



A Reply To A PENTECOSTAL

ASHY (S.O.A)

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FOREWORD

There is no salvation in a mix up of truth and error. Truth can not be more than one and neither is it hidden except to those whose minds are blind after turning their ears away from it. Salvation comes only through full obedience to the whole counsel of God. This is an excellent exposition of the word of truth that sets men free. The author is my "fruit" in the gospel. By reason of use and careful study of use and careful study of the word of righteousness, he has his senses exercised to discern both good and evil. I pray that the Almighty will use this work to convert many to "the faith once delivered unto the saints" through the apostles of Jesus our Lord. Seek God diligently; He is ever ready to reward such people.

UMANAH, I. H.T.
Ovwian, Delta State.
July 1992

INTRODUCTION

This is an open reply to a letter received from a friend in one of the many bodies of the Pentecostal Movement with whom I used to fellowship. It is therefore addressed to all in the various Charismatic sects of Christendom. This treatise examines the core beliefs and claims of those professing to have had a 'Pentecost like experience.' Having studied the letter and the scriptures for some time, I deem it fit to publicly defend what the Bible rightly teaches contrasted with the teachings and practices of Pentecostalism. This is because of what he regards as "your errors ... and the judgment seat of the Lord." After all, the Bible commands (1 Peter 3:15): "...*Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.*"

Consequently, I expect that you will be bold enough to read through with an open mind and not be timid as to abandon halfway or forbid others from reading it. This work does not relieve one of the personal responsibilities of exposition of the Bible in study or evangelism. I dedicate it to all those who love and seek for the truth in a confused religious world. Copies of the manuscript have been circulated since 1992. Given the support of those willing to assist with funding its free distribution, it has finally come out revised, in book form. I am grateful to my brethren for their encouragement towards this production. *To sponsor the publication of more copies, please contact the printing press that I have used directly. To translate and reproduce in another language, do obtain my written permission.*

Bible quotations are from the KJV and NIV. Words in {} are my insertions or Bible translators' insertions.

Ashy (S.O.A), 2010

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Letter From A Pentecostal-Lagos, Nigeria, West Africa

28/2/91

2.00 p.m.

Dear Bro. Ashy,

I checked on you at the above-mentioned time of the day. How are you now? I surely understand your errors and I know it will take the almighty arm of the Lord himself to deliver you. Anyway, I know for sure that if you are a child of God, someday, sometime you'll return like the prodigal son to his beloved Father otherwise, it will be another Pharaoh or Nabal's case, nothing will change you from this way of Cain and from this untoward counsel of Korah. You know what the bible call people like you: "wells without water, wandering stars." Repent of this your wicked ways and turn back to God, it's never been the will of God to have adders (vipers) as children and as such I pray that the beam in your eyes be removed in Jesus name! Something keeps telling me that peace is somehow becoming elusive to you. The bible even says it -there's no peace unto the wicked! I don't mean no harm by all that I have written but I just feel that the time has come for us to tell one another some real solid truths. May you not be found wanting at the judgment seat of the Lord; I say same for myself too! Amen.

Yours faithfully,
Bro. Dotun

A Reply To A Pentecostal - Lagos, Nigeria, West Africa

Dear Dotun,

How are you doing? I hope you are blessed with good health from the Lord to whom be glory forever, Amen.

Beloved, it is with joy unto God for myself but pities at your tenor that I studied your letter. Few believers, if any at all would be impressed by the nature of the words that are written out of the abundance of your heart. Irrespective of your judgmental attitude, I will continue to speak the truth in love for I am not ignorant of the devices of the enemy to make us devour each other. *"But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or by man's judgment: yea, I judge not my own self, for I know nothing by myself; yet I am not hereby justified but he that judgeth me is the Lord."* I greatly rejoice that I suffer as a Christian not as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer or as a busybody in other men's matters -1Peter 4:13-15. Even if I am wrong, you should have been guided by the passages (Galatians 6:1 & James 5:20) that read; *"...if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted...let him know, that he which converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."*

In the similitude of the defense of Paul the apostle, I can boldly make the following truthful assertions; ever since I became Christ-conscious, I lived as a Pentecostal. Now I live and I am judged for believing and proclaiming that which is evident from the scriptures. Why should it be thought a thing incredible to you that Christ built only one church? You know of my conduct in time past, how I waxed in Pentecostalism above many my equals, being more exceedingly zealous of the tradition of its founders. Later it pleased the merciful God to Biblically save me, and increase my understanding. I discarded preconceived

notions, personally researched into the Bible and learned in His church for some time before contacting any of you. This was to ensure that I have proved all things, and am holding on to that which is good. Thereafter, I preached unto all but most of my Pentecostal friends turned their ears away with all manner of unfriendliness. They are eager and swift to talk, and to judge rather than to hear. This I confess unto you that after the way, which they call heresy, so worship I the God of the Bible, believing all things, which are written in the Prophets, the Gospels and the Epistles.

I write so that God's counsel would be declared unto Pentecostals and that I should be free of their blood. It is not an attack on any individual but is a righteous judgment against a fallacious religious system whose mouth must be stopped and rebuked with all scriptural authority. *"And the servant of the Lord must not strive but be gentle to all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those who oppose themselves if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledgement of the truth. And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive of him at his will"* -II Timothy 2:24-26.

Let me now recount as a Christian how I have tried to reply to the contentions of typical Pentecostals such as you. A careful and diligent study of the word and the world will leave no sincere mind in doubt as to who really is in error and needs to repent.

The aspects to be considered are:

- 1 SALVATION, WORSHIP AND CHURCH.
- 2 APOSTLESHIP AND MIRACULOUS GIFTS.
- 3 THE DOCTRINE OF PREMILLENNIAL RAPTURE.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Below are the meanings of certain words as variously employed in the New Testament and in this book.

APOSTLE: In the primary sense the apostleship office is for Christ-chosen preachers who has seen the resurrected Lord and thus qualify as his witness -Acts.1: 1-8, 21-24; 26:14-18. In the secondary sense, one 'sent forth' to preach by the Holy Spirit from the church such as Silas, Barnabas, etc. -Acts.13:2-4 & 14:14.

CHURCH: Primarily Christ's people, saved, called out by the gospel -Acts 20: 28 & II Thessalonians 2:14. Secondly it consists of the saved of all ages -Hebrews 9:15; 11:10; Revelation 21:22-24.

Note further that the word church is used in three senses;

- (a) The church universal or the body of all the saved - Colossians 1:18.
- (b) The church geographic, that is at particular locations - Galatians 1:2, 22.
- (c) The church assembled or when the members of a particular congregation all come together at their meeting place - Acts 14:27.

DIE, DEAD: To have no fellowship with God, it could also mean end of physical life.

- (a) The dead soul is the person who though is physically alive is spiritually separated from God because of sin - Genesis 2:17; I Timothy 5:6; Luke 15:32. Note that the second death is an eternal separation from God after the judgment -Revelation 20:12-15.
- (b) The separation of the spirit from the body -James 2:26; Luke 16:22.

Note that Jesus once remarked, "Let the dead bury their dead" - Luke 9:59-60.

DISCIPLES: Primarily the early followers of Christ especially the apostles -John 4:1-2 & 20:19-26. Secondly the early church and all Christians -Matthew 10:38; Acts 11:26 & 20:7.

DAVID'S THRONE: To sit on David's throne means to take up God's dominion or rulership over his people. Compare I Kings 2:12 with I Chronicles 29:23.

FAITH:

- (a) Believe in something or a confident trust upon -Hebrews 11:6.
- (b) Beliefs or what is believed i.e. the Gospel teachings - Acts 6:7 & Romans 1:5.
- (c) Divinely inspired trust on God to perform a miracle. This is one of the gifts of the Spirit, the type of faith that can literally move mountains -I Corinthians 12:9 & 13:2.

An all-embracing fact is that faith comes from hearing the word of God -Romans 10:17.

HOLY SPIRIT:

- (a) Deity -The Most Holy God as a spirit being -John 4:24.
- (b) The Lord Jesus Christ as a spirit being -II Corinthians 3:17.
- (c) The in-dwelling of the Spirit in a Christian -Romans 8:4; II Timothy 1:14.

Note: Christ and the Spirit dwells in us by faith not literally - Ephesians 3:17 & 5:18; Colossians 3:16. Jesus is worshipped because "in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" or simply put, he is the embodiment of deity, God manifest in the flesh -Colossians 2:9, Romans 9:5, Isaiah 9:6-7, I Timothy 3:16.

- (d) The miracle-enabling power of God -Luke 1:35; Acts 1:8.

LAW:

- (a) Established rules and code of conduct in any society, written or unwritten regulations, the violation of which is a sin/offence/crime –1 John 3:4.
- (b) The law of God given unto the Israelites through Moses on mount Sinai-John 1:17 & John 7:19.
- (c) The gospel teaching of Christ by which we shall be judged -Romans 2:16; James 2:12 & Galatians 6:2.

Note: Paul mentioned or implied the three kinds of law in I Corinthians 9:20-21.

PROPHET: One who revealed God's word or instructions to people and was divinely inspired to foretell events-Amos 3:7, Numbers 12:6, Hebrews 1:1-2, Acts 13:1 & 21:10-11.

With the above in mind you will come to understand fully, for I do not write unto you anything that you cannot read or understand.

SALVATION, WORSHIP AND CHURCH

Pentecostal: One is saved by praying and accepting Christ as his personal Lord and Saviour. One then becomes a saved born-again Christian. To receive Christ thus is to become a child of God.

Reply: Christianity started on the day of Pentecost that the Holy Spirit was given from heaven and the scriptures show that one becomes a Christian by:

- 1 Hearing the word of God -Romans 10:17
- 2 Believing in Jesus Christ as God's Son -I John 5:1
- 3 Repenting of sins -Acts 3:19
- 4 Confessing faith in the Lord Jesus -Romans 10:9-10
- 5 Undergoing water baptism for the remission of sins and to receive the indwelling Holy Spirit-Acts 2:38.

Pentecostal: Baptism is a work of man and is not a necessary condition for salvation. We are saved by faith only; Jesus forgave several people without requiring baptism. The thief on the cross was not baptized.

Reply: Is repentance also a 'work of man' and NOT a condition for salvation? During the latter part of the Old Covenant, John the fore-runner of Christ introduced water baptism (Matthew 3:4-8). The baptism of John was for the remission of sins -Mark 1:4. In Matthew 21:25, Christ asked the religious leaders; "*The baptism of John, whence was it? **from heaven, or of men?** And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him?*" This is instructive because Luke 7:29-30 states that they rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of John. Christ could and did pronounce sinners forgiven without baptism for several reasons:

1. **The baptism of John was no longer necessary the moment Jesus was identified as the messiah** -John 1:25-33; Acts 19:1-4. God instructed John to baptize people so that John would be able to recognize and confirm that Jesus is the Christ. Multitudes were being baptized to prepare people for the Messiah's ministry and Jesus was so identified when the Spirit descended on Him. Henceforth, John's ministry was to decrease and Christ's own to increase. In other words, people should then begin to believe on and follow Jesus, not John.

2. During His earthly ministry, the Son of man '**hath power on earth to forgive sins**' (Matthew 9:6) and He could do so in any way unto any one as He pleases (Matthew 20:15). Such people need not necessarily be baptized because Christ is God manifest in the flesh with them (Emmanuel). Thus He could forgive anyone because He knew their hearts and circumstances -John 2:24-25 & 4:29. This is paralleled by the situation described in Matthew 9:14-15. Just as His disciples did not have to fast while He was with them to grant their prayers so also did sinners not have to be baptized while He was personally around to pronounce remission or forgiveness of sins. After all, He had not yet shed His blood for that purpose. In like manner as John, Christ's disciples baptized people during His earthly ministry. The record however suggests that Jesus permitted it, NOT that He expressly commanded it at that time -John 3:26-30; 4:1-3.

3. Christ was born and lived under the law of Moses or Old Testament -Galatians 4:4-5. His ministry was to prepare people for the New Covenant which was enacted with His Blood upon His death -Matthew 26:28, Hebrews 9:14-17. The Father has committed all judgment unto the Son. The conditions under which Jesus forgave people BEFORE His death are just a subset of the gospel as it was not yet in effect (I Corinthians 15:1-4). **Also, a man may distribute his possessions to anyone he wishes in any way he pleases during his lifetime. But after**

his death, no one has any right to receive anything from his estate except according to the terms of his will or testament.

The will does not come into effect until He dies. During Christ's personal ministry before His death, he had stated the necessity that one should believe in Him, which that thief did –Luke 23:39-43. It was AFTER His death and upon His resurrection that He commanded “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” – Mark 16:15-16. Thus accountable individuals upon hearing the gospel today may choose to receive forgiveness of sins by complying with the terms of Jesus' testament.

