



Do Not Be Entangled

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# At Christ's Table ~ ACTpublications

*"Explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words."*

1 Corinthians 2:13

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# Preface

The intention and purpose of this article are to remind those who belong to Christ of some basic spiritual realities with regards to the World in which we live, and to bring to our remembrance some realities of the Kingdom of Heaven which may help us to better understand how to maintain our stance of being *“IN the World, Bur Not OF the World”*. (John 17:14-15)<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> I have written in detail on this subject in other articles including [\*“The Way of God & The Way of Humanity”\*](#), [\*“IN the World, Bur Not OF the World”\*](#), [\*“How Does God Govern Fallen Humanity?”\*](#), [\*“Concerning Gathering”\*](#), and other articles which can be found [HERE](#).

# The World System

“The following quote communicates what we must understand about the world in which we live: *“(It is) An ordered world system governed from behind the scenes by Satan. This system encompasses politics, education, literature, science, art, law, commerce, music -- anything involved in the progress of mankind.... No matter how good the initial intentions, all organizations created by mankind eventually turn away from Godly power to worldliness. When the influence of Divine Life is removed, organizations gravitate towards materialism, humanism, worldliness, and Satan.”*<sup>2</sup>

I have long believed that most Christians are not sufficiently aware of *the spiritual realities behind the World System* in which we live. (I have discussed this issue in detail in [\*“Facing the Future”\*](#) and [\*“Do Not Love the World”\*](#).) We need not dedicate ourselves to learning “the deep things of Satan”<sup>3</sup>, but an understanding of the realities of “the god of this world”<sup>4</sup>, “the rulers, the

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<sup>2</sup> This quote is from a book summary (not an excerpt) of *“Love Not the World”* by Watchman Nee offered by a Davin Dahlgren. This book, as with his many other books, is actually published from the notes taken by his students during Watchman Nee’s talks (1920-1972).

<sup>3</sup> Revelation 2:24

<sup>4</sup> 2 Corinthians 4:4; 1 John 5:19

powers, the world forces of this darkness, the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*”<sup>5</sup>, and the operation of the World System on the Earth **serve to help make clear distinctions between the kingdom of the World and the Kingdom of Heaven.** I believe “making no distinction between the holy and the common and having not taught the difference between the unclean and the clean”<sup>6</sup> is a fundamental weakness of contemporary Western Christianity.

Firstly, the whole World – including all governments in all nations, regardless of who is president – “lie under the control of the Evil One”.<sup>7</sup> **Scripture tells us we are not dealing with flesh and blood, but with spiritual forces of darkness and evil.**<sup>8</sup> These spiritual entities and their material manifestations in human governments and societies truly could not care less about the stopping of killing or the making of peace in the World regardless of any and all political rhetoric and

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<sup>5</sup> Ephesians 6:12

<sup>6</sup> Ezekiel 22:26

<sup>7</sup> 1 John 5:19; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:2; Cf. 1 John 2:15-17; Revelation 12:9; James 4:4.

<sup>8</sup> Ephesians 6:12

propaganda. In addition to this, the presidents and politicians who are not spiritually regenerated are “ignorant of the schemes of Satan”.<sup>9</sup> If they are not spiritually regenerated, there is no way they can even understand what is going on in the spiritual realm<sup>10</sup>, none-the-less know how to address and handle these things with wisdom. “The weapons of **our** warfare are not carnal.”<sup>11</sup> However, the weapons employed by human governments and their politics are merely an arsenal of carnal weapons which are useless against spiritual forces.

**It is the fallen state of the human heart which is the cause of all the evil we see in the world.** “The heart is deceitful above all things, and it is incurably sick; who can understand it fully *and* know its secret motives? ... Thus says the LORD, ‘Cursed is the man who trusts in *and* relies on mankind, making [weak, faulty human] flesh his strength, and whose mind *and* heart turn away from the LORD.’”<sup>12</sup> The human heart is the battleground, and that is in the spiritual realm, not the political realm.

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<sup>9</sup> 2 Corinthians 2:11; Cf. 1 Corinthians 2:6-8; Ephesians 6:11

<sup>10</sup> Cf. John 3:3-8

<sup>11</sup> Ephesians 6:12

<sup>12</sup> Jeremiah 17:9, 5 AMP

*“Christianized”* legislation of morality does not change hearts.<sup>13</sup> And unchanged hearts make for unchanged human behavior and unchanged societies.

