of the blue, "Dad, do you know what year Jesus is coming back?"**Typically, I enjoy answering my sons' questions with firm, confident, black-and-white truths, but this time I had to admit my ignorance.**The Bible does give us some very black-and-white things to say in moments like these, though.**I told him that I did not know the year, and that even Jesus himself, when he was on earth, said that he didn't know the exact time when he would be coming back.***Matthew 24:36 KJV***36 But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.***Mark 13:32 KJV***32 But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.**I also took the opportunity to emphasise that if anyone says that he knows, that person is false.**Then I added that even though I don't know what year Jesus is coming back, I do know that his coming is near.**And by "near," I mean what the New Testament means when it tells us, multiple times, that his coming is near.***The Next Big Thing***God calls his church, in every generation, to live in light of this remarkable truth: nothing now stands in the way of Jesus's return.**After his perfect life, sacrificial death for us, resurrection from the grave, and ascension to heaven to pour out his Spirit on his church, the next major movement in the history of the world is the second coming of Christ.**In the church age, we Christians have no definite unfulfilled list of events which must transpire before his return.**What the Bible promises will happen at the end is already happening, in significant measure, around the world today — and has been happening, in some sense, since the earliest days of the church.**As long as Jesus tarries, we do indeed have the concrete directives of the church age to continue pursuing, like the evangelisation of the nations.***Matthew 28:19 KJV***19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: and the hastening of his coming through holy living.***2 Peter 3:11–12 KJV***11 Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,**12 Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?**And yet we have no firm, certain list of unfulfilled conditions about which Jesus could not surprise us.**His coming is the next big thing and could happen at any moment.**That's what the New Testament means when it says his return is near.*

The End Is at Hand

Four particular texts in the New Testament, from four different human authors, say that the end is “at hand,” or literally, “has drawn near.”

Paul writes in Romans, “The night is far gone; the day is at hand.”

Romans 13:12 KJV

12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

The “times of ignorance” (as he said at Athens, Acts 17), the dark season of human history, now has passed with the coming of Christ.

Acts 17:30 KJV

30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:

The previous statement clarifies the context in Romans.

Romans 13:11 KJV

11 And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.

The day of Christ’s coming, Paul says, “has drawn near.”

Hebrews has the same nearness in view when he charges Christians in Hebrews 10.

Hebrews 10:24-25 KJV

24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:

25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

By this, he does not mean, as is often misunderstood, “Get more serious about Christian fellowship sometime in the future, when you see the signs of the end begin to appear.”

Rather, he means that he and his readers already are living in the end times.

The signs of the end aren’t off in the future; they are already happening now.

“All the more” now because they already see the Day drawing near.

As we will see, Hebrews, as plainly as any New Testament author, says that Christians are living “in the last days.”

Peter, then, in 1 Peter 4 writes;

1 Peter 4:7 KJV

7 But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.

Some have wondered whether Paul and Hebrews were referring to the coming destruction of Jerusalem (which happened in 70 A.D.) as the “day” that was “the Day drawing near,” but such alternative theories hit the wall here.

Peter says, very simply, “The end of all things is near.”

Even if Peter wrote his letter only to Jewish converts, it would be special pleading to take “the end of all things” as simply the destruction of Jerusalem.

Finally, James says plainly and unmistakably in James 5,

James 5:8 KJV

8 Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

Jesus’s return is near.

That’s what James, Peter, Hebrews, and Paul believed — and what the faithful church has lived in light of for two thousand years.

And what we should believe, and be ready for, today.

How, then, do we square the New Testament's claim that Christ's coming is "near" with the fact that here we are, two thousand years later, and he has not yet returned?

ISSUE 057: Draw Nigh Unto Me Part 55

Issued: 1st May 2018

Defaced - Week 47

Could Jesus Come Back Today?

I remember a book appearing at our local bookstore in the late 90s, when I was a teenager, with the title 'Are We Living in the End Times?'

I was intrigued.

Are we?

Might Jesus return in my lifetime?

My interest was aroused.

I wanted to get that book and answer the question for myself whether we are living in the last days.

Well, eventually I did get the book, and I was very disappointed.

I remember it being speculative, and concerned with the transient political realities of late 90s.

The book wasn't nearly as convincing as I'd hoped it would be.

But it wasn't too long until I went to college and became involved with a campus ministry that pointed me to the Bible's clarity about whether we are living in the last days.