At baptism, Christ's blood washes sin away, our old man is crucified and buried with Him and we are raised to newness of life -Romans 6:3-13. It is the work of God, not of man - Colossians 2:12. That we are not saved by works (Ephesians 2:8-9) means we can never earn salvation by deeds of self-righteousness -Titus 3:4-5. Yet one is not justified by *faith only* or 'a mere mental belief' -James 2:18-24. We receive the gift of salvation by “*the obedience of faith*” (Romans 16:25-26) to the gospel command to “repent and be baptized...for the remission of sins” -Acts 2:37-38. To deny the divine purpose of water baptism and reject it amounts to unbelief and self-condemnation.

Pentecostal: Baptism is a church ordinance and is not essential to our being saved. Paul even said in I Corinthians 1:17 that the Lord sent him not to baptize but to preach the gospel.

Reply: I Corinthians 1:10-18 reads; “*Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are*

contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.”

To rightly divide the scriptures, it must be understood that water baptism for taught, penitent sinners is a command from the only Saviour in the universe. It is an intrinsic part of the great commission -Matthew 28:18-20 and it applies to everyone starting from the day of Pentecost as taught by the Apostles to the end of time. Paul himself was baptized (Acts 22:12-16) and after his conversion, preached to and baptized people including many Corinthians -Acts 18:1-8. However, while he did a lot of preaching, it is evident from I Corinthians 1 that he did not do most of the baptisms with his own hands, implying that his companions must have done that. [This is not surprising for they often assisted with the writing of his letters, to which he would just append his signature greetings.]

The Corinthians were segregating themselves after their favourite preachers. Paul's statement when read within the context of that chapter truly means; “*For Christ sent me not to baptize {people into my own name} but to preach the gospel {and make men His followers}.*” He was not downplaying baptism but showing that anyone not necessarily the direct soul-winner can baptize a convert; for people must be **baptized into Christ** before they can claim to be Christians and should therefore not wear sectarian names. Paul's purpose was not to cultivate personal followers but to bring others into fellowship with Christ by preaching, irrespective of whether someone else baptized or

nurtured them; so long as they were baptized into and follow none but the crucified and risen saviour.

To be born again is the same as becoming a Christian. It is not enough to say 'I have received Jesus into my heart, for "as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.'" Acts 2:41 shows us **how** people received Christ about 2000 years ago as well as Galatians 3:26-27. These verses state that those that gladly received the word were baptized the same day... and via baptism into Christ put Him on - to become children of God by faith. The apostles or their companions never declared anyone saved after asking such to recite a so-called "*sinner's prayer*." It is a perversion of the gospel by unsound teachers that mislead people today. These often altogether ignore or much later organize baptisms after further false indoctrination. The book of Acts however shows that anyone who believes, repents and acknowledges Jesus as Lord should be baptized **immediately**. The accounts of the Jews at Pentecost, the Samaritans, the Ethiopian eunuch, the households of Cornelius and of Lydia, the Philippian jailor, the Corinthians, the disciples at Ephesus, etc. are a testimony against anyone who teaches otherwise. The instruction in Matthew 28:18-19 is 'preach, baptize and teach to observe...' and that was the way the apostles did it.

The Bible does not teach that 'baptism is an outward sign of an inward grace' as some imagine and profess. For Jesus said, "*I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sin... repent ye, and believe the gospel... whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess before my Father which is in heaven... he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.*" These, Jesus' own words are from John 8:24, Mark 1:15, Luke 13:3, Matthew 10:32, & Mark 16:16 and amplifies the often quoted John 3:16. Jesus after His ascension to heaven has not changed His requirement for mankind's salvation under His New Testament. On this issue or any other, please be careful not to

wrestle Paul's epistles to your own destruction –II Peter 3:15-16. After Saul's encounter with the glorified Christ on the road to Damascus, he was simply asked to go and wait for instructions on what to do. He had confessed Jesus as Lord, was repentant and demonstrating faith via prayer and fasting. But he was still in his sins because he had not contacted the cleansing blood. That was why Ananias came to him and said "***And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord***"-Acts 22:16.

We can now see that God's plan is so very plain. He wants mankind to come unto and worship Him by New Testament standards.

Pentecostal: We are to worship God by the precepts of the Bible, both the Old and the New Testaments.

Reply: The Old Covenant was made with and given to the Jews only; other nations neither knew nor obeyed the Law. Deuteronomy 5:1-2 reads; "*And Moses called all Israel, and said unto them, Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and keep, and do them. The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb.*" Psalms 147:19-20 states; "*He shew his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation: and as for his judgments, they have not known them. Praise ye the LORD.*" All Gentiles or non-Jews were strangers to that covenant of promise but are now brought near unto God by Christ, the Saviour for all people. "*For the law was given by Moses but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ*" - John 1:17. Even Moses taught that the teachings of the Messiah would supersede his own -Deuteronomy 18:17-19. At the transfiguration of Jesus, God spoke from heaven that 'This is my beloved Son -HEAR YE HIM.' God thereby indicated the supremacy of Christ over Moses who appeared there to

represent the Law, and Elijah who represented the Prophets - Matthew 17:1-6. Christ himself later said, "*The Law and the Prophets were until John {the baptist}: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it*" - Luke 16:16. The law of Moses, which gives bondage, is from mount Sinai while the law of Christ, which gives liberty, is from Jerusalem.

Isaiah (2:2-3) prophesied; "*And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow into it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.*" I Timothy 3:15 shows that the house of God is the church and we know that it was established after Peter's sermon on Pentecost's day. In Isaiah's prophecy, the mountain of the LORD's house is the true church and would be above all of the false religions while hills refer to religions and religious sects. All nations, implies Jews and Gentiles, while the law means the new covenant law of Christ. Believers who contend for the keeping of the law (that was not even given to them -Exodus 19:3-6) probably don't believe that Christ is the mediator of a better covenant which was established upon better promises, he took away the first that he may establish the second -Hebrews 8:6 & 10:9.

Pentecostal: Christ said that he did not come to destroy the law but to fulfill it, what is wrong with our following practices of the Old Covenant?

Reply: While on earth, Christ did not destroy or break or forbid the keeping of the Old covenant for he himself was born under the law -Galatians 4:4. He **fulfilled** the law by meeting all its

requirements for righteousness, and fulfilling its promises and prophecies of the Messiah -Luke 24:44. Every portion of the law was accomplished in him. Jesus nailed the accusing ordinances of Moses to His cross -John 5:45, Colossians 2:14. Our saviour "abolished... even the law of commandments" and shed his blood for the New Testament -Ephesians 2:15 & Matthew 26:28. The Mosaic law is no longer pending for fulfillment, rather we are to "*fulfill the law of Christ*" which centers on love -Galatians 6:2. The Bible is so plain..."*For where a testament {a will} is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength while the testator liveth*" -Hebrews 9:16-17. It was for this reason that the Lord told the apostles not to disclose the transfiguration event to any man "*until the Son of Man be risen again from the dead.*" The law (gospel teachings) of Christ went into effect to replace the law of Moses on that day of Pentecost. Of course, there was a transition period for Jews -from the time the apostles started receiving the revelation of the gospel until all was revealed unto them and written for posterity -Hebrews 8:13. Gentiles who become Christians are commanded **not** to obey the law of Moses -Acts.15:1-29.

Paul said concerning the Jews unto whom the law was given; "*Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are **no longer** under a schoolmaster*" -Galatians 3:24-25. Do you prefer the abolished law to Christ? Paul teaches that those who insist on observing precepts of the law not found in Christianity are spiritually blind and under the ministration on death. "*...for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading {practicing} of the Old Testament; which veil is done away in Christ...*" -II Corinthians 3:3-16. Paul by inspiration wrote that such people, even if they profess to be believers are:

1. Desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say, nor what they affirm -I Timothy 1:7
2. Frustrating the grace of God -Galatians 2:21

3. Under the curse of the law for not continuing in all the things of the law of Moses to do them –Galatians 3:10
4. Without hope of inheritance with Christ but shall be cast out as the son of the bondwoman -Galatians 4:21-30
5. Alienated from Christ and have fallen from grace - Galatians 5:4

Pentecostal: Is the Old Testament then useless and should it be torn off?

Reply: The New Testament teaches that the Old Testament scriptures:

1. Testify of Christ and makes us wise unto the salvation he offers -John 5:39, Acts 10:43, II Timothy 3:15.
2. Were written for our learning, comfort and hope - Romans 15:4. For example it gives us the details and purpose of creation.
3. Were written for our admonition or warning, with examples of God's judgment on evildoers -I Corinthians 10:6-11

Pentecostal: I see nothing wrong with worshipping God by mixing the two testaments. What is the difference?

Reply: Why did God call one testament or covenant “old” and the other “new”? **Judaism is different from Christianity**. We are to do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus -Colossians 3:17. That means to do all things by his authority if we are to worship the Father in spirit and in truth, and not in carnality and in error! The new covenant by direct command, approved **accounts of action** (examples) and necessary inference shows that the church must meet regularly for mutual edification (Hebrews 10:25) and partake in the following acts of worship:

1. Pray directly unto the Father through the name of Jesus - Ephesians 5:20 & Philippians 4:6.

2. Preach and teach God's word -I Thessalonians 1:8 & II Timothy 4:2.
3. Give willingly and thankfully for the Lord's work - Luke 6:38 & II Corinthians 9:12. Note that tithes, levies or fund raising activities are not ordained in the New Testament for Christians.
4. Partake of the memorial Lord's Supper when the whole church comes together (on Sunday) - I Corinthians 11:23-26.
5. Sing praises unto the Lord with our lips -Colossians 3:16. There is no instrumental music in New Testament church pattern.

Pentecostal: We can do the Lord's Supper as often as we like not necessarily on Sundays, a yearly or quarterly observance should be okay.

Reply: The early Christians were steadfast in the breaking of bread. The structure of Acts 20:7, "*And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread...*" shows that one of the main reasons those Christians assembled on Sundays was to partake of the communion. How often should we reflect on the Lord's death via the communion? Should we partake less often than the early church? Remember the Jews were commanded to keep the Sabbath day holy and they kept EVERY Sabbath! Should we not continue to bless the bread and the cup of the Lord on every First day of the week (Sunday)?

Pentecostal: A believer must pay tithes to fulfill all righteousness and receive showers of blessings from the windows of heaven, it is written in Malachi 3:10.

Reply: Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believes. In Malachi, the Lord was talking to those under the law of Moses. The Israelites were to pay tithes unto the Levites (priests who had no land or inheritance and were

forbidden from secular work). After collecting a tenth of the peoples produce, the Levites were also commanded to pay their own tithes in the house of God -Numbers 18:21-26. Sadly, they all failed in their duties. Jesus also rebuked the Pharisees (Matthew 23:2, 23) for their hypocrisy to Mosaic law –John 9:13-28; 5:46.

Here is the instruction through an inspired apostle for Christians; *“Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God has prospered him... but this I say, he which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver”* -I Corinthians 16:1-2 & II Corinthians 9:6-7. If you can afford it and want to, give any amount, it could be 1% or 15% or 99% of your income and belongings to God! The law of Christ through the early apostles is binding on us. It was not just for the Galatians and Corinthians alone but was the way Paul and his fellow workers spread the word to all the brethren or *"teach everywhere in every church."* Also, his widely-shared epistles are unto *"all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus"* -I Corinthians 4:17 & 1:2, Colossians 4:16.

Pentecostal: But my Pastor insists that we must pay tithes. The tithe is for the church leaders who represent the Levites of old, the workers of the tabernacle.

Reply: There is not any record of apostles, prophets, pastors or preachers receiving tithes after the Church was started on the day of Pentecost. To teach or demand tithes or to open a tithe register is foreign to the teachings of the New Testament. All Christians are 'workers in His vineyard' and the only collection

that is authorized in I Corinthians 16:2 is for the work of the church. Most Pentecostal preachers give patronizing sermons to extort 'donations and vows' from both believers and unbelievers but God is only interested in the free-will offering of those that will *"first give themselves unto the Lord."* It is because Pentecostal preachers sit on church treasury boards that they live a lifestyle of 'my god is not a poor god.'

Christ's priesthood accepts freewill offerings and is of a higher order than the Levitical priesthood -Hebrews 7. We are all priests under the new covenant (1 Peter 2:9-10) so no-one should receive tithes today. Besides, ministers of the gospel are free to labour with their own hands and are not divinely forbidden from secular work -I Corinthians 7:20-24, John 21:1-6, Acts 18:1-4 & 20:32-33; II Thessalonians 3:7-9. Preachers should be paid wages or be supported with gifts as determined by the whole church (I Corinthians 9:9-14; II Corinthians 11:8, Philippians 4:15-18) or be voluntarily supported by individuals -Luke 10:2-7, III John 1:5-7. Unfortunately, gullible followers are being manipulated and defrauded by those presiding over financial empires disguised as religious places of worship.