**As “disciples of the Kingdom”<sup>14</sup>, we need to remember: “God is Spirit.” His kingdom is in the realm of His Spirit.** Jesus Himself made those statements. (John 4:24, 18:36) In accord with the promises of the New Covenant, the “law” of God’s kingdom is written on human hearts and operates “according to the spirit” – not “according to the letter” – specifically, it cannot be legislated in political policies and programs. (2 Corinthians 3:6) The citizenry of God’s kingdom is “*in* the world but not *of* the world” (John 17:14-15). We are individually “strangers and exiles on this earth” (Hebrews 11:13), and collectively an outpost or colony of heaven. Our citizenship is in Heaven (Philippians 3:20), and we are witnesses to a heavenly kingdom which is not “*here*” and not “*there*” (Matthew 24:23) – that is, not established anywhere here on this Earth in this age, other than in the hearts of

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<sup>13</sup> Cf. Romans 8:3-4

<sup>14</sup> Matthew 13:52



people, until the return of our King to a new Earth and a new Heaven. This will, indeed, be a “*new*” Earth, and not a “*renewed*” Earth. There will not be anything on this Earth having been “*renewed*” by the work of Christian ministry or by “*Christianizing*” societies through governmental legislation. Rather, it will be a literal newly created Earth descended from Heaven – at the start of the next age. (2 Peter 3:7-11<sup>15</sup>; Cf. Revelation 21:1-2, 9-11, 23; 22:1-5) I have more fully addressed this issue in [“Your Kingdom Come”](#), pp.13-22.

Secondly, all nations are made up of a majority of people with fallen human natures – be they presidents, politicians, or the general populace. (Romans 3:10-18) It follows that **self-preservation and self-aggrandizement govern all political policies, programs, and interactions.** Scripture identifies this as the cause of all wars. (James 4:1-2) There are no “*holy*

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<sup>15</sup> I am aware of the controversy regarding the alternate translation of the end of v. 10: “... and its works will be discovered” instead of “... and its works will be burned up.” Since only two out of many manuscripts suggest this reading, and since this reading is quite inconsistent and therefore very problematic to the meaning of the passage, like the majority of Greek scholars, I do not see the necessity for over-spiritualizing the passage to mean that there will be a “renewed” earth instead of a literal “new” earth.

*wars*” or “*just wars*” in the New Testament except for the one going on in the spiritual realm. (Ephesians 6:12; Cf. Daniel 10:13, 12:1; Revelation 12:7) All wars between nations are solely based on what benefits that nation. The same is true of the immigration policies of all nations. Humanitarian goals and world peace are not the ultimate goals of any nation. Every nation is motivated solely by self-preservation and self-aggrandizement. All “*virtue signaling*” is self-serving propaganda – a means to an immoral end.

If one does not want to accept what has been stated above, and prefers to believe that the World in which we live can be transformed by human governments and their politics, or by the work of the Church (Ekklesia)<sup>16</sup>,

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<sup>16</sup> Some thoughts on using the word “Ekklesia”: **Not everyone identifying with the word “church” is part of the Ecclesia of God. There is only one true Church made up of those who have received the Spirit of Christ (Romans 8:9-10) - those who “possess the Son”.** (1 John 5:11-12) However, contrary to what is in vogue today for some, I make no distinction between the Greek word, ekklesia, and its English translation, “church”. I use the two words interchangeably. If I use the word “church”, I mean the full and accurate biblical meaning of “ekklesia”. Simply using the Greek word, ekklesia, in and of itself, helps no one understand the biblical meaning. **The biblical meaning will always require explanation for the unlearned.** Therefore, I think the English words, “church”, or “assembly”, or “community” are adequate translations. When writing, I sometimes find myself leaning towards using terms like “the people of God”, or “the disciples of the kingdom”, or “the followers of Christ” - depending on the context.

or by a “*special*” class of Christians called “*the manifested Sons of God*” - *before Christ’s return*, then one must disregard Scripture or come up with some erroneous system of interpretation of Scripture. These erroneous systems of interpretation abound, and every one of them is a misinterpretation and misrepresentation of the Kingdom of Heaven. This, according to Jesus, brings serious doubts as to the spiritual regeneration of the adherents of these erroneous systems of biblical interpretation.

(John 3:3-8)

In any case, this world has been subject to futility.