As early as Acts 2, just after Jesus has ascended to heaven and poured out his Spirit on his church, Peter declares that the "last days" prophecy from Joel 2 is being fulfilled in their midst:

Acts 2:17 KJV

17 And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:

Joel 2:28-32 KJV

28 And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:

29 And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.

30 And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke.

31 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come.

32 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call.

Then Paul writes in;

2 Timothy 3:1 KJV

1 This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.

And the times of difficulty he refers to were already happening for his readers.

He was saying, in effect,

"Don't be surprised that life is tough; these are the last days, remember?"

And 2 Peter makes a similar assumption, and gives a similar reminder:

2 Peter 3:3 KJV

3 Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,

For Peter's readers, and for us, the scoffers aren't future; they are here now.

We are living in the last days.

James denounces the unbelieving rich by in James 5 by saying;

James 5:3 KJV

3 Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days.

James, his readers, and we today are already in the last days, and those who lay up earthly treasure now do so, tragically, in this final season of history before Jesus returns.

Perhaps most prominent of all, and unmistakable, is the first two verses of Hebrews:

Hebrews 1:1-2 KJV

**1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,
2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;**

The first coming of Christ ushered in this final season of world history — these last days — and his second coming is the next major step in history.

History of Salvation

Unlike many other major systems of belief around the world, Jews and Christians view history as linear.

History is God's story, and it is going somewhere.

It had a beginning, and it will have an end.

There were first days, there were the days of the patriarchs and the many seasons (so many ups and downs!) in the history of Israel, and there were four hundred years of prophetic silence, and then the days Jesus walked the earth.

And since then, we have been living in the last days.

We don't know how long this present season of history will last.

It has been almost two thousand years so far.

But we do know that this present season of history, which began with the early church, is the last one until Jesus comes.

The next major, literally epoch-making event to come is not some especially great persecution (as if Christians haven't been persecuted for the last two thousand years and aren't being persecuted in horrible ways around the world today); and it's not God intervening to rapture Christians from being persecuted.

God has better plans than to keep his people from hard times.

Acts 14:22 KJV

22 Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

2 Timothy 3:12 KJV

12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

The next big step is that Jesus is coming back.

That's what the New Testament means when it says his return is "near" or "at hand."

It's not about shortness of time as we conceive of it, but about nearness in history as God crafts it.

And it should make us a people who anticipate it, pray for it, and live in light of it.

The coming of Christ is near.

This is what we teach our children, and remind ourselves.

We are living in the last days.

End of Article

Original Article can be found at;

<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/are-we-living-in-the-last-days>

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ISSUE 058: Draw Nigh Unto Me Part 56
Issued: 8th May 2018



Defaced - Week 48

A Living Stone - My Brother John (Part One)

After several days 'out of action' with a head cold I went to bed last night knowing I only had today to write this weeks email.

I had intended to write regarding the article that I have been sharing over the past two weeks but the instant I awoke this morning all that changed.

My Brother John was on my mind, along with the words 'the rejected living stones'.

So here I am.

Let me start with my Brother John.

Today, I stand 22 days short of the 28th anniversary of having received the EIDO Call & Vision & some 22 years away from the day I first ever met my Brother John & Sister Jeanette Whipp.

Somehow from that first meeting, the Lord engendered an enduring, serious & strong relationship based purely upon the Oneness of Unity we have with each other in Christ Jesus.

Ours was never a personal social relationship based on merely seeking mutual enjoyment or satisfaction but rather in the kindred spirit of desiring to know more of God & what He wanted of each one of us.

Naturally, with EIDO being central to our lives, there was also some sharing of its recent history.

It was in a private time of John's seeking of the Face of God that he was to later share with me that he now knows 'EIDO is from God' & from then he & Jeanette have stood with us & the 'EIDO Family' of East Africa faithfully, for over two decades now.

In the early years together, it was more as interested brethren sharing in the communications from Africa & prayerfully supporting the issues as they arose.

Then, many years ago, John further shared that the Lord had Called for them to fully support EIDO which they have in every way since, eventually becoming the only other EIDO Australia Board Members.

By God's Hand, John & Jeanette became the only persons in Australia to continually stand firm & strong in facilitating the Vision, not only in words but action.

Many across East Africa can attest to this.

I now stand some 23 days away from the time when I sat in an Intensive Care Unit looking at my Brother John's comatose & paralysed body edging toward his passing & 13 days since I helped lay his mortal remains to rest.

For Our Father had chosen to take him home & I ask not why, but instead, what did his life mean.