Still, you do not pay tithes according to God's specifications. Deuteronomy 12:5-6 states: *"But unto the place where the LORD your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put his name there, even to his habitation shall ye seek, and thither shall thou come: and thither ye shall bring your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, and your tithes..."* Tithe is the tenth item (Leviticus 27:32) not an arbitrary 10%. Deuteronomy 14:22-29 says one should determine it annually but pay at the end of three years. Also, *"Thou shall truly tithe all the increase of thy seed... and if the way be too long for thee, so that thou art not able to carry it, ...then shall thou turn it into money... and thou shall bestow that money on whatsoever thy soul lusteth after...and thou shall eat and drink, thou and thy household...and the Levite, ...and the stranger, and the fatherless and the widow which are within thy gates."* So, to truly pay tithes today as

commanded through Moses and Malachi, you must take it to Jerusalem (where God put his name under the old covenant -1 Kings 14:21). However if it's too far [and you can't afford to go there to worship like the Ethiopian eunuch did], turn your tithes into money and use it to give a feast for your family and the needy in your neighbourhood. You must not leave out the sacrifices and burnt offerings for everyone that pays tithes is a debtor to do the whole law of Moses but by the works of that law shall no-one be justified!

Pentecostal: Ephesians 5:19 mentions psalms and making music. David used instruments in the book of Psalms. The book of Revelation mentions harps and trumpets and in the New Testament, God does not say 'Thou shall not use instruments when singing.'

Reply: Instrumental music in worship, like polygamy was tolerated but not originally purposed though regulated by God in the Old Testament. Ephesians 5:19 states "*Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.*" The term used is not 'playing' but 'speaking and singing.' This implies vocal music alone. The word psalms actually means songs of praise (James 5:13), the melody should be in the heart not guitars or other instruments, from spiritual songs expressed by our lips (Hebrews 13:15) not from 'classical music, gospelized reggae or hip-hop to the glory of god.' As for trumpets and harps, church worship patterns are better seen in other epistles rather than the symbolic book of Revelation; else we all must literally burn incense and play individual harps! God would have instituted instrumental music, clapping and dancing in the New Testament if He wanted us to do them. David who introduced such in the Old Testament worship (1 Chronicles 15:16, 2 Chronicles 29:25, Amos 6:5) though a prophet is not whom we should hear in all things nor was he an apostle of the new covenant. Jesus the Son of God

speaks to us through the New Testament. We are not free to act presumptuously where the scriptures are silent. We have the Old Testament so that we can learn from the presumptuous sins of the past and by obedience have hope of eternal life -Romans 15:4.

Here is a principle from the Old Testament that applies to us even today that answers this question of allowing instrumental music in the worship. Numbers 20:7-12, "*And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink. And Moses took the rod from before the LORD, as he commanded him. And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also. And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.*"

Now a question for users of instruments of music in church worship, where in these passages did God tell Moses not to strike the rock? **It was sufficient to tell Moses what to do, not what he was not allowed to do!** Whenever God specifies something, He has automatically excluded every other thing that may seem (to man) to be an alternative or improvisation. God said Moses displayed unbelief and for this disobedient action, Moses was not allowed to reach the promised land – Deuteronomy 34:1-5. In Leviticus 10:1-3, we also read of the two sons of Aaron who died immediately they "*offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not.*" That men introduced instrumental music into church worship in the seventh

century is another instance of '*going beyond the doctrine of Christ*' -2 John 1:9. Those who practice such should repent and need not beg the issue with "show me where God said not to..." God expects us to reason with the brains which He gave us as we study His word, in order to discern good from evil. He does not have to spell out everything. We do this in everyday life so why the inconsistency in religion? If you gave money for the preparation of rice, plantain and meat in your home, your chef would lack justification to serve rice, beans and fish. This is because you *spoke nothing concerning* 'beans and fish!' It would be wrong for a doctor to additionally remove for organ donation, the liver of a person who simply volunteered to donate a kidney. Imagine a doctor doing such to you with an excuse that he was not expressly forbidden! An independent government with a new constitution can not rule with the abrogated colonial laws.

Friend, those scenarios parallel and contrast with your excuse for instruments in worship and your selective adherence to the Old Covenant. Do your preachers wear robes with an ephod, as did the Levitical priests? Do your women sacrifice two turtledoves or two young pigeons for purification after giving birth even as Mary the mother of Jesus did? Do you observe the feast of Passover? There are no New Testament scriptures showing where God explicitly forbade them after the day of Pentecost!

Pentecostal: Those things have been abolished by Christ.

Reply: So also has he abolished Sabbath keeping, incense and lamp burning, wearing of priestly garments, taking-off of sandals, making of pilgrimages to so-called holy places in Judaism, paying of tithes, using instruments in worship, observing feasts such as that of Harvests, Passover, etc. How dare you select those things that appeal to your fancy out of the abolished old covenant? Do you stone to death those caught committing adultery or those who cook or travel on Saturdays (Sabbath)? True Christians don't worship by the requirements of

the Old Testament; they are dead (immune) to the entire law of Moses including the Ten Commandments! They obey Christ's commandments. For example, Moses said '*do not kill, do not commit adultery, etc.*' but Jesus teaches '*do not hate, do not look lustfully upon, etc.*' which are more fundamental! Why not submit to the truth to be free from the law of sin and death, and its condemnation? True worshipers heed Paul's charge to "*Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again in the yoke of bondage*" -Galatians 5:1.

Pentecostal: We can improve on what the early church did, innovations are admissible as we see fit.

Reply: If we are to worship God, it must be on his terms alone. Any belief or act that lacks New Testament authority is therefore a doctrine and commandment of men and as such are condemned by the Lord -Matthew 15:9.

Some human innovations in churches include:

1. Water baptism void of full immersion in Jesus' name.
2. Praying through angels or so-called special saints.
3. Assumption of unscriptural titles.
4. Creation of various societies within a congregation.
5. Having a special performing choir or an entertaining drama group.
6. Celebrating Christmas, Easter, Lent, Bazaar etc.
7. Involving the church in business, socials, politics and other unscriptural things.

The work of the church is to preach to the world (I Thessalonians 1:8), teach her members so that they are built up spiritually (I Thessalonians 5:11) and help provide succour materially for her needy -I Corinthians 16:1-2; II Corinthians 8:13-15. We must adhere to the divine plan, the apostolic pattern, and must not go

beyond that which is written. The rules of men change with time and never restrain carnality though they may appear to have a show of wisdom and humility -Colossians 2:22-23.

Pentecostal: Most theologians and religious leaders approve of those things. Must we not continue such traditions since people have been doing them for a long time?

Reply: The thoughts of the Lord are different from men's (Isaiah 55:8-9) whose ways seem right in their own eyes. He told the Pharisees of his time: "*This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouths and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.... And why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not those things which I say?...Full well ye reject the commandments of God that ye may keep your own tradition*" -Matthew 15:7-8, Luke 6:46, & Mark 7:9. Of his own teachings, the Lord says, "*if ye know these things, happy {blessed} are ye if ye do them.*"

Anyone who is really interested in serving God, and who is not after money, position or praise of men, will never hesitate to discard a popular error and come to the light of the gospel so that his deeds may be seen to have been done in innocence. "*Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy or vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world and not after Christ*" -Colossians 2:8. Whatsoever is not of faith (expressly or inferentially from God's word) is sin -Romans 14:23. Consequently, it would be impossible for anyone to partake in the above human innovations/traditions in faith. Now, if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains only a certain fearful looking for of judgment -Hebrews 10:26. The times of this ignorance God overlooked; but now commands all men everywhere to repent -Acts 17:30. For him that knows the right thing and does it not, to him it is sin -James 4:17.

Pentecostal: All these things don't really matter; one can be saved by sincerely following what his Pastor says.

Reply: Hebrews 5:9 states that Christ is "*the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him*" hence you should "*work out your own salvation with fear and trembling*" -Philippian 2:12. Men need to return to the Bible and the church of the living God which is the foundation and upholder of the truth.

Pentecostal: An individual believer is the church; the church is in your heart.

Reply: The church or called out people of the Lord is built up of Christians where **several** of such are gathered in the name of the Lord -Matthew 18: 15-17. The church (or body -Colossians 1:18) of Christ consists of more than an individual, "*for the body is not one member but many*" -1Corinthians 12:12,14.

Pentecostal: Church membership is not important to one's salvation, just believe and fellowship somewhere. One can join any denomination he likes and be saved, especially any living, Bible believing gospel church.

Reply: That opinion is foreign to scripture, which teaches that the church was eternally purposed by God to declare his manifold wisdom, and that Christ gave his blood to purchase and build it -Ephesians 3:9-11 & Acts 20:28. The Lord adds those who are being saved to the church -Acts 2:47. To be outside the church, and claim that it is not important to salvation is to slight the intelligence of God and the work of Christ. **If you truly believe that salvation is everywhere, why term some churches as dead, worldly, etc. and others as living, Bible believing, etc.?** If we are to be led by the scriptures and not by sentiments, one must agree that salvation is found only in one church or body proclaimed in the Bible. If the *Catholic Church* is

the true church then everyone outside it would be lost. Similarly, if the *Pentecostals* (or *Jehovah Witnesses*, etc.) were the true body of Christ then all others are worshipping in vain. For each denomination is a separate religious body. They are quite distinct and different in origin, core beliefs and practices. Men are not agreed on the specific denomination[s] in which one may obtain salvation but the New Testament shows that one cannot be saved outside the Lord's church.

The Bible reveals unto you and unto me of only one church: THE CHURCH OF CHRIST. The Lord Jesus is the head and saviour of that church which is called his body -Ephesians 1:21-22 & 5:23. There is **one** body (Ephesians 4:4) means that there is but one church! The scriptures state that Christ built, rules, owns, recognizes, and is coming back for His own church and not human denominations. The body of Christ is his own church; it is not a conglomeration or an association of different, divers and contrary man-made churches. It is identifiable from scripture and history.

Pentecostal: The church of the Bible was sort of killed. I don't believe that a church must necessarily bear the name 'Church of Christ,' any nice name will do.

Reply: The Lord's church has always been persecuted, never exterminated. The Lord always has a remnant to perpetuate and propagate his truth. Christ was speaking the truth of the message of the gospel when he declared, "*I will build **my** church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it*" -Matthew 16:18. Apostle Paul was not lying in his inspired writing that '*unto God be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages*' -Ephesians 3:21. Granted that the word of God was scarce during the "dark ages," that word still existed on the earth. In the sixteenth century, men like Martin Luther and Ulrich Zwingli embarked on the reformation of existing denominations but their work was not thorough. Instead of reforming existing

denominations they should have restored New Testament Christianity in their own areas. In the eighteenth century, men like Thomas Campbell and Barton Stone called for a restoration to pure New Testament Christianity. Everyone can do so in his locality.

A true wife wears her husband's name, and so does the Lord's bride, the church (Ephesians 3:15; 5:22-32), for whom there is no other name -Acts 4:12. She is faithful to her groom and Christ is no polygamist either. I cannot rename your wife neither are you the one to name my children so it is presumptuous of men to purport to do that to Christ. Human churches wear different names for identification and other reasons known to their owners, basically to show their differences. Peter's epistle shows God wants believers to glorify him in the name of Christ. Isaiah foretold that after Gentiles shall see the righteousness of God, the Lord would call his people by a new name. This prophecy came to pass after the conversion of Cornelius in Acts 10 for God Himself called his children by the new name, 'Christians' -Isaiah 62:1-2; Acts 11:26; I Peter 4:16. It wasn't a societal derisive tag.

Pentecostal: Denominationalism or religious bodies of division in Christendom do not count. We are all one in Christ. God uses various groups for his purposes, for Paul and Barnabas disagreed. There are different ministries but we all preach the same gospel.

Reply: Division matters a lot hence the Bible pleads that the unity of the Spirit be kept in the bond of peace since there is one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism and one God -Ephesians 4:3-6. Unfortunately men have discarded this early teaching and practice. Different denominational bodies now have different faiths, different hopes, different baptisms and so on. Thus they don't preach the same gospel in the real sense of the word. Can two walk together except they agreed? Do you

follow the teachings of Catholics or Methodists or Adventists or White Garment churches or Jehovah's Witnesses or Mormons? The list goes on for there are thousands of denominations worldwide!

Which kind of oneness exists among those who are not of the same mind and the same practice in spiritual matters in worship of God, man's salvation and eternal destination? Do these who deviate from the scriptures not identify themselves by different unbiblical organizational structure and unscriptural names? Is Christ divided? –I Corinthians 1:10-13. Many people today are happy that they can form or join a church of their passion. Someone wakes up one day and declares; 'God has called me to preach the gospel.' Rather than seek the unreached sinners, he registers a church with himself as head, a board of trustees dominated by his relations, and starts hustling for members. Failure to hold unto the pattern and sound doctrine handed down by Christ's apostles shows that such people are corrupting the gospel and building their own kingdoms, not Christ's. They merely claim to be believers rather than seek the truth and the Lord's church. Their selfish ambition promotes disunity and unbelief. They afterwards say that the universal believers' unity Christ prayed for in John 17 is impracticable. This is done while they try to keep a hold on their sect members for internal unity. Nevertheless, with time others will break away to form their own denominational churches. Can God be mocked? Can one truth of one church (Ephesians 4:4 - one body) be many different churches? The truth, the whole truth, can only be in one place and error everywhere else. When different churches holding on to contrary tenets each lay claim to the truth then either only one of them has the truth or all of them are in error!