(Romans 8:20; 2 Peter 3:7, 10-12; Revelation 20:11, 21:1) Notwithstanding amazing advances in the

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Furthermore, not identifying as “Church” does not “automatically” make us the “Ekklesia”. If we are going to identify as the “Ekklesia”, there must be the reality of being and living as “called out” AND “GATHERED TOGETHER” AND ENGAGED IN THE MATTERS OF THE KINGDOM (it’s the latter that is demonstratively lacking today.) Donning the Greek word is duplicitous and inconsistent. If that were the thing to do, why aren’t we using Greek words to communicate 100s of other New Covenant truths? Moreover, don’t the words “congregation” and “assembly” ALSO conjure up images of people sitting in a BUILDING? Doesn’t the term “ekklesia” conjure up the connotation “ecclesiastical” (man-made church systems)? We also have to reckon with Paul’s injunction: “Solemnly charge them in the presence of God not to wrangle about words, which is useless and leads to the ruin of the hearers.” (2 Timothy 2:14) What do we do with that? I think we are still “missing the mark” and “falling short” with all of this.

sciences and technologies, there is no historical precedent upon which to base any hope of Humanity being able to solve its own social-economic-political and moral problems. Expecting improvement by any means is simply foolish thinking, as it is contrary to God's plan. Righteousness and peace have never been established in this world, in this age – and according to Jesus, never will be. (Matthew 10:34; Luke 12:51; John 16:33; Cf. Acts 14:22; Revelation 6:4)

Thirdly, one must *“open wide the lens”* when looking at anything taking place in the world. Marx's Dialectical Materialism (the struggle between different social classes) is still very much in force. Also, there is a globalist-nationalist dialectic behind every issue and action taking place in the world. There is a globalist movement which will continue and will increase up to the return of Christ. Naturally, in reaction, there are nationalist counter movements which, at best, may have only temporary “success”. And it must be remembered that nationalist movements – in any nation

under any president - are also “under the sway of the Evil One”. (1 John 5:19)

These realities are in accord with Scripture – regardless of our natural desire to have a pleasant life. Since Humanity’s fall in the Garden, sin and death have ruled throughout all human history in the World System (Genesis 6:5-7), and according to Jesus, this will continue until His return. (Matthew 24:3-22) Until the “Faithful and True” comes again (Revelation 19:11-21; Cf. Psalms 45:3-5, 96:13, 98:9; Isaiah 11:4, 42:13, 63:1-4; Zechariah 14:3-5; Matthew 16:27, 24:30; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-8, 2:8; Jude 1:14-15), the world will be under the control of spiritual forces of darkness and wickedness.

# The Ways of God & The Ways of Fallen Humanity

Like the wisdom of God, the ways of God are “from above” (James 3:17) – “not of this realm” (John 18:36) - altogether different than the World. There is a passage in the Old Testament which, if read and taken seriously, bears out the ways of God in contrast to the ways of fallen Humanity:

“**13** Now when Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went up to him and asked, “Are you for us or for our enemies?” **14** “**Neither**” he replied, “but as commander of the army of the Lord I have now come.” Then Joshua fell facedown to the ground in reverence, and asked him, “What message does my Lord have for his servant?” (Joshua 5:13-14 NIV)

This is what the Strong's Lexicon has to say about the Hebrew word, *lo* (Strong's # H3808), which is translated "Neither": *"The Hebrew word "לֹ" (lo) is a primary particle of negation. It is used to express a strong denial or prohibition. In the Hebrew Bible, "lo" is often employed to negate verbs, commands, or statements, indicating the absence or opposite of an action or condition. It is a fundamental word in Hebrew, appearing frequently throughout the Old Testament."*

The fact is: God is not on any human "side". It is the responsibility of Humanity to align with God, not vice versa. Spiritual warfare is not being waged in the realm of politics. Political "weapons" may or may not produce some beneficial social outcomes. But history clearly shows that any beneficial social outcomes achieved through political means have been quite short-lived. Kingdom warfare "is not of this realm" (John 18:36). "That which has been born of the flesh (for example, political achievement) is flesh, and that which has been born of the Spirit is spirit." What is born of the flesh cannot see or enter into the realm of the Kingdom of God. (John 3:3-8; Cf. 1 Corinthians 15:50) To be engaged in human warfare with human weapons –

namely, politics - is to be “*entangled*” in the earthly dimension,<sup>17</sup> rather than the heavenly dimension.