What message did the life of John William Whipp leave?

I knew the man all those years, but what can one man 'really know' about another, for what man 'truly knows' himself.

I knew from him of his troubled past, his struggle to find meaning for life, of his former hippie life & its drugs, long gone.

I learnt of his Testimony of how Jesus Christ became his Lord & Saviour, which was evident throughout his relationship & dealings with me.

I learnt that in his past he felt like so many of us that he was a 'rejected stone' & dramatically found in Christ an inner peace, if not so much outwardly.

In the early days, it was our mutual experiences of personally experiencing & witnessing a pattern of seeming regression rather than facilitation of the living stones that had raised questions within the four of us.

The years of Seeking God's Face together through the sharing of our observations amongst ourselves & then supplicating in prayer for some stable form of clarification, in hindsight, proved only to serve its now understood intended purpose to unify us for His Purpose.

Eventually, the revelation came that nothing is unknown to God & if what we were seeing was so, then He was allowing it.

We just needed to lift it to Him & leave it with Him.

We were to Trust Him in ALL things & from there we moved forward into many years of a close relationship centred through EIDO & its outworking.

Along the journey over those many years, we naturally discovered a lot of different things about each other, but nothing, even remotely ever arose that hindered, halted or jeopardised the relationship that He had formed.

I found John to be a forthright man ever willing to allow you to form your own opinion of him, one not prone to sacrifice conviction simply for acceptance or gain.

He was primarily a peaceful & calm man seen to be standing solidly on the Foundation of Jesus Christ in his life.

***So now I return to my question raised above:
What message did the life of John William Whipp leave?***

I, of course, can only speak for myself & all I can say is that the most significant message his life left embossed upon my heart & mind cannot be found anywhere in the previous 22 years.

In fact, it was to come during the last months of his earthly life, flowing from his receiving the news that cancer was present in his body.

As the time approached for them to leave for Adelaide to undergo treatment, John twice spoke something that he repeated to us every time we met again before his passing.

Many others have shared that he spoke the same thing to them during that time of uncertainty in his life.

It was to be in reality his parting message to all who he loved.

As I see it, there was no more significant gift he could have possibly given to those he left behind & those who hear or share it.

I well remember in my early days in Christ asking myself a specific question that I had heard bandied about in Christian circles.

What would I do if someone held a gun to my head & told me to deny Christ or die?

As much as Christ had changed my life & regardless of the Love that now filled the void in my life with a new Divinely Given Ability to seemingly obey unquestionably along with all my loud declarations fuelled by First Love, I truthfully could not answer this question.

Why? because it is a hypothetical question, for how can you possibly answer it unless you find yourself in such a position.

And even then it could not be answered by mere words but by the very act of receiving the fate without protest & in the Peace of knowing where you were about to go.

And a conviction of knowing that it would be gain, not loss.

On each occasion that John spoke it, his stoic matter of fact manner that engendered in me a feeling of what it might have been like to hear Jesus talking Truths on this earth.

All those who have told me that John spoke the same thing to them all shared they had the same reaction to it.

He truly meant it!

John shared that he knew God could Heal but should it be his time to go home he was prepared to accept God's Will.

For the Lord had taken him from a dangerous situation, turned him around & gave him a good & full life.

*Then with a gentle yet steadfast conviction, John declared:
AND I KNOW WHERE I AM GOING!*

(Part Two Next Week)

ISSUE 059: Draw Nigh Unto Me Part 57

Issued: 15th May 2018

Defaced - Week 49

A Living Stone - My Brother John (Part Two)

"AND I KNOW WHERE I AM GOING!"

When we are in challenging situations, such as my Brother John had found himself; we can so easily be seen voicing 'obligatory' statements of faith.

Declarations that come more out of a perceived mandatory need to maintain a show of strength of faith amongst our peers rather than out of any sincere, deeply held personal conviction.

For if we are to be truthful, isn't it often more a case of promoting 'a false sense of positiveness' from within the parameters of our 'uncertain faith', or in other words our fears that remain.

In honesty, who amongst us has not made loud & seemingly powerful declarations of all sorts based more upon a loose sense of hope rather than any genuine & deep personal conviction.

However, when my Brother John repeatedly spoke what he did, never before have I heard such words embodied in such an honest, pure commitment to a known Truth.

In fact, so much so that my spirit received it more deeply as a witness to its Truth than my soul could outwardly allow accepting.