The early apostles with the ministry of reconciliation planted congregations of the Lord's church over vast areas. They did not build denominations with different makeups. Christ expects us to spread His one church as they did, and not to build our own denominations. Paul and Barnabas disagreed not on a doctrinal

issue but on whether Mark should accompany them. What was involved was not gospel principle but personal preference. Much later, Paul relented -Acts 15:35-40 & II Timothy 4:11. Men have to discard their ulterior motives for being religious. Those who obeyed the gospel at the birth of the church "*continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, of breaking of bread and in prayers*" -Acts 2:42. Later, Paul wrote the Roman Christians (Romans 16:16-18), "**...the churches of Christ salute you. Now I beseech you brethren, mark them which cause divisions... and avoid them. 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.**" This passage is self-explanatory as to the cause of the proliferation of churches, which the heavenly Father has not planted. The church that man builds will not stand for "*except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it.*" Denominations have their initial origin from men who by false teaching drew disciples away after themselves from the Lord's church -Acts 20:16-30.

Pentecostal: The body of Christ is not a single Church but all denominations or certain ones that I think are following the Bible. Going by I Corinthians 12, they all belong to the same body.

Reply: Your imagination is not a yardstick neither is mine nor any other mortal's for that matter. The one absolute divine and true standard -the New Testament, teaches of only one body or church. **The church prophesied in the Old Testament and promised by Jesus in Matthew 16:18 was established in Acts 2, so those built thereafter by men are fake.** As the Lord's church spreads over the earth, local congregations of the church of Christ emerge but still share the same name, pattern of faith and structural organization as seen in the Bible. These churches of Christ in various geographical locations are different from the denominations conceived and founded by men within the last two millennia. When Paul penned I Corinthians 12, he

had in mind the members of the one true church which alone existed then, not the contrary man-made churches and religious groups that have since sprang up. The Lord never approved of any denomination. They are still unnecessary and contrary to his word irrespective of the claims of men. Over the ages, in different lands and even until the end of time, people have risen and will continue to rise up to build their own churches; ruling with human creeds, bye-laws and constitutions. Such who build to their fancies cannot but pervert the scriptures. Oftentimes such groups are only disguises for business assets, for it is not uncommon to hear of 'XYZ Church International Incorporated!' The founder or leader of each church is its Head, Spiritual Master or Alpha and Omega. Nobody else but such has the final say on decisions, appointments, doctrines and practices from the so-called headquarters. Jesus heads His own church (Ephesians 1:22) with headquarters in heaven and governs with the New Testament.

Pentecostal: All denominations have human founders and leaders but Christ is still their collective head. They must rule over the churches on his behalf.

Reply: Christ is not heading more than his own church. Men build and rule their own denominations according to their hearts desires. Of course, each of them would swear that God told him to do exactly what he's doing. In the church of Christ, **no human being claims to be, is addressed or recognized as its Founder, Head, President, General Overseer, etc.** The New Testament alone is its manual, not human creeds or constitution. No earthly headquarters is maintained and no congregation is superior to another. Neither synods nor governing councils exists, they are not even needed for each local congregation can understand and apply the scriptures, and maintain discipline. While a congregation may disfellowship an erring and unrepentant member, Christ also may remove the candlestick of

an erring church. Each and every local church of Christ is self-governing. This fact can be easily understood from Revelation 1-3 where the seven churches in Asia were **independently** addressed, praised or rebuked. Each local church under her own appointed leaders is responsible to Christ the heavenly Head -1 Peter 5:1-4; 1 Timothy 5:17; Hebrews 13:17. The churches maintain love and co-operation in word and good works. All members are saints -I Corinthians 1:2.

Ministers who serve include:

- 1 Men ordained as Elders (or Bishops or Pastors or Overseers or Presbyters, these terms describe the same office) *in every church* (Acts 14:23) with qualities stated in I Timothy 3:1-7 & Titus 1:5-9.
- 2 Men ordained as Deacons with qualities stated in I Timothy 3:8-13. They work with the Bishops (Philippians 1:1) as the chosen seven assisted the apostles and elders at the beginning (Acts.6:2-4).
- 3 Men called Evangelists or Preachers of the word -II Timothy 4:2 & 5.

These men do not assume uninspired titles or blaspheme the Lord our God by taking for themselves His titles or names (which no disciple or believer ever did in the Bible). Titles such as these only belong to God:

- 1 Founder/Owner –Matthew 16:18
- 2 Head/His (Pre) Eminence –Colossians 1:18
- 3 Father/Master –Matthew 23:8-10
- 4 Reverend –Psalms 111:9
- 5 Chief Shepherd –I Peter 5:4
- 6 Holy/His Holiness –Revelation 15:4
- 7 His Grace –Acts 15:11
- 8 Lord/His Lordship –I Corinthians 8:6
- 9 'High Priest and Apostle' –Hebrews 3:1

Pentecostal: Those titles are just to distinguish the laity or ordinary members from the officiating members or clergy.

Reply: The Lord Jesus, the head of the New Testament Church has assigned names for various duties; apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers -Ephesians 4:11. These offices are for useful functions and to depart from such given by the Lord is an unscriptural practice. II Timothy 4:3-4 warns of departing from sound doctrine. **For men to invent strange appellations or to assume divine titles and names, is certainly departing from New Testament truth.** People who detest the truth and follow after false teachers who will fill their ears with what they want to hear are characterized as having 'itching ears'. Of these we learn; "*And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you...*" -II Peter 2:2-3. The scriptures cannot be broken (John 10:35), for it was foretold that false prophets shall arise with the name (or titles) of Christ -Matthew 24: 4-5. Many people are inclined in these perilous times to give heed to preachers of the so-called acceptable social gospel of 'grace covers your sins, or don't preach against other churches or religions and, come and receive your miracles.' Such is readily accepted rather than anyone who says, 'repent or perish!' If only people will use the bible as their sole guide to examine the so-called servants of God of today.

Pentecostal: The modern men and women of God are sincere.

Reply: One can be sincere and zealous even in error, note the words of Paul in Acts 22. God has never endorsed the leadership of women over men in matters of religion. You have worldly not scriptural examples. This principle is the same under the law of Moses and in the law of Christ; women are not to

teach the entire congregation -I Corinthians 14:34 & I Timothy 2:12. **No matter the level of spirituality anyone thinks he or she has attained, such is to acknowledge Paul's writing on this issue as a commandment of the Lord** -I Corinthians 14: 36-37.

Paul was taught by Jesus (Galatians 1:12) and Peter acknowledges that Paul's writings are scripture (II Peter 3:15-16). Did not Jesus Himself say that He would send the Comforter (Holy Spirit) who would teach His apostles all things and bring to their remembrance all that He had said (John 14:26)? In Hebrews, we read that Jesus is speaking to us today through His word. In Ephesians 4:21 we read, "*If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus.*" Thus the words that Paul spoke in this matter are the commands of Jesus. Jesus said, "*If you love me keep my commandments*" - John 14:15. John wrote, "*and his commandments are not grievous*" -1 John 5:3. Many today who claim to love Jesus, and to be led by the same Holy Spirit that inspired Paul are allowing and encouraging women preachers. Paul wrote, "*Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ. Now I praise you brethren that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances as I delivered them unto you. But I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God*" -I Corinthians 11:1-3.

Many have proffered different excuses why women can have rule over men in the church, and that is carrying the so-called women's liberation too far. It is affirmed in I Timothy 2:8-13 that God forbids women from praying over men, or (religiously) teaching or exercising authority over men because the man was created first, and it was the woman who was deceived in Eden. Women are not to lead and teach where a Christian man is available, especially in the whole church for to do so amounts to usurping the man's authority. They can privately preach to unbelievers and expound the scriptures unto themselves and their children -Titus 2:3-5.

Pentecostal: What of Deborah, Priscilla, etc. in the Bible?

Reply: Those women were useful for God as any could be. Deborah knew she was not in the priesthood (which involved continual presentation of the worshipers to God among other things unlike prophecy -occasional delivery of a divine message). Priscilla was not an apostle, Evangelist or Teacher in the church. The same God who poured his Spirit on his handmaidens commanded them not to teach men in the assemblies, and Priscilla obeyed -Acts 18:24-27. **There was no woman miracle worker, church leader or scripture writer in the Bible!** To be pleasing to God we must obey Him either by command, through example, or by necessary inference. In this matter we do not have any of these and so we cannot and must not go beyond what is taught or we fall into the condemnation of The Lord (Matthew 15:9) who will judge us (II Corinthians 5:10) according to His word -John 12:48. Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil -Ecclesiastes 8:11. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God-Hebrews 10:31.

On these matters, do not allow yourself to be deceived that all a sinner need do is pray for forgiveness and join a church of his or her choice. That doctrine is nowhere found in the Bible and could only have originated from the father of lies. It is the Christian, not a sinner who should confess sin and pray if (and when) he sins -I John 1:8 & James 5:16. An example was Simon of Samaria -Acts 8:9-24. The God who doesn't allow for choices of Saviours also doesn't allow for choices of churches. Many believe the religions of Mohammed, Buddha, and a thousand others are all different roads to God. The Bible states: "...*there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus*" -I Timothy 2:5. Jesus also said that no one could come to the Father except through Him -John 14:6. Although many believe that denominational churches are different vehicles of getting to

heaven, the Bible states: "*There is one body {church}*" - Ephesians 4:4. Do you agree with 'many' or the Bible? Many today have joined different spiritual bodies or churches and are proud to display stickers proclaiming such. You did not join your natural family, you were born into it. Likewise, you cannot join God's house or family, the Lord's body or church; you must be born {again} into it. The scripture teaches that:

1. Faith in Jesus saves -Acts 16:31.
2. Repentance of sin saves -II Corinthians 7:10.
3. Confession of Christ saves -Romans 10:10.
4. Baptism in water saves -I Peter 3:21.

None of these can by itself save a sinner from his sins and God's wrath but he has to obey them altogether, and be a faithful member of the Lord's church. These facts cannot be erased from the Bible. **So, repent and be baptized into Christ and His one body for your true salvation, then you will be able to worship in spirit and in truth.**

APOSTLESHIP AND MIRACULOUS GIFTS

Pentecostal: I find it hard to accept that all the popular church leaders are wrong. There are many God-sent Prophets and Apostles in the world today.

Reply: There are no such today, for their roles had been fulfilled. That role was to bring forth the word of God and commit it unto writing once confirmed for all generations to learn from. We are to be mindful of the words spoken before by the holy prophets and of the apostles of the Lord (II Peter 3:2) because they were stewards of the mysteries of God -I Corinthians 4:1. The Church and Christianity was built by Christ's Spirit through them. Moreover, the ministry, work and writings of those men are foundational and therefore irreplaceable -Ephesians 2:20-22. Having had the last will or testament of the Lord revealed unto them and written by them for us, we can now read and

understand -Ephesians 3:1-5. A Prophet was one through whom God spoke unto his people, in various ways (exhortation, foretelling, etc.) and by divers manners (directly, visions, dreams, etc.). Deuteronomy 18:22 gives the test of a prophet. An Apostle was a specially chosen man of Christ who has seen Jesus (Acts 2:22) and was sent to go testify of what he has personally WITNESSED or seen and heard directly from the Lord -Acts.1:1-8 & 26:16. An Apostle should be one who can truthfully claim that he was neither taught nor ordained by man but that his message was obtained directly from Christ -John 14:25-26. Such was the case of Paul -Galatians 1:1 & 11-12. The early apostles satisfied all these, and sought to preach Christ where he was not known. Now you can study the Bible to become a Christian, Pastor or Evangelist but you cannot study to become an Apostle or a Prophet.

Pentecostal: The Lord Jesus is still appearing to people today. Modern preachers who claim to have seen the Lord must be telling the truth. These are changed people for they even write books on their miraculous conversions and how they formerly served the kingdom of darkness.

Reply: After his resurrection, the Lord appeared only 'unto witnesses, chosen before of God' -Acts 10:41. The last man he appeared unto to make an apostle was Saul of Tarsus also called Paul -1 Corinthians 15:8. Only these people were his eyewitnesses and they had truthfully written down for us what they witnessed -II Peter 1:16-18 & I John 1:1-4. Anyone who claims to be seeing the Lord now is contradicting many scriptural references such as Peter's general admonition to Christians to rejoice in our faith till the second coming of Christ, "*Whom having not seen, ye love, in whom though now ye see him not yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory*" -I Peter 1:8.