One may ask: “*What is the harm of investing oneself into the political process to produce beneficial social outcomes? Is it sinful?*” Investing in the political process for social outcomes may not necessarily be sinful, although it very often is. But that is not the point. The point is, for the Christian, being *entangled* in the political process for beneficial social outcomes is wrong in many ways:

- **It is not co-laboring with God.** It is not Scripture, but never-the-less, a line from a Bob Dylan song speaks succinctly: “*Every earthly plan that be known to Man, He is unconcerned. He’s got plans of His own to set up His throne, when He returns.*”<sup>18</sup> God is not involved with political process – that is totally a human endeavor. God is involved with His own Kingdom agenda, and the Ekklesia is called to **co-labor *with* Him.** (1 Corinthians 3:9) There are

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<sup>17</sup> 2 Timothy 2:4

<sup>18</sup> “*When He Returns*”, from “*Slow Train Coming*”, Bob Dylan (1979)



many verses in Scripture warning against acting independently of God - “leaning on our own understanding” (Proverbs 3:5), moving in ways “which seem right, but its end is the way of death” (Proverbs 14:12). The Lord spoke through the prophet Isaiah a very somber warning: “Listen carefully, all you who kindle **your own** fire [devising your own man-made plan of salvation], who surround yourselves with torches, walk by the light of your [self-made] fire and among the torches that **you have set** ablaze. But this you will have from My hand: **You will lie down in [a place of] torment.**” (Isaiah 50:11 AMP)

- **Misplaced glory**: If there are any beneficial social outcomes, it is the government, the president, the incumbent political party, and its politicians who take the glory. The Ekklesia should be doing things “*in the name of the Lord, Jesus Christ*”. That name carries the authority of the Kingdom of Heaven, and it is that name which receives glory.
- **Misplaced faith**: “Do not put your trust in princes, in human beings, who cannot save.” (Psalm 146:3

NIV)<sup>19</sup> Those outside of Christ have no other option but “*the arm of the flesh*”.<sup>20</sup> Their only hope is Humanism. The only process available to them is the political process. **It is assumed that the political process is the only way to address and meet the needs of Humanity.** This makes perfect sense, if one doesn’t believe in Christ. But it makes no sense for the Christian believer to put faith in the political process instead of the Spirit of the Living God. And it must be remembered that **God does not involve Himself in the political process**, as was established in Joshua 5:13-14. The problem is that most Christians do not believe this is true. They believe God serves human government instead of the government serving God. The result is Christians serving human government instead of serving God. This belies their faith – their faith is in human government and

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<sup>19</sup> Cf. Psalm 118:8-9; Isaiah 2:22, 30:1-3, 31:1; Jeremiah 17:5

<sup>20</sup> 2 Chronicles 32:8

the political process, instead of the Spirit of the Living God.

- **Abdication of Divine Calling:** When Jesus said to “Pay to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s.” (Matthew 22:21; Mark 12:17; Luke 20:25), He was referring to tax money. But the tax money was to be used as God has ordained human government to use it – specifically for protection and punishment – not for meeting the material needs of society. (Romans 13:1-7) God gave the responsibilities of Charity to families and the Church. However, both families and the Church have to a great extent abdicated what God has called them to do by looking to human government to fulfill their calling of educating their children, feeding the poor, caring for the elderly, widows, and orphans, healing the sick and broken-hearted. In this, the Church has “*gone the way of the World*” and is at odds with their King and His Righteousness – namely, at odds with how

God has chosen to accomplish His Righteousness  
in His Kingdom.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> I have also written on these things in [\*“The Root Problem with ‘Progressive Christianity’”\*](#) and [\*“Concerning Gathering”, Part 2, The Commission of the Church.\*](#)

# His Kingdom & His Righteousness

In Matthew 6:33, Jesus instructed us to “Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.” How does the Lord accomplish His righteousness in His Kingdom? Jesus spoke of the nature of the affairs of the Kingdom of Heaven, including its life, warfare, and weapons in His parables. While it is not within the scope of this article to fully interpret Jesus’ parables, we can consider one parable which I believe contains the answer to the question “*How does the Lord accomplish His righteousness in His Kingdom?*”

## The Parable of the Sower

“<sup>3</sup>And He told them many things in parables, saying, ‘Behold, the Sower went out to sow; <sup>4</sup>and as he sowed, some seeds fell beside the road, and the birds came and ate them up. <sup>5</sup>Others fell on the rocky places, where they did not have much soil; and they sprang up immediately, because they had no depth of soil. <sup>6</sup>But after the sun rose, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. <sup>7</sup>Others fell among the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked them out. <sup>8</sup>But others fell on the good soil and

yielded a crop, some a hundred, some sixty, and some thirty times as much. <sup>9</sup>The one who has ears, let him hear.” Matthew 13:3-9

## The Parable of the Sower Explained

“<sup>18</sup>Listen then to the parable of the Sower. <sup>19</sup>When anyone hears **the word of the kingdom** and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one sown with seed beside the road. <sup>20</sup>The one sown with seed on the rocky places, this is the one who hears **the word** and immediately receives it with joy; <sup>21</sup>yet he has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution occurs because of the word, immediately he falls away. <sup>22</sup>And the one sown with seed among the thorns, this is the one who hears **the word**, and the anxiety of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. <sup>23</sup>But the one sown with seed on the good soil, this is the one who hears **the word** and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces, some a hundred, some sixty, and some thirty times as much.” Matthew 13:18-23