For many years my Brother John had, as we all do, declared numerous things but never before had anything impacted me like this did.

The simplicity of its frankness, spoken with unquestionable honesty, was the embodiment of its power!

And not only once, but repeatedly on every single occasion that we met in private since receiving news of the serious bodily ailment that had befallen him!

The last time we met my Brother John was comatose & unable to speak a word, but those previously spoken to all four of us undergirded the Peace that filled the room, before, during & after his passing.

So it is with Truth!

That the witness of the Spirit that comes upon us, witnesses to the Spirit dwelling within, for it is the self-same Spirit.

This Spiritual process is the only way we can come to See&Know The Truth.

When Jesus asked the Apostles who do you say I am, Peter replied in Matthew 16:16 "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Jesus told them that Peter's proclamation had come only by Divine Revelation, affirming that these were not Peter's words but those of His Father in Heaven, who had revealed it to Peter.

I believe that my Brother John's repeated statement was found upon & made manifest out of such a Spirit Confirmed Conviction.

Am I now attempting to allude to a proposition that my Brother John was fully aware of his imminent passing & accepted it?

God forbid, not at all.

We need to understand that the Apostles had all walked, talked & listened to Jesus for some time.

They had watched & heard the public reactions & opinions regarding Jesus & related their observations to Him when He asked: "Who do they say I am?".

Until Peter spoke under the Unction of Holy Spirit, none of them could answer the further question Jesus then posed to them.

"Who do you say I am?".

Only by the True Faith Given could Peter utter The Truth that "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Jesus then replied to that in Matthew 16:18 KJV

"18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

Jesus declared He would build His Church upon the rock of True Faith Given by Grace, being the Power of God, to those Called.

Matthew 7:24-27 KJV

24 Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

I wholly believe, that my Brother John transmitted a defining declaration that his Trust was to truly be found in God.

Matthew 6:10 KJV

10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

This was far from giving up or giving in, but rather an honest declaration of faith, more in the vein of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane.

For my Brother John knew he would fall not for his house was founded upon the rock of his salvation being his Living Faith that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

He was not speaking the acceptance of any particular fate but rather Holy Spirit led him into the ultimate declaration of his faith.

That Father let thy will be done, in earth [in me] as it is in Heaven!

In its fullness, My Brother John's succinct yet poignant message was framed within Biblical Truth that we are Living Stones destined for being built into a spiritual house, to become a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

I believe that a personal message my Brother John would have wanted to leave, for his life in Christ demonstrated it, is one for all those who know Christ Jesus yet somehow still feel to be somehow to be stones 'rejected' by the builders.

The Bible tells us that they rejected Jesus & that the stone they rejected became the Cornerstone of the spiritual house that is to be built with Living Stones.

Psalm 118:22 NKJV

22 The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.

Men are men & do what men do & Christian men often still do what men do, for who amongst us is perfect?

In being men we too often busy ourselves in building 'our image' of the Church while the subliminal messages our actions send out openly oppose the true essence of the Word we profess with our mouths.

In doing so, we can & do unknowingly dismiss or reject so many 'stones' that Christ has brought to us.

Merely because of our inability to find a place for them or somehow consider that they do not possess a parallel fit into the limited image we are promoting of ourselves & where we are heading.

My Brother John, I believe, spent this life feeling somewhat displaced for varying reasons both outside of & even in Christ.

Because of this, I saw that in Christ he always had a keen discernment for brethren displaying the signs of such spiritual rejection.

He always had a willingness to share what he could to lift them, sometimes more bluntly than most would desire but with his approach framed by pure intent.

One message I believe John would hope he left with his brethren who still feel 'displaced' is that men may still be men, but God is God.

Therefore he would say to you, as he did in his final actions, that if you know that you know Christ, then indeed you were Called by God.

Men may reject you, but God never will so let your faith be founded on Him & Him Only!

Let it not be swayed by the actions or words of men, for we all fall far short, forgive & HOLD ON TO WHAT YOU KNOW TO BE TRUTH!

At this point, I feel a need to emphasise to you that my intent here has not been to eulogise John into some exalted position in anyone's mind.

In his passing, as in our life together, I stand with him to Exalt the only One Worthy of Glory. God Our Father in Heaven. Amen.

For without Emmanuel, God with John, there would be no Testimony.

(Part Three Next Week)

ISSUE 060: Draw Nigh Unto Me Part 58

Issued: 22nd May 2018

Defaced - Week 50

A Living Stone - My Brother John (Part Three)

So now I ask what message did the life of John William Whipp leave me?