So-called modern day prophets and apostles are known to

assume unscriptural religious titles, become founders of their own doctrinally opposing churches and both teach and practice things the early apostles did not. The Lord commended his church at Ephesus, "*I know thy works, and thy labour and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil, and thou has tried them which say they are apostles, and are not and has found them liars*" -Revelation 2:2. There have always been false apostles. These are calculated deceivers making money off you -II Peter 2:2-3. In their well-concocted stories, they go to great lengths giving details of their alleged evil past, forgetting that the scripture says '*it is a shame even to speak of the unfruitful works of darkness which are done in secret*' -Ephesians 5:12. They proceed to talk of how they got saved instantaneously on "having a personal encounter (visitation) with Christ" or an angel. They have forgotten that Paul's sins were not washed away until he was preached to and baptized by Ananias -Acts 9:17-18 for when one is baptized his sins are pardoned -Acts 2:38. Paul wrote, "*For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light, so therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works*" -II Corinthians 11:13-15.

Of himself, Paul states; "*Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders and mighty deeds*" -II Corinthians 12:12. It is worthy to note that the so-called miracle workers of today do not perform Bible-like apostolic signs for all to see, rather they claim and propagate 'testimonies' of doing such some time ago in another land several kilometers away! One does not have to be as wise as Solomon to know they are false teachers.

Pentecostal: There may be false apostles but all Pentecostals baptized in the Holy Spirit can perform miracles.

Reply: Only the early apostles (Acts 2:3-4) and the household of Cornelius (Acts 10:45) were baptized in the Holy Spirit (Acts 11:15), and these folks alone and those on whom the apostles laid their hands were able to perform miracles. The Spirit fell directly from God upon the Jewish apostles and the Gentile household to fulfill the Joel 2:28 prophecy that God's Spirit would be poured on "all flesh." The Jews saw themselves as the only people of God and assumed that the Messianic blessings were essentially meant for national Israel. They thought Gentiles would have to become Jews (via circumcision and obedience to the law of Moses) before they could be saved. God proved otherwise in Acts 10. The term 'all flesh' refer racially to Jews and Gentiles (for whoever is not a Jew is a Gentile). The apostles were given the baptismal measure to enable them perform their Christ ordained work (Luke 24:46-49) and the Gentiles so that Jews would know that Gentiles could be saved - Acts.11:1-18. Hence Paul states "*For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles...and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.*" A careful study of Acts 2 (take special note of verses 13-14, and 43) shows that only the twelve apostles; these Galilean men alone not one hundred and twenty believers spoke in tongues, stood up to preach, and did many signs and wonders to make godly fear come upon the soul of other believers. That is, only the apostles were baptized in the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. Holy Ghost baptism on all flesh is a promise, which God has already fulfilled. However, water baptism is a commandment which man must obey. This is the one baptism (Ephesians 4:4) intended for all believers (Matthew 28:19). It is administered by man. That was why Peter still commanded Cornelius' household to be so baptized.

All who repent and are baptized "shall receive the GIFT of the Holy Ghost" -Acts 2:38. This is different from 'the gifts of the Holy Ghost.' It means a believer after water baptism receives the Holy Spirit himself as a gift from God. A measure of the Spirit called

the 'in-dwelling' is that which makes one a Christian. The scripture calls it the "...*seal of promise...the earnest expectation of our inheritance...*" -Ephesians 1:13-14. *And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father...if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you* -Galatians 4:6-7. "**...now if any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his**" -Romans 8:9.

Baptized believers (on whom the apostles laid their hands) received spiritual gifts to help the growth of the church and Christianity which had just started. Examples were Stephen and Philip the evangelist -Acts 6:5-8; 8:5-7. Such people however could not impart the gifts unto others. For instance, after Philip converted and baptized many in Samaria, two apostles from Jerusalem came to lay hands on the Christians so that they would receive miraculous manifestations of the gift of the Spirit - Acts 8:14-17. These Samaritans had been baptized in water in the name of Jesus Christ, and must have received the in-dwelling measure of the Spirit. Acts 8:18-19 reads, "*And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hand the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, Saying, Give me also **this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.***" Definitely Simon understood that not Philip whom he had been accompanying but the apostles had the power to impart spiritual gifts because he saw some visible evidence or manifestation of gifts on those on whom they laid their hands. Philip also could not and did not impart spiritual gifts unto the baptized Ethiopian eunuch who must have received the promised in-dwelling Spirit to make him belong to Christ -Acts 8:34-39. Ananias who laid hands on Saul was commanded to do so through a vision of the risen Lord, and was in a special way, an apostle unto Paul -Acts 9:10-18. Paul himself had seen the Lord (Acts 9:17) and as an apostle could and did lay hands upon others to receive spiritual gifts -II Timothy 1:6. In fact, he wrote the church at Rome; "For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end that ye may be

established" - Romans 1:11. In Acts 19:1-7, we read that after Paul had baptized twelve men in water (in the name of the Lord Jesus), he "...laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost {miracle-enabling power} came on them; and they spake with tongues and prophesied."

Pentecostal: Anyone can claim the signs of Mark 16 by faith. They are still for us.

Reply: Jesus had multitudes of disciples and knew from the beginning those who would not believe. Generally, they did not initially believe the resurrection hence he came "*and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart.*" Thereafter He said those signs would follow the ones among them who believe. He has used signs and wonders to confirm the word they preached -Mark 16:15-20. Signs had purposes and dispensations. When the Lord first sent out the initial twelve and then the seventy he gave them power (Matthew 10 & Luke 10). But there is no record of them being able to pass on this power. After the death of the apostles and those on whom they laid their hands to impart spiritual gifts, no-one has truly replicated the miraculous signs of Mark 16:17-18.

Pentecostal: We cast out demons in our gatherings.

Reply: When the church started, the early apostles and others cast out demons from non-Christians and cured all such cases they came across -Acts 5:16; 8:58; 16:18. This contrasts with the theatrics and physical abuse associated with the modern Pentecostal system. The apostles did not cajole people to "come out for deliverance" by virtue of certain misfortunes or dreams in their lives! Pentecostals only use such tactics to 'cast out demons' from themselves repeatedly at their regular so-called deliverance services. The insinuation that the Christian's body can simultaneously be the abode of demons and temple of the

Holy Spirit conflicts 1 John 5:18; "*We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.*" This principle is recorded in I Samuel 16:14. I have seen people leading Pentecostal services who are supposedly anointed and filled with the Holy Spirit, later on in the same services "delivered" by others of demons. It is inconceivable should the apostle Peter have 'cast out demons' from John, that Martha would have done a demon "check-up" on Peter thereafter as Pentecostals do weekly among themselves. Such practice is alien to scripture and is repugnant to the Spirit.

Although devils are associated with idolatry, there were no recorded cases of demon possession in the Old Testament. King Saul was tormented periodically not actually possessed. During Christ's ministry, their possessions of humans were documented. This seems to indicate that possession of human bodies by devils was a special phenomenon divinely permitted to showcase the anointing and power of the Messiah over Satan and his devils. Consequently, possession by devils is not to be feared today. Moreso, the usage of Spiritual gifts to confirm the New Testament scriptures ceased shortly after the death of the last apostle. Jesus has "*disarmed the principalities and authorities, made a public display of them, having triumphed ...When He ascended, He led captive a host of captives.*" -Colossians 2:15, Ephesians 4:8. Satan is masquerading as a lion (1 Peter 5:8) but can be put to flight. Recall the counsel, "*Resist the devil and he will flee from you*" -James 4:7. "*God will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but will provide an escape*" -I Corinthians 10:13. "*Ye have overcome the wicked one ...for greater is he {Christ} that is in you than he {Satan} that is in the world*" -I John 2:23 & 4:4. Note that witchcraft, sorcery, etc. are renounced when one truly confesses Christ who is the head of all principality and power -Colossians 2:10, Acts 8:9-13. We receive the Spirit of God upon becoming a child of God -Acts 2:38. The prayer and fasting of the righteous is effectual against devilish

possession or affliction -Mark 9:29. Nevertheless, not all problems are directly attributable to the devil and not all solutions need be miraculous.

Pentecostal: We speak with tongues.

Reply: Those gifted with divers tongues and their interpretations in the first century church were able to speak, understand and interpret human languages that they had not learned before. This was for the purpose of preaching the gospel unto strangers. When the apostles spoke in tongues on the day of Pentecost in the presence of people from different places, "every man heard them speak in his own language" -Acts 2:5-11. Thus they were not babbling syllables; rather the listeners heard them speak in divers languages "the wonderful works of God" - vs. 11. Sincere Pentecostals and Charismatics admit that the so-called tongues of nowadays are emotional mumbo-jumbo, which nobody in the world, including the speakers understand.

Pentecostal: Well I Corinthians 14:2 says, "For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men but unto God; for no man understandeth him, howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries." Thus our tongues need not be understood.

Reply: Paul referred to {unknown} tongue in the sense that the language being spoken was not normally known or learned by the speaker, not that it was a language totally unknown to the world. The miraculously spoken language was unknown to the speaker especially if he could not miraculously interpret it, and it was not unknown to its natural speakers. Also, if in the church, one speaks a language that he alone understands then he only is edified, God understands him but others are not benefited -I Corinthians 14:4. Thus if the foreign language spoken is not understood by any member of the listening congregation, it becomes for that moment an unknown tongue and the speaker

should KEEP QUIET in the assembly -I Corinthians 14:28. Now if the speaker is to keep silent because others cannot make sense out of his speech, how much more should he keep his silence if he cannot understand his own mutterings! Paul never suggested that tongues are ecstatic rubbish that should not be understood for he wrote, "Except you utter by the tongue words that are easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken. For ye shall speak into the air. There are, it may be so many kinds of voices {languages} in the world, and none of them is without signification. Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh unto me a Barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a Barbarian unto me." -I Corinthians 14:9-11. Even Paul spoke in tongues a lot (probably in preaching to various Gentiles) but he never spoke with unknown tongues in the church -verse 18-19.

How can tongues be 'a sign to unbelievers' (I Corinthians 14:22) in the world today seeing that they cannot understand you as the people from sixteen nations understood the tongues of the apostles when the Spirit gave them utterance in Acts 2??? Even that spoken by Cornelius' household was understood to be words magnifying God -Acts.10:46. Nobody, not even those performing the act sincerely know the true meaning of these so-called tongues. Is it that Pentecostals have not prayed enough or read I Corinthians 14:13? Although a lot of Pentecostals are saying strange incomprehensible words, the Bible teaches that ones mind is unfruitful, and others are not benefited when one prays in an unknown tongue. They that listen would not even know when to say 'Amen' -I Corinthians 14:14-17. When the speaker claims that only he knows the interpretation of the tongues then, "thou bearest record of thyself, thy record is not true, for out of the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established." In fact, any tongue message could only be adjudged true by one or two interpreters apart from the speaker himself, all in gentleness and making known their message one after the other -I Corinthians 14:27-32.

Pentecostals out of the imaginations of their hearts deceitfully assume interpretations to so-called tongues at the assemblies. It is unknown for two or three Pentecostals at different places or times to accurately interpret a RECORDED message of 'tongues' and have those 'interpretations' agree!!! Pentecostals, who speak together at once, present quite a confused scene. It is interesting that women who should keep silent in the church are often the leading speakers in such circumstances. Pentecostal assemblies of prayers and worship scenes are always rowdy. They scream and shake violently to different hysterical levels.

Pentecostal: One cannot control himself when led by the Spirit. He can scream, shake or jerk violently, roll on the ground, knock his head against the wall or do any other abnormal thing when filled with anointing. Jesus said the kingdom of God suffereth violence.

Reply: The kingdom of God does not suffer from self-induced violence. It suffered 'spiritual violence', that is the people of the time of John grasping with determination; as if by force, the way of the Lord introduced by John the Baptist (Matthew 3:1-5), for the Law and Old Testament prophets prophesied until John - Matthew 11:12-13. Jesus came to change 'sons of thunder' to harbingers of peace. After the Lord started his earthly ministry, He taught of Spiritual virtues, humility, godliness, seekers of righteousness, holiness and peacemakers -Matthew 5:3-9. The kingdom of heaven is for those with the simplicity and humility of little children -Matthew 18:3-4.

Violence by the Holy Spirit is foreign to New Testament doctrine, for Paul states; "*the spirits of the prophets are subject unto the prophets.*" I know that the Holy Spirit never tormented Christ and the early Christians in any manner and as such cannot be responsible for those strange manifestations that Pentecostals periodically exhibit. Search your scriptures. He is a spirit of love, and of power, and of a sound mind -II Timothy 1:7.

His fruit in a Christian includes love, peace, gentleness, and temperance among others -Galatians 5:22-23. Ever since the Spirit came from heaven on that day of Pentecost, we see no place in the scriptures where he was conjured up or commanded to come forth. Thus he can not be responsible for the apparent seizures and unintelligible chatter of Pentecostals, White Garment Churches, Idol Worshipers, etc. since they all invoke and chant songs calling on a "spirit from heaven, come down."

"*God is not the author of confusion but of peace in all the churches of the saints*" -I Corinthians 14:33. The ministers of the Churches of Christ do not shout and repeat 'in Jesus name,' ring a bell or clap their hands in order to bring a confused congregation back to their senses as some mumbo-jumbo praying people do, for these practices are foreign to the New Testament.