Again, we are not giving a full interpretation of all that is contained in the parable, but just looking for the answer to the question, “*How does the Lord accomplish His*

*righteousness in His Kingdom?”* Jesus gives us His answer: The Lord accomplishes His righteousness in His Kingdom by **“the word” – “the word of the Kingdom”** – by the preaching of the **“gospel of the Kingdom”** (Matthew 24:14; Cf. Mark 16:15) *“For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was pleased through the foolishness of **the message preached** to save those who believe.”* (1 Corinthians 1:21) **Yes, it is the word of the Lord transforming the hearts of human beings – *not the enactment and enforcement political policies and programs* – which He has chosen to accomplish His righteousness in His Kingdom.**<sup>22</sup>

There is another aspect of the Kingdom of Heaven we can see in this parable. God’s method and the Kingdom results are different from Humanity’s method and political results: With the preaching of “the word of the Kingdom”, some have “ears to hear”, some don’t. And there are also differences in the amount of fruit

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<sup>22</sup> Again, I have written more on “His Kingdom & His Righteousness” in [“The Root Problem with ‘Progressive Christianity’”](https://www.AtChristsTable.org)

produced in the outcomes - some 0, some 100-fold, some 60-fold, and some 30-fold.<sup>23</sup>

In contrast to God's ways, with politics there is universal enforcement of law – *“obey the law, or go to jail”* – *“no one is above the law”*, etc. Obviously, God expects everyone in His Kingdom to endeavor to keep the law of His Kingdom – *“the Law of Christ”*. (1 Corinthians 9:21, Galatians 6:2; Romans 8:2) But how does God govern those outside His Kingdom – on this Earth, here and now? He uses no *“sword”* to enforce His law on those who have not yet received His Spirit, *“<sup>7</sup>because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, **for it is not even able to do so,** <sup>8</sup>and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.”* (Romans 8:7-8)

I have written at length about [\*“How Does God Govern Fallen Humanity”\*](#), but, for here, this excerpt may suffice:

*“Every human being is free to make choices and live with the consequences of their choices. This is the type of context God establishes with humanity in the Old Testament, but it is*

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<sup>23</sup> Cf. *“The Parable of the Weeds Among Wheat”* in Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43, and *“The Parable of the “Dragnet”*, Matthew 13:47-50.



*also the same in the New Testament: ‘I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse, so, choose life that you may live.’” (Deuteronomy 30:19; Cf. vv. 15-20) This is the context which God Himself establishes for humanity at large.”*

God has no “enforced legislation” – not for those in the Kingdom, nor for those outside His Kingdom. Again, the way of God is the working of His Spirit through Spirit-in-breathed words **transforming the hearts of human beings** – *not the enactment and enforcement of political policies, programs, and legislation*. This is how He has chosen to accomplish His righteousness in His Kingdom.

# An Apostolic Exhortation

“No one engaged in warfare **entangles** himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.” 2 Timothy 2:4

## “Entangled”

What does it mean to be “entangled” in the affairs of this life? Strong’s Lexicon gives us these insights:

*“**Usage:** The verb “emplekó” is used metaphorically in the New Testament to describe becoming entangled or involved in something, often with a negative connotation. It suggests being caught up or ensnared in **affairs that distract or hinder one’s primary focus or mission.**”*

***Cultural and Historical Background:** In the Greco-Roman world, the concept of being entangled was often associated with being caught in a net or snare, a common metaphor for being trapped or hindered. **This imagery would have been familiar to early Christians, who lived in a society where military service and civic duties could easily distract from spiritual commitments.**”*

## *“The Affairs of this Life”*

Is Paul saying that we should not be responsibly engaged in the affairs of our family and household? If so, he would be contradicting much of what he wrote in his epistles. (1 Timothy 5:8; Cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12; 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12) Universally speaking we all need to work in order to support and give good oversight to our families and households. We can understand these things as “a garden” God which places us in with the responsibility to “cultivate and tend” – to “be fruitful and multiply”. (Genesis 2:15; 1:28)

Yet, the Lord says, “But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided to you.”. (Matthew 6:33) In a manner of speaking, *at the top of a list* of all “*the affairs of this life*” are “the kingdom of God and His righteousness”. Each of us needs to learn how to maintain that priority uniquely in our own lives before the Lord.