It took 22 years to know John as I do & it was only during the past few months that he passed on his life's most significant message to me, one that relates to us all.

The words John repeatedly spoke over the last three months of his life were powerfully compelling for the various reasons I have already expanded on above.

However, the most poignant point of the message came over the hours I sat next to his hospital bed looking at my Brother John ebbing closer & closer to his passing.

All I could think of was the intense conviction with which he repeatedly spoke those words & the pure, simple faith that produced them.

HE SPOKE IT, HE BELIEVED IT!!!
He had a Living Hope founded in Christ Jesus.

Is this not the message to us all, that this is what being a Christian is really all about, ordinary men holding onto an extraordinary Hope in extraordinary ways!

Not in the same way but rather in an absolute myriad of extraordinary ways being as individual as we each are, to be one body brought together by the head being Christ Jesus!

Our hope founded in Jesus, Trusting the Will of God for our lives, producing a living hope for the salvation of our soul!

Not the pursuit of or the devotion to hoping for better living standards, a better job, a better home, more power, more success, a healing, a miracle, a prophecy, leadership in the Church, a better Church etc. etc.

My Brother John would & did question the teachings of such hopes instead of faithful facilitation of the saints according to the true essence of The Word of God.

The powerful Living Hope John demonstrated in his last days in this world enlivens the hope in me that he shall be seen a living stone built into the spiritual house, being a holy priest, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

My Brother John Whipp was an ordinary man who lived a simple life & left an extremely powerful uncomplicated message to all who can hear.

"AND I KNOW WHERE I AM GOING!"
DO WE ????

"What does it mean that Jesus and believers are living stones?"
 Reference: <https://www.gotquestions.org/living-stone.html>

1 Peter 2:4–5 NIV

**4 As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to Him—
 5 you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ"**

Answer: The term living stones in 1 Peter 2:5 is used as a metaphor to illustrate the secure and intimate relationship believers have with Jesus, who is described in the previous verse as the "living Stone" (1 Peter 2:4).

Together, these two verses picture how Christ and His followers are joined by God Himself: The foundation of God's building is His Son, Jesus Christ, the "living Stone."

The "living stones," in turn, are believers who come to Jesus and place their lives upon this foundation.

The living Stone is "precious" to those who believe:

1 Peter 2:7 NIV

**7 Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, "The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,"
 but some men reject the living Stone in order to build their lives their own way, not God's way:**

Psalms 118:22 NIV

22 The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone;

Luke 6:46–49 NIV

The Wise and Foolish Builders

46 Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?

47 As for everyone who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice, I will show you what they are like.
 48 They are like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built.
 49 But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete.

Unbelievers cast this living Stone aside, not caring that Jesus is the only true foundation upon which they can build securely.

1 Corinthians 3:11 NIV

11 For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.

In a metaphor much like that of the living Stone, Jesus is described as the chief cornerstone in Ephesians.

Ephesians 2:19–22 NIV

19 Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household,

20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.

21 In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord.

22 And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

Peter references Jesus as the cornerstone in Acts.

Acts 4:11–12 NIV

11 Jesus is "the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone."

12 Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved."

God accepts no one who refuses to become a part of His building.

And God is just like all builders—He has a foundation upon which all workers must build:

Matthew 7:24–27 NIV

The Wise and Foolish Builders

24 "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.

25 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.

26 But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand.

27 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."

Believers, then, are the "living stones" of the church that Jesus promised to build:

Matthew 16:18 NIV

18 And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.

As living stones, we have new life in Christ:

2 Corinthians 5:17 NIV

17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

As integral parts of the building of God, we have security in Christ:

John 6:37 NIV

37 All those the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away.

As the Master Builder, God places His living stones just where He wants us to be:

1 Corinthians 12:18 NIV

18 But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be.

As living stones, we are connected to one another in the body of Christ:

Romans 12:5 NIV

15 Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.

Our Lord, the foundation Stone, is alive forevermore and will never crumble.

He will support us eternally.

Peter goes on to describe the function of the living stones to "declare the praises" of Him who called us out of the darkness of sin into the light of life and glory:

1 Peter 2:9 NIV

9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the

praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

This is the “job description” of a living stone: a speaker of praise, a declarer of truth and love and light.

1 Corinthians 10:31 NIV

31 So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

The spiritual house God is building is designed for His glory, and we, the living stones, glorify the Lord in all we do.

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