Pentecostal: I speak with tongues; this is something, which I have personally experienced. That I don't understand it doesn't matter. May be we speak the tongues of angels.

Reply: Have you ever spoken or interpreted another human language that you did not learn naturally? Have you preached to, and communicated with strangers miraculously in their own languages? Who is the Biblical apostle that laid hands on you to impart spiritual gifts? Did you not rather start speaking your 'tongues' when someone told you that by speaking whatever comes to your mind, that that is how to receive the Holy Spirit???? Is that the way it was in your Bible??? **Did any non-apostle ever gather believers together and tell them to say whatever jargon comes to their minds??** Should your unbiblical, human invented, personal experience rule over God's word? Bible tongues ceased centuries ago but some people have now fashioned their own.

Even while the miraculous gifts were in operation, Paul asked; "Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all

workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? –I Corinthians 12:29-30. Obviously the answers to those rhetorical questions were NO. Pentecostals, however teach that all believers must speak in tongues and claim the signs of Mark 16, saying these are the proof of one's belief and spirituality. Consequently, many poor souls are misled to believe that they are 'Spirit-filled healers' the moment they consent to start repeating some emotional, nonsensical syllables.

Do not pervert I Corinthians 13:1, Paul did not claim to have been speaking the tongues of angels or to have personally understood all mysteries. Is language for communicating with others and with God, or for speaking to angels? Pentecostals when speaking in tongues do not miraculously speak human languages; are you talking of the language of angels? Rather than speak miraculously earthly tongues as the early Christians, Pentecostals mutter and chatter repeatedly some unintelligible words, and fidget excitedly as a magician reciting incantations. Speaking with tongues in the Bible was not speaking rubbish. When say, an American Pentecostal preacher addresses a Yoruba audience in western Nigeria today, does such preacher speak the Yoruba language miraculously? Does such audience hear and understand the preacher's English miraculously? Do such occasions not require and make use of trained interpreters who have **studied** both languages??? Can one answer these questions truthfully and still contend that miraculous tongues speaking and their interpretations have not ceased?

Pentecostal: Jesus said that believers shall speak with tongues and lay hands on the sick. I don't care what you say; these and other miracles are still very much around.

Reply: When such 'tongues' are contrary to the Bible then it shows that Pentecostals do not care what God says. Have you been drinking poison unharmed or taking up serpents as Paul

did? Some people have tried such things and died as a result. It is unfortunate that most people who claim to have performed miracles, received miracles or witnessed miracles do not really know what a miracle is. Prayers today wrought results that even unbelievers and atheists can naturally sometimes receive in normal life experiences. For example, that someone was jobless for months, applied for a job for which they were qualified, was interviewed and employed is not a miracle. Yes, it is wonderful but it is not a wonder! If they were not qualified for the job and neither applied yet were offered appointment, and was able to do a very highly skilled job well that would be a miracle! Christ was the only baby ever born miraculously, why?? Miracles have to do with besought divine intervention to (speedily) perform an act such that its occurrence is contrary to nature.

I employ you to read carefully the recorded miracles in the scriptures. Biblical healings were total and complete. They were accomplished with little or no prayers; recipients did not go for multiple prayer sessions. When the church started, the apostles healed all the cases brought unto them and several others they just came across on the streets -Acts 3:1-6, 5:12-16 & 14:7-11. **Who is doing that today??** Fake healers offer excuses for their failures. They have never healed those who are well-known to be born afflicted (sick) in their own communities but rather abound with 'testimonies.' Their aggressive marketing strategies are rather comical; a dumb struggling to mumble 'Je, Je, Jez' (in an attempt to say Jesus) or a cripple wobbling without his crutches on a stage are shown as the evidence of their powers, and thus all are invited! Do you honestly think that such charades were the healings performed by Jesus? Scriptural miracles were often at chanced and unpredetermined places. Modern frauds organize, advertise and preach not salvation but a 'gospel of miracles' at their own stations and revival grounds. Psychology is used with seducing speeches that people should accept "by faith" that their problems have disappeared. They would claim that the invisible ailments of their followers such as ulcers have gone. After

repeating some words and scriptural verses after the so-called servant of God, the victims would give offering, and go home together with the unhealed cripple, blind, etc. After hundreds of people have come repeatedly to the 'miracle center' and few have recovered from illnesses, 'testimonies' will flow. How is it that Bible-like miracles have not been performed?

Pentecostal: We have the same anointing as the apostles. The failures occur when the subjects do not have faith.

Reply: Does anyone really believe that the deformed, deaf, etc. who come to such services to be prayed for do not have faith? Does that then mean that the dead need to "have faith" in order to be raised? While on earth, there was an occasion when Christ's disciples could not heal a boy. The Lord said the disciples and not the boy or his father lacked faith! -Matthew 17:14-20. Pentecostals claim apostolic anointing which they have not. **How is it that Pentecostals cannot discern the hearts of others and have a few drop dead like Ananias and Sapphira?** How is it that Pentecostals do not boldly withstand sinners to their faces as Peter did but rather cajole one another to own up to some trumped-up charges? Prayers of such are often characterized by (deceitful) so-called word of knowledge such as; "You are here, you do...., you know yourself, the Holy Ghost knows you. Own up now, all eyes closed. Indicate by raising up your hand and I will pray for you." It does not surprise one that such imaginary charges often fail to draw a response!

Instantaneous judgment for offenders has ceased. God is not striking people dead now for offences as in the scriptures. Our towns are still filled with handicapped beggars, pagan strangers and unbelieving opposers. Nobody today miraculously speaks foreign tongues to preach unto strangers. No one heals a naturally infirmed, well-known beggar at the location that he begs for alms and thereby attracts and wins the souls of the beggar and his neighbours. None of these so-called anointed preachers

of today can miraculously afflict any opposer as Paul blinded Elymas. The same Bible that teaches that miracles happened also teaches that miracles have ceased. No one should find it difficult to believe that.

Pentecostal: Paul wrote 'forbid not to speak with tongues...and despise not prophesyings.' Why are you then against these and miracles?

Reply: I am not against God's word or anything that is in conformity to it. When some in the church at Corinth were misusing gifts of utterance, Paul wrote that he was not forbidding the usage of those gifts but to admonish them that all things be done decently and in order. The instruction 'covet to prophesy' (I Corinthians 14:39) cannot apply to post first-century believers since such miraculous gifts have ceased. Also, should a German, Chinese or Hausa man come to share the gospel in my vicinity, and begin to speak my mother tongue (Yoruba) miraculously, I will not forbid him. It is when such mutters gibberish that even himself can not understand that I have to remind him the scripture commands him to be silent. Modern day 'prophets' beat their chests that at least some of their forecasts come to pass. However, a true "thus saith the LORD" never fails. A single unfulfilled prediction shows that such people are not inspired by the Lord but rather speak presumptuously or by evil means –Deuteronomy 13:1-3 & 18:21-22.

Pentecostal: Jesus said except people see signs and wonders they will not believe. He also said that believers shall do greater works than he did.

Reply: The Lord's statement about seeing miracles is not directed to all men in all ages. It was addressed unto the Jew(s) who doubted him -John 4:46-48 & Luke 11:29. His miracles were performed not only out of compassion on the recipients but also

to prove that he is the Son of God. Some of those miracles were written that we might believe and have life in his name -John 20:30-31. After the first century, people believe the gospel not by seeing miracles but by hearing the word of faith, which has already been confirmed. *"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?"* -Hebrews 2:3-4. We must decide to obey the gospel but we must not expect miraculous gifts. Do not expect to reconfirm God's word with miracles when preaching to strangers or neighbours. The Lord said that believers shall do greater works not in the sense of miracles but in the sense of having faith in him and carrying out world-wide evangelism –John 14:12; 6:28-29 & 4:34-38. **Do not hope against hope that you will one day perform miracles greater than those of Christ who had the Spirit without measure** (John 3:30-34). Even the apostles fell short of his standard of signs and wonders for a servant is not greater than his master.

Pentecostal: According to the truth into which the Spirit is leading us, we should expect greater anointing for miracles and revelations.

Reply: Jesus promised His disciples that they would be miraculously led to all of the truth. To them, not you, he said; *"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said to you...(John 14:26). Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he shall shew you things to come"* -John 16:13.

My Pentecostal friend, **what did Jesus personally discuss with you while he was on earth that the Holy Spirit will now remind you of?** What new truth has he shown you that was not part of the 'all truth' given to the inspired apostles?? May I restate that through his Spirit working in the apostles, Christ has revealed unto all men and his church in particular, ALL TRUTH and divine wisdom about the mystery of salvation which before had not been known unto mankind -I Corinthians 2:7-10 & Ephesians 1:9. The revealed knowledge of the Lord has given us all things that pertain unto life and godliness - 2 Peter 1:3. Anyone who preaches "a different or additional truth" apart from that preached by the early apostles is accursed and will be dealt with at Jesus' return. To follow such unapostolic and unscriptural teaching is to submit to the spirit of error -I John 4:6. The Spirit today leads through the word of God that He revealed. It is because many have refused to accept the word as the lamp unto their feet, and the light unto their path (Psalms 119:105) but "feel and think" that they are miraculously led that we now have much confusion in Christendom. The Holy Spirit calls, gives faith, saves, and sanctifies only through the instrumentality of the word of the gospel (II Thessalonians 2:14; Romans 10:17; Romans 1:16; John 17:17). The sword or tool of the Spirit to defend the truth is the word of God -Ephesians 6:17. It is through the word that he operates on the soul, spirit and heart of men -Hebrews 4:12. "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word which is able to save your souls" -James 1:21.

Pentecostal: I Corinthians 13 suggests tongues, miracles, revelations, etc. are to cease at the coming of Christ the perfect one.

Reply: The theme of I Corinthians 13 is comparison of charity (love) which is unending with temporary spiritual gifts, and not the second coming of Christ. The lower passages (8-13) read,

"Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as I am known. And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."

In the first century church, miraculous gifts were manifested to usher in Christianity and usher out Judaism. The church was as a baby. They did not have a bond-written volume of the New Testament given to them as we have now. They were having the Lord's will revealed unto them miraculously in bits from many disciples. The result was as a hazy picture in a dark glass. For example, circumcision, clean and unclean meats, acceptance of Gentiles, etc. were initially unclear issues even unto someone like Peter. The gifts of divine wisdom and knowledge were for the revelation of the mysteries, details and application of the gospel. This knowledge could not be obtained by studying as the New Testament was in the process of being written. The gifts of tongues and interpretations were for instructing strangers. The gift of prophecy was to teach, to foretell issues and to warn believers. The gift of discerning of spirits was to ascertain inspiration and expose false prophets. The gifts of faith, healings and miracles were for confirming the divine authenticity of God's new message (gospel) to all people. When the perfect revelation of God's word had been completed, the miraculous gifts ceased. Today we can look in the New Testament to know God's will on salvation, circumcision, etc. and see clearly. The church has passed the stage of infancy. The expression 'that which is perfect' refers to the new law of Christ that had emanated from Pentecost, in its complete form as against the partial and

incomplete word of God that it was when Paul wrote. The apostle was not there talking of seeing Christ face to face but of having access to all truth. The passage does NOT read 'when he who is perfect is come' as some people imagine, "But when that which is perfect is come...".

The entire faith message or gospel doctrine of Christ by which we shall be judged is 'the perfect' that is meant in this passage. James 1:23-25 states; *"For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."* This perfect law of liberty is able to spiritually make one perfect, for II Timothy 3:16-17 states; *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."*

All miraculous gifts and thus ability to perform biblical miracles ceased when the confirmation and inspiration of writing the New Testament was completed. Presently faith, hope and love abides but the greatest of them is love. This is because love is the summary of all commandments, the second coming of Christ is our blessed hope (Titus 2:13) and when He returns, our hope and faith shall be fulfilled in Him who first loved us. Why?? Because hope is longing for what we can not see... (Romans 8:24-25) and faith is the substance of things hoped for -Hebrews 11:1. Please reason with me for a moment. Didn't Paul write to the Corinthians to impress on them that miraculous spiritual gifts would cease? Why would he then inform them that faith, hope, and love would abide after these gifts had passed away, and that the greatest of these is love? We do not need to exercise the miraculous gifts in heaven (which is a faultless place), so it would be ridiculous of Paul to discuss the expected cessation of those

gifts IF they are to cease in heaven and not **during** the gospel era! The inspired apostle wrote that passage so that they (and we today) would focus on the three things generally needed throughout our Christian lives on this planet.

The spiritual gifts were given to confirm the truth until the gospel faith, which was revealed through the apostles and prophets, came in its entirety (Ephesians 4:8-15) and the completed gospel was:

- 1 A whole unit and not fragmentary portions.
- 2 The source of the perfect knowledge of the greatness of Christ.
- 3 The standard reference and stable universal guide for church doctrine and edification.