We can also consider the meaning of “the affairs of this life” more specifically in the context of this passage in

2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy. Paul's reference to "a soldier engaged in warfare" is the key to understanding Paul's probable intention here. And again, Strong's Lexicon is helpful:

*"Affairs that distract or hinder **one's primary focus or mission**.... This imagery would have been familiar to early Christians, who lived in a society where military service and civic duties could easily distract from **spiritual commitments**."*

So, as followers of Jesus Christ, what is our "*top priority - primary focus or mission*" in life? **The affairs of the Kingdom of God** – "Seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness". (Matthew 6:33)

## *The Affairs of Kingdom of Heaven*

Jesus defined the Kingdom of God as the Father's will being done here on earth as it is in Heaven. (Matthew 6:10) But, who is capable of doing God's will? His "*called out ones*" (the Ekklesia) – not the general populace. Scripture tells us: "Without faith, it is impossible to please God." (Hebrews 11:6) This "faith" is definitive of the Ekklesia of Christ. Again, Scripture tells

us: “The mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for **it is not even able to do so**, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.” (Romans 8:7-8) There are two kingdoms – the Kingdom of Heaven and the kingdom of this World. And there are two different groups of people: There are those who, by faith, have been “*born from above*”, have seen and entered the Kingdom of Heaven (John 3:3-8), and endeavor to walk by faith in order to please Him. And then there are those who are outside the faith, have not been born from above, cannot see or enter the Kingdom, and live according to the flesh. (Romans 8:5; Cf. Ephesians 2:3; 1 John 2:15-16) Who is capable of “*His righteousness*”? Only those who “belong to Christ” (Romans 8:9), who through faith have access to the righteousness of Christ the King. (1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Romans 3:22, 10:4 & 6; Philippians 1:11, 3:9)

So many Christians do not understand that on this Earth, during this age, the affairs of the Kingdom of Heaven take place “in the Spirit” as well as in and through those who are “*born of the Spirit*” – namely,

those who *“belong to Christ”* (Romans 8:9-10) – the Ekklesia He is building. The general populace with its human government and politics is *“in the flesh”* which is *“hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.”* (Romans 8:7-8) They are unable to see, enter, or participate in the affairs of the Kingdom of Heaven – namely walking in faith, pleasing God, doing His will, clothed in His righteousness in Christ Jesus. There are two separate peoples and two separate kingdoms – irrespective of whatever morality is legislated and enforced by the human government and politics of the general populace. The New Covenant operates *“by the Spirit, not by the letter”*. (2 Corinthians 3:6) **A new heart and spirit – not new legislation - is required for living in the Kingdom of God:**

*“<sup>26</sup>Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you, and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. <sup>27</sup>I will put my Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My ordinances and do them.”* (Ezekiel 36:26-27 AMP)

## *Christians Live in Babylon, Not the “Promised Land”*

The social order of Old Testament Israel is according to the Old Covenant which is now obsolete. (Hebrews 8:13) Israel, like most ancient societies, was a “*sacral*” society – that is, one land, one nation, governed by one God and one religion. (*“Sacralism represents the fusion of church and state power, promoting a system where religious and political authority are intertwined.”*)<sup>24</sup> God gave Israel an allotment of land which came to be known as “*The Promised Land*”. In contrast, the New Covenant established by Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection includes **all nations and all forms of social order**, yet is “<sup>4</sup>one body and one Spirit, as you were also called to the one hope of your call; <sup>5</sup>one Lord, one faith, one baptism; <sup>6</sup>one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.” Ephesians 4:4-6)

The Church (Ekklesia) is universal – that is, it is not limited to any one nation. That alone precludes the idea of any one nation being a “*Promised Land*”. That whole perspective in all of its variant forms is adeptly

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<sup>24</sup> <https://www.monergism.com/sacralism>

addressed in Greg Boyd's ["The Myth of a Christian Nation"](#). Babylon (Revelation 17) represents the spirit of the World System (Ephesians 2:2) which is worldwide – in the spiritual realm. The Kingdom of Heaven is also worldwide. Jesus warned of the deception of believing the Kingdom of God is "*here*" or "*there*". (Matthew 24:23; Cf. John 18:36) On this Earth, during this age, the "*Promised Land*", so to speak, is also "*in the Spirit*".