Since the acts and word of truth revealed unto the early church have been completed, the spiritual gifts having served God's intended purpose ceased. God starts all things by miracles but continues them without miracles. He made the universe miraculously but now upholds it by the word of his power. He created Adam and Eve miraculously but has given the natural law of reproduction for the multiplication of the human race. He gave the Bible, His word, miraculously through inspired men but has ceased inspiring men to give original revelation of His word, as it is now complete. Many people pretend as if they do not know the meaning of the word "TILL" when it comes to passages such as:

1. *One jot shall not pass from the law TILL all be fulfilled* - Matthew 5:18
2. *Christ gave gifts unto men... TILL we all come to the unity of the faith* -Ephesians 4:8-13

Surely, these statements truly mean that:

- 1 The Law of Moses was to continue fully but not beyond the time that all its conditions would have been fulfilled (which Christ did at his resurrection).
- 2 Miraculous gifts were given up to the time that the gospel faith would have become a complete unit of revelation.

It is unfortunate that those verses have been perverted to mean:

1. Men are to continue in the law of Moses up to the end of the world. In which case the blood of Christ would be unnecessary and worthless.
2. Miraculous gifts were given up to the time that individuals and denominations will decide to be united, and discard their doctrinal differences.

In which case it is insinuated that Christ gave the gifts to allow each and all to be led in divergent ways, and that the Lord now supports denominationalism and timeless religious confusion. Beloved friend, such wresting or twisting of the scriptures can only damn a soul. Many may continue to protest that biblical miracles have not ceased but it is well documented that such cannot practically be demonstrated otherwise. The in-dwelling Spirit still produces His fruit in a Christian through obedience unto the word of Christ -Colossians.1:3-6 & Galatians 5:22-23. Jesus said, "*Ye shall know them by their fruits...*" -Matthew 7:16.

Pentecostal: The reported miracles of different churches today indicate that God is with them. Can Satan cast out Satan? Where there is no vision people perish. How are we to know God's will without revelations, especially in personal matters? It even takes a special revelation to understand the scriptures for the letter killeth but the Spirit giveth live.

Reply: Not all powers are with divine approval. Satan the author of lies and deceits (II Thessalonians 2:9) allows his servants parading about as the ministers of righteousness (II Corinthians 11:14-15) to perform lying wonders on his other subjects. The Lord himself states that, "...if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" -Matthew 24:24. God who is not the author of confusion (I Corinthians 14:33) will not display support for a perverted version of the gospel. God does not and will not confirm the contradictory teachings of various sects with miracles! Satan does not but he repeatedly pretends to cast out devils at some so-called deliverance services. There is not a single place in the Bible where Jesus disregarded the possessed, mad or epileptic in the crowd around him and began to cast out a "spirit of anger, spirit of fornication, etc." from his own disciples as some profess today. Also, Jesus never made a general prayer that "somebody here will be healed today, receive your healing." He dealt with specific cases and healed confirmed infirmities on the spot.

In very personal matters (for example, choosing a marriage partner), one should use common sense or initiative, offered advice, prayer and knowledge of scriptural principles to reach a decision. Don't wait for any other thing! If the Lord saturated every facet and detail of our lives with "revelations" then things would never ever go wrong for Christians. However, sometimes, they do.

A revelation is not needed to understand the Bible. II Corinthians 3:6 reads; "*Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament, not of the letter but of the Spirit: for the letter killeth but the Spirit giveth life.*" It is amazing that some infer from this verse that the word of God is a dead letter that saves only when accompanied with an additional, miraculous illumination or revelation from the Spirit. That is nowhere suggested in the Bible which says the word of God is "living and active." The context of

that chapter is comparison of the letter of the law of Moses with the New Testament ministrations, with the New Testament shown to be more glorious. Romans 7:6 reads; "*But now are we delivered from the law that being dead wherein we are held that we should serve in the newness of the spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.*" Paul never taught that one cannot understand the scripture but that man could never have known the will of God by his own efforts. He stated that God, by his Spirit, had made known his will or revealed it unto them -the apostles and prophets, whereby when you read it, you may understand -Ephesians 3:1-5. The unbeliever does not know spiritual things (I Corinthians 2:14) because he received not the gospel, regarding it as foolishness -I Corinthians 1:18.

The New Testament is God's perfect and final revelation unto man. The faith has **once** {and for all time} been delivered unto the saints -Jude.3. There is neither room nor need for amendments. The doctrine of progressional revelation is false. There is no new religious truth to reveal, it is either in the Bible or it contradicts the Bible. The revealed things belong unto us for obedience while the hidden things belong to God -Deuteronomy 29:29, Revelation 1:11; 10:4. Divine inspirational word of wisdom and of knowledge has ceased, now we learn from the Bible. Discerning of spirits or of hearts is no longer by miraculous power; we now prove or test everything by the written word which is able to save us -I Thessalonians 5:21. There is no more miraculous reception and preaching of the gospel as Paul received from the Lord, we have to be taught by man now - Romans 10:14-15 & II Timothy 2:2. There is no longer any miraculous speaking or interpretation of human languages, we have to study them. No one today can reproduce biblical miracles. We cannot conclusively know the Lord's will by our ever-different dreams, our unstable feelings or other subjective personal experiences -except in self-deceit.

How is it that those who profess to be believers refuse to accept that the Bible can equip a Christian for all religious and

life issues? Also is it that they contend some so-called new revelations and individual dreams be given pre-eminence? Today, one can not know for certain if any dream will truly come to pass so it is futile seeking interpretations here and there or writing a book of predictions based on such, rather one should pray and act wisely. Beloved, that we may not perish for lack of knowledge, the Spirit through Paul says: "*Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needed not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth... All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works*"-II Timothy 2:15 & 3:16-17. God did not forget to reveal anything necessary for our knowledge unto salvation. Unfortunately, men are adept at adding to and subtracting from rather than dividing the word of God! We need to give more time to prayerful and patient study.

Pentecostal: Many of our preachers claim to have seen Jesus, Satan, Heaven, and Hell etc. and delivered messages on such.

Reply: After the book of Revelation was given to John for Christians to come unto the perfect knowledge of Christ, the Lord stopped revealing or inspiring such. John was the beloved apostle who was not to die until the Lord had re-appeared unto him (John 21:20-24). Anyone that now claims revelations or inspiration from God, and writes prophecies, visions, doctrinal instructions etc. is preaching that the Bible is uncompleted or insufficient, and that God's plan has not been fully revealed or that it is being changed. Such a person is indirectly ADDING to God's book of prophecy to his or her own damnation -Revelation 22:18-19. If it is believed and taught otherwise then such as believe this should mount an open campaign that all such visions and revelations of men be entrenched in the Bible! **It is well**

known that not only do such acclaimed messages prove to be unscriptural or anti-scriptural, they are in themselves contradictory. As someone has said, "Lies not only disagree with the Truth, they often quarrel among themselves." If these 'latter-day revelations' are in conformity with the Bible then they would be useless, unnecessary repetitions. They, however, always violate the scriptures and are thus lies of filthy dreamers speaking evil of dignities -II Peter 2:10. All such acclaimed wisdom and visions descends not from above but are earthly, sensual and devilish -James 3:14-15.

It is written in the scriptures that there shall be many false teachers, and that many shall be deceived but do you have to be one of them? My dear Pentecostal friend, Christ says: "*Not everyone that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many shall say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity*"-Matthew 7:21-23.

Pentecostal: I think you doubt the miraculous ability and power of God. Does not Hebrews 13:8 state that 'Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today and forever'?

Reply: I am not disputing what God can do, but those things you claim he is doing now which the scripture shows he has ceased. I am not questioning the Lord's power; I am discussing his will for our era. It is not a matter of whether some believers performed miracles in Bible times; it is whether it is his plan that all believers should do so till he comes again. If indeed the Lord promised that all believers of all generations be followed by the signs of Mark 16:17-18 then each believer (**without exception, at least every Pentecostal**) should be just like Jesus' apostles - in performing miracles. For God does not display favouritism or

respect of persons (Acts 10:34) and "*all the promises of God in Christ Jesus are not yea and nay but are yea and amen*" -II Corinthians 1:19-20. Only salvation, not miraculous signs, is promised to each baptized believer -Mark 16:16. Notice that there is a switch from "he" to "them" in Mark 16:17. This signifies a switch from a general promise (vs. 16) given to all mankind to a specific promise (vs. 17) given to just His apostles.

The Spirit in the apostles could work miracles and impart spiritual gifts unto those upon whom they laid their hands. Why is it that the spirit in the modern-day 'anointed' ministers cannot perform biblical miracles for themselves and those upon whom they too lay their hands? "*Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these resist the truth... their folly shall be made manifest...*" -II Timothy 3:8-9. Those Egyptian magicians could by lying wonders imitate Moses' miracles till Aaron turned dust into living lice -Exodus 8:16-19. Anybody today can claim that he has God's anointing to perform 'miracles,' see 'visions' or speak in 'tongues.' But bring such a one someone born-blind or lame or a stinking corpse to raise and his folly shall be exposed. I lay emphasis on visible and from-birth infirmities because by rapping in 'tongues,' a modern magician may as well cast spells on his participatory audience, and "heal" them afterwards. They can say that we should not test them but remember the Lord commended the Ephesian Christians for trying some people and proving them to be false apostles -Revelation 2:2. His apostle commands: "*Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God because many false prophets are gone out into the world*" -I John 4:1. Testing is not a reflection on God but on a self-acclaimed anointed preacher who tells his hearers not to bother about Bible patterns but to accept his 'testimonies' and present some titles or theological certificates as credentials.

Jesus is unchangeable in deity, power, and character (Hebrews 1:10-12) not in operations. He is no longer to be regarded as a Jew but as the glorified Christ, the Lord of all -II Corinthians 5:16 & I Timothy 6:15. His will is no longer the old

covenant but the new covenant -Matthew 26:28. To contend that what Christ once did, he shall always do is not true. Surely, the Lord does not come physically to prove to each generation that he is the Messiah. Since he has neither been sending the Spirit to suddenly baptize believers as the apostles were nor inspiring more chapters to be added to the Bible, we should realize that miraculous gifts are not for ever. The Pentecostal craving for 'prosperity' and lust for 'miracle explosions' is a sign of carnality and is not spiritual maturity. Recall that in Matthew 12:38-41, Christ rebuffed those ungodly, sign-seeking men who would not listen to His message of salvation with these words; "*An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: ... The men of Nineveh shall stand up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, a greater than Jonah is here.*" Is your faith based on a so-called modern day miracle or on the words of Christ testified to by His resurrection and recorded by the early apostles?

It does not take a miracle to approach Jesus today. When we pray according to his will and live in obedience to his word, he answers our prayers -I John 3:22.

The early disciples did not go about making claims of what God could do or what they could do but would not do. They did not even spread rumours of what they "heard" that a believer had done. Rather, they performed astonishing, outstanding miracles that had their opposers "*Saying, what shall we do to these men for that a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest to all Jerusalem and we can not deny it*" -Acts.4:16. Many sincere people who do not carefully study the Bible are being piloted to hell. The days of miraculous gifts are over. The Lord now answers prayers with Yes, Wait or No, and all in his own time. "*But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse,*

deceiving, and being deceived" -II Timothy 3:13.

We should endeavour to ascertain whether what we have just read in a verse has total, limited or no application unto us today. Many people profess to have spiritual gifts and the ability to impart the same to others by "claiming by faith" promises Christ made unto his apostles alone. They claim to have prayed down "the Spirit" and to be speaking with 'tongues.' Did they not feel the power when "the Spirit" came over them? Did they not experience being 'slain in the spirit'? But their tongues and experiences are as far from the scriptures as infinity is from infinitesimal! Has it ever occurred to anyone that the much-touted power in Pentecostal churches is really an ability to speak unintelligible tongues and the laying-on of hands is an ability to knock themselves unconscious??? That power cannot instantaneously restore limbs, sight, health, etc. of well-known beggars or even of their own handicapped and afflicted members. To perform real miracles, no more Holy Ghost power than that which is claimed would be needed. It is therefore obvious that the Pentecostal movement does not have the real thing.

Christ said "*and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*" It takes real humility to acknowledge one's error, and this is not a question of winning an argument but of winning a soul to the Lord. It does not matter whether someone is a "Founder" or "Pastor" or ordinary follower. It profits nothing to gain the whole world and suffer eternal loss. **The moment you are fully persuaded that a belief or practice does not conform to the New Testament pattern, please abandon it for the sake of your soul.**

THE DOCTRINE OF PREMILLENNIAL RAPTURE

Pentecostal: There will be a secret coming of the Lord accompanied by the resurrection of the just, and a sudden disappearance of one hundred and forty four thousand (144,000)

Jews from the world. This shall be followed by the emergence of the Antichrist -a Christ opposing religio-political man who will rule the whole world for seven years. At first, he will rule peaceably and make a covenant with Israel. He will break the agreement within three and a half years and unleash a reign of great tribulation. God will raise two men with the anointing of Moses and Elijah against him, both of whom he shall kill after the remaining three and a half years. While unfaithful believers and unbelievers who missed the rapture are suffering on earth, the marriage supper of the Lamb will be taking place in heaven. This will happen after the judgment of believers to receive crowns with stars proportionate to their faith and labours.