<sup>22</sup> **You have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem**, and to myriads of angels, <sup>23</sup>to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled **in heaven**, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, <sup>24</sup>and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant." (Hebrews 12:22-24)

We are exhorted by Paul: <sup>1</sup>"Therefore, if you have been raised with Christ, keep seeking **the things that are above**, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup>Set your minds on **the things that are above**, *not on the things that are on earth.*" (Colossians 3:1-2)



## *Kingdom Warfare*

There is “a battle in heaven” (Revelation 12). There is warfare between the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of the World. Scripture – not Political Science, but Scripture - defines the nature of this warfare:

“For our struggle is *not against flesh and blood*, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the **spiritual forces** of wickedness **in the heavenly places**.” (Ephesians 6:12)

“<sup>3</sup>For though we walk in the flesh, **we do not wage battle according to the flesh**, <sup>4</sup>**for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh**, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. <sup>5</sup>We are destroying arguments and all arrogance raised against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.”

( 2 Corinthians 10:3-5)

And as Paul indicates, this is *a spiritual warfare with spiritual weapons* – not human warfare with human weapons:

“<sup>10</sup>Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. <sup>11</sup>Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. <sup>12</sup>For our struggle is **not against flesh and blood**, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, **against the spiritual forces** of wickedness in the heavenly places.<sup>13</sup>Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist on the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. <sup>14</sup>Stand firm therefore, having belted your waist with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, <sup>15</sup>and having strapped on your feet the preparation of the gospel of peace; <sup>16</sup>in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. <sup>17</sup>And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” (Ephesians 6:10-17)

### *The Weapons of Our Warfare are Not Worldly Weapons*

I have written at length about the negative spiritual realities behind the World System. All of this is not to say that Christians should be ambivalent about godliness in the human sphere. *We are to love truth*

*and righteousness and hate sin.* That is not “*up for debate*”. **The issue is how does the Lord accomplish His righteousness.** *That is to be our “modus operandi”* as well. But unfortunately, what typifies the contemporary Christian approach is taking the side of “*the lesser of two evils*”, investing time, money, and effort into political parties and policies which *appear* to lean more towards godliness in comparison to the other.<sup>25</sup> I ask you: “*Does that sound like the way of God to you? Can you imagine Jesus and His disciples adopting that methodology? Do you see any evidence of that in the gospels or epistles?*” “This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic.” (James 3:15) That is the way of fallen Humanity. “The wisdom of this world is foolishness in the sight of God.” (1 Corinthians 3:19) “The way of the Lord is perfect.” (Psalm 18:30; 2 Samuel 22:31)

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<sup>25</sup> By far, the best writing I have ever come across on the subject of the social ministry of the Church is “*Social Action Jesus Style*” by Larry Christenson. One of the “take aways” I received from this book is this: The Church is to be “a Servant Church”. But it is not the “servant” of the world – it is the “servant” of God. The Church has had the tendency to take its leading from the world regarding its involvement in social issues – that is, jumping on whatever “band wagon” that is determined to be “in vogue” for the expediency of the political climate and agendas at any given time. This can leave other social issues, which are just as worthy, totally unaddressed. Rather, the Church should be *led by the Spirit* in its mission and ministries. And the leading of the Spirit will always be in alignment with the Lord’s Commission of the Church to Represent the King and His Kingdom.

# “Out of the Fire”

## *A Prophetic Word*

September 2020

A little more than 40 years ago, while reading the scriptures, I had a very brief vision : The “*canvas*” was entirely black. Then out of the blackness, bright golden specs jumped into the center of the picture. This continued until the center had grown into a shining golden sphere. The understanding that immediately came to me was this: *In “latter times”, people would be “jumping” out of the world into the Household of God.* This vision took place just before or just after reading Jude 1:23.

More recently, the same verse - Jude 1:23 – was placed on my heart and mind, along with an instruction or direction from the Holy Spirit, which I’d like to share.

*“And some, save (or deliver) by seizing (or snatching) them out of the fire, detesting (disdaining or hating) even the garment that has been polluted by the flesh (or fallen human nature).” Jude 1:23 AMP*

## *The Spiritual Context*

The World is “*on fire*” – the political sphere is riddled with “*fires*” continually springing up all over the earth. Human governments are constantly working to “*put out the fires*” of social issues and political unrest, but **there is no end to these “*fires*”**. At the same time, Christians have become more and more **involved (“*entangled*”)** trying to address these “*fires*” – the ills of fallen Humanity. Contrary to the “*spiritual weapons*” used by the apostle Paul, Christians are predominately and increasingly aligning themselves with various political personalities, parties, policies, and programs in an effort to address these “*fires*”.

## *The Instruction of the Spirit*

“<sup>14</sup>Do not be mismatched<sup>26</sup> with unbelievers; for what do righteousness and lawlessness share together, or what does light have in common with darkness? <sup>15</sup>Or what harmony does Christ have with Belial<sup>27</sup>, or what does a believer share with an unbeliever? <sup>16</sup>Or what

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<sup>26</sup> Literally, “unevenly yoked”

<sup>27</sup> Greek: *Beliar*, a name of the devil and the antichrist

agreement does the temple of God have with idols? For we are the temple of the living God.”

2 Corinthians 6:14-16

There can be no “fellowship” – no partnership – with light and darkness. Our **involvement** is to be with the Kingdom of God – **not** with the World System. Know this: The World system is **not** going to be “redeemed” but rather burned up in the fire of God. (2 Peter 3:7, 10-12; Revelation 20:11, 21:1) This world has been subject to futility. (Romans 8:20) Expecting moral improvement in the political area is simply foolish thinking, as it is contrary to God’s plan. Peace has never been in this World and, according to Jesus, never will be. (Matthew 10:34; Luke 12:51; John 16:33; Cf. Acts 14:22; Revelation 6:4) It is **not** God’s agenda to transform the World System into the Kingdom of God. It is God’s agenda to have the Church (Ekklesia) witness to and be a witness to – that is, “to make known” (Ephesians 3:10) – the Kingdom of God as **an alternate society** – a light in the midst of the darkness.

## *The Direction for Those Who Belong to Christ*

Firstly, **“come out”**,<sup>28</sup> and **stop involvement with the World System** – with a healthy fear and disdain of its spiritual pollution.

Secondly, **align yourselves and your energies with God’s agenda**: preach the Gospel of the Kingdom, make Disciples of the Kingdom, be a collective witness of the Kingdom of Heaven, and thus “save some – seizing (or snatching) them out of the fire” through the power of the Word and the Spirit of God.

And thirdly, implied in Jude 1:23 is that **our focus as the people of God is to be the building up of the Ekklesia** – not transforming the World System.

As the World burns, *some* will also “*come out*” of the flames into the Household of God. Therefore, we are IN, but not OF the World. We are INVOLVED with “some snatched from the fire”, but not the World

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<sup>28</sup> *Ek* (out of) *kaleo* (to call): “a called-out assembly” or “an assembly of called-out ones.”

System. We belong to Christ – our citizenship is in heaven. We are sojourners in this World System – **not involved** in its politic. In a manner of speaking, we can be likened to are “*Conscientious Objectors to Politics*” – “*Political Atheists*”.

I believe this prophetic word is very much in sync with the series of messages I wrote a few years ago: [“A Remnant Will Return”](#). The key scripture passage there, Isaiah 8, portrays ancient Israel in the same situation as ourselves today – [“IN the World, But not OF the World”](#). And the following verses give God’s instruction to His people in that spiritual and political environment:

*“Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples. And I will wait for the LORD who is hiding His face from the house of Jacob; I will even look eagerly for Him. Behold, I and the children whom the LORD has given me are for signs and wonders in Israel from the LORD of hosts, who dwells on Mount Zion.”* Isaiah 8:16-18

But there is something more: I see in the words: “*Save others, snatching them out of the fire...*” and “*Bind up the*



*testimony, seal the law among my disciples...*” something to do with the formation of intentional Christian communities functioning independent of the World System in various ways – alternate societies which “*are for signs and wonders*” – that is, these **family-based / household-based communities** would be witnesses to the Oikos (Household) of God in a post-Christian world. Some of what I am seeing is rooted in a message I published quite a few years ago: [“Facing the Future”](#). And although I continue to seek more insight and understanding, more recently, I have written more on this subject in: [“Kingdom Households”](#). The books I have mentioned (and others) are available in paperback format [HERE](#).

Bill & Frances Furioso  
~ At Christ's Table ~



Bill Furioso and his wife, Frances, have been married for more than 40 years, and have two children, four grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

Bill and Frances served as missionaries in South Africa for thirteen years making disciples, establishing churches, and training church leaders. Over a span of 40 years, they also traveled extensively in an itinerant Bible teaching ministry which took them to hundreds of gatherings on four continents ministering in churches, conferences, spiritual formation seminars, and home gatherings. They have shepherded several churches, disciplined many to Christ, and mentored church leaders in the USA and abroad.

Being an avid student by nature, Bill has done both formal and informal study in various fields including Education, Music, Philosophy and Theology. As a writer, he has authored many publications which are distributed worldwide. Because of Bill's disabilities resulting from a spinal cord injury, he can no longer travel, so their ministries of writing, recording, distributing, mentoring, and correspondence are now shared primarily via the Internet... [www.AtChristsTable.org](http://www.AtChristsTable.org)

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