After the seven years, the Lord and the raptured believers will visibly come to fight and destroy the sophisticated armies of the Antichrist at the battle of Armageddon. He shall then cause the return to Jerusalem of the ten tribes of Israel lost to the Babylonian and Assyrian captivities. Then the Jewish nation will be converted unto Jesus. After that He will set up the kingdom of God on earth with Jerusalem as headquarters. Satan shall be bound in a pit for one thousand years and Christ and believers shall reign peacefully as priests and kings on earth.

After the millennial reign, Satan shall be loosed to now test those born during the millennium and to give the former living unbelievers a second chance to repent. He will deceive them to attack the city of Christ's government but before that can happen fire from God shall destroy them. The next resurrection, which is that of the wicked, will then take place, and believers shall then judge the world. The unjust shall be thrown into the lake of fire. God will make a new heaven and a new earth in which the saved will be given mansions to live in forever. The signs of the coming of the Lord are being fulfilled; the Antichrist has probably been born in Europe or the Middle East. The Rapture may take place anytime from now!

Reply: The doctrine of Premillennial Rapture is a spurious

eschatological teaching. It emerged from the fertile imaginations of a highly carnal mind fed of wrestled scriptures and on figurative passages taken literally. The book of Revelation is written in much figurative language. Most of its passages must be assumed to be symbolic unless such can be proved otherwise from other plain scriptural passage(s). An effort shall be made to prove ten assertions:

1. There are no 'Lost Ten Tribes' of Israel. There has always been a living remnant of the twelve tribes of national Israel in Palestine.
2. The kingdom of God is the church of Christ. The Lord Jesus is its king right now, in this gospel era. He will not come back to earth to set up a world government or priestly kingdom in which to rule for a literal 1000 years.
3. The true Jews of God now are those circumcised in the heart. Christians or Saints constitute the kingdom of spiritual Israel. The church is the New Jerusalem and holy city.
4. The number 144,000 is used to represent the redeemed peoples of the Lord in all ages of time under Patriarchal religion, Judaism and Christianity.
5. Satan was bound at the first advent of Christ and has been loosed at the close of the apostolic age. Christians have always been a royal priesthood in this gospel era since they undergo the first resurrection at water baptism. Believers reigned in some sense during the apostolic age. There is no future priestly 1000-year reign for dead saints.
6. The two Beasts warring against the Lamb represent ungodly world governments and false religions especially that of perverted Christianity. Anyone not sealed with the Spirit of Christ has the mark of the beast.
7. The two witnesses represent "the apostles and the prophets" and "the saints" of the Lord. After declaring the gospel or doctrine of Christ with divine help and

miraculous power in the apostolic age (represented by 42 months or 1260 days), they were subdued by the beast till the end of time (represented by time, times and half a time or 42 months or three and a half days) before getting caught up to heaven. Another Moses and Elijah are not coming into this world.

8. The early Christians were in much tribulation after the Roman army destroyed Jerusalem and massacred the rebelling Jews it was ruling peaceably before. Saints have always been persecuted in this gospel era. It is AFTER not before this great tribulation that Jesus shall visibly, audibly come with his holy angels to reap the earth. It won't be secret.
9. "Armageddon" is not an earthy warfare but is the spiritual battle of the forces of good against evil in the human heart -the valley of decision. Saints and sinners shall be raised and judged by Christ on the same day. Presently, Christian conduct is judged by admonitions based on apostolic teachings. Also, the righteous life of saints is their judgment of sinners.
10. All saints shall be "housed" in a glorious body of immortality, and be rewarded with eternal life. They shall all be before the Lamb's throne forever, not living in different abodes. There are no differential housing estates in heaven.

Hints on the Book of Revelation

The book of Revelation though written in figurative language contains a message of spiritual truth and real facts. The message was God-breathed upon John the apostle exiled on the island of Patmos about A.D. 96 during the reign of the persecuting Roman emperor Domitian. The message was sent particularly to rebuke, admonish and comfort the seven churches of Asia and other saints in the Roman world. Nevertheless, all Christians of all ages are meant to benefit from "*what the Spirit*

saith unto the churches." Cryptic symbols were used to hide the message from the ungodly persecutors since it mentions their destruction, and shows that ultimately, God's people are "more than conquerors."

Those who disregard this epistle's historical background and plain teachings of the other scriptures formulate bizarre doctrines that would sound strange, comfortless and erroneous to the book's original recipients. It's core message however is not sealed from being known to Christians -Revelation 22:10.

However, due to the figurative language of the book it is subject to being mishandled. One rule above all other rules must be applied to understand this book. This rule was given by Jesus in John 10:35, "...*the scripture cannot be broken.*" In this part of one verse Jesus is telling us; the Bible is true, does not internally conflict and that being so cannot to be used against itself. The Bible is in harmony from the first word in Genesis to the last word in Revelation. If any verse in Revelation appears to be out of harmony with any other verse in the Bible then a reappraisal of the meaning of the verses in question must be done to harmonize them. So, like other books of the Bible, it is not subject to isolatory interpretations. By a diligent study of the scriptures, it would be observed that the following symbols are often utilized in the book of Revelation:

Adultery/Fornication - Idolatry or spiritual unfaithfulness.

Angel - A Messenger such as a spirit creature or human preacher.

Babylon - The seductive and enslaving world of which the Roman empire was perfect example in the apostolic age.

Bound - To hinder, impair, limit or restrict considerably.

Beasts around the throne - Cherubims and/or Seraphims.

Beast from the sea - Evil political systems personified in their leaders.

Beast from the earth - False religious systems personified in their leaders.

Blood - War or death.

Bottomless pit - Dominion of Satan.

Candlestick - Church.

Crown -Royal majesty.

Darkening of the sun, moon or stars - Calamitous obscuring of spiritual or political glory.

Death - Render lifeless or to weaken and consign to misery, this is not annihilation.

Dogs - Unbelievers and backsliders.

Dragon/Serpent - Satan the Devil.

Eagles' wings -Strength due to divine help.

Earth - Religious people "from beneath" or children of the Devil.

Earthquake - Political, Moral or Spiritual upheavals.

Fire - Action in which destructive influence is exercised.

Flood - Great deception or seduction.

Forehead - Soul or being.

Garments/Linens or White garments - Righteous acts or life of saints.

Given - Allowed by divine approval or awareness.

Gog and Magog - Evil forces and peoples against God's people.

Gold/Precious stones - Fabulous splendour and glory.

Hail - Catastrophes.

Harps - Songs of praise.

Horn - Power, king or kingdom.

Horses - Forces of carnal or spiritual battles.

Incense - Prayer

Islands - World sovereignties and states.

Key - Authority

Locusts - Pesteering forces such as famine, etc.

Mark on the forehead - Public profession of whom one has chosen to serve.

Mark on the hand - Manner of life.

Seal on forehead - Mark of ownership or control over.

Moon - Those who share in the glory of one having authority.
Mountains, hills and rocks - Ungodly powers, religions and places of worship.
Palms - Triumphant joy.
Rod of iron - Unswayed or just rule.
Red/White/Scarlet & Purple - War/Righteousness/victory & Royalty.
Saints - God's people.
Sea/Waters - Godless nations or restless peoples.
Stand on/stood upon - Operate from above of.
Stars - Human or Spiritual beings that are powerful in their respective realms.
Sun - Earthly lords or a great ruler.
Sword - Symbol of conquest.
Temple - The Lord's tabernacle or his church.
Trees, especially green trees - Innocent or godly people.
Trumpet - Divine warning/action or the Sound of God's voice.
Woman - A nation or a religious group.
Winds - Calamities such as invading armies, pestilence, etc.
Winepress - Distressful carnage.
Sodom and Egypt - The place of sin and its bondage or the world.
One-third - A significant portion.
One - Unit symbol.
Two - Allies or witnesses.
Three - Divinity or a false claim to it.
Three and a half - A segment of an era.
Four - Universality.
Five - Inadequate portion or non-fullness.
Six - Evil or that which falls short of perfection.
Seven - Perfection or completeness.
Ten - Fullness.
Twelve - Divine organizational structure.

It should be noted that other numbers such as 24, 144, 1000,

1600, and their multiples can be derived from special combinations of those given above. Also, a word does not necessarily symbolize the same thing all the time. For example, the beasts in the midst of the throne are different from the beasts that war against the Lamb. The entire chapters of the book of Revelation do not depict chronological events; rather they show God's dealings with man in this last dispensation viewed from different perspectives. Now to the earlier assertions...

THE SUPPOSED "LOST TEN TRIBES OF ISRAEL"

The doctrine of 'millennial reign' partly rests on the assumption that some lost tribes of Israel will in the future return to Jerusalem under Christ to form the kingdom of God. Every false doctrine leans on another hence a wrong teaching hardly ever crumbles alone.

Due to Solomon's sins, God promised to divide the kingdom of Israel in the days of the reign of his son and He did -1Kings 11:11-12 & 12:1-21. Ten tribes formed the (northern) kingdom of Israel while Judah and Benjamin formed the southern kingdom of Judah with capitals at Samaria and Jerusalem respectively. Assyria besieged Samaria and captured "Israel" (the nation made up of the ten tribes), II Kings 18:9-10. However, there were some children of "Israel" in the cities of Judah -II Chronicles 15:9 & 31:4-6. Later the southern kingdom of Judah went into the Babylonian captivity but THE POOR OF THE LAND (from the twelve tribes living there) were spared -II Kings 25:8-12. With time, the Persians subdued the Babylonians and Cyprus their king proclaimed that Jews should return to rebuild Jerusalem, and many did under Ezra the scribe -Ezra 1:1-5. Many also returned under Nehemiah to rebuild the city gates, working with the remnants that were NOT taken into captivity -Nehemiah 1:1-4 & 2:1-18. Jeremiah (30:3) also foretold, "*For, lo, the days come saith the LORD, that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the LORD; and I will cause them to return*

to the land that I gave their fathers, and they shall possess it...

The question now is 'did God restore Jews from the twelve tribes before Christ brought the new covenant?' It was prophesied (Isaiah 11:10-12) that before the 'root of Jesse' brings salvation unto the Gentiles, God would restore a remnant from the exiled Jews. On the day of Pentecost there were men from every nation, from that 'root of Jesse' -Acts 2, and from this great meeting of Pentecost came the proclamation of the new covenant as foretold. "*Behold the days come saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah*" -Jeremiah 31:31. There were Jews from every tribe listening to Peter and the apostles preach the first gospel sermon on the day of Pentecost!

The Jewish leaders crucified Jesus and persecuted Paul because they did not know that Jesus was the hope for which "the twelve tribes" were serving God -Acts 26:1-7. In view of the above facts, it is obvious that Premillennialists "*do err, not knowing the scriptures.*"

THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND KINGSHIP OF CHRIST

Daniel interpreted the parts of the image of king Nebuchadnezzar's dream as representing four world kingdoms (these four were: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome). He also stated, "*During the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall not be destroyed...*" -Daniel 2:44. After the decline of the Greeks, Rome became the world empire ruled by Caesars. In the time of Augustus, Jesus the Christ, "the tried stone cut out without hands," was born -Luke 2:1-11. He came preaching that "the time is fulfilled, the kingdom of heaven is at hand" or very near -Mark 1:15. Jesus also taught that no man could enter the kingdom except he is "born of water and of the Spirit" -John 3:3-5. He said he would build his church on the truth of He being the Son of God, and also that He would give the apostles the keys of the kingdom -Matthew 16:13-19 &

18:18-19. The Lord told his apostles that DURING THEIR LIFETIMES, some (all but Judas who later committed suicide) of them would see the kingdom of God come with power (Mark 9:1) which power they were to receive when the Holy Ghost is come upon them -Acts 1:8.

What started on that day of Pentecost when the apostles were endowed with power from on high? It was the Church that was started, and that after many were baptized in water as directed by the Spirit-inspired teaching of Peter and the Apostles -Acts 2:1-47. We thus give thanks unto the Father "*who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath TRANSLATED US INTO the kingdom of his dear Son*" -Colossians 1:13. Truly, as the Saviour promised, his disciples "received a kingdom which can not be moved" or overcome by the gates of hell. The kingdom of Christ is His Church, and it is "*not of this world*" or worldly/earthly in nature. The kingdom is not 'meat and drink but righteousness and peace, and rejoicing in the Spirit' hence Paul enjoins Christians "to walk worthy of God, who hath CALLED YOU INTO HIS KINGDOM and glory -I Thessalonians 2:12. We now see that the kingdom exists as the church of Christ into which God calls men not by 'dreams or spirits or a tiny, wee voice' but rather by the gospel preached by human vessels, "*For we have this treasure in earthen vessels...*" -II Corinthians 4:7! Please note that the kingdom of God is the kingdom of Christ -Ephesians 5:5. The church is described as a kingdom to illustrate the government or rule of the Lord over his people. The true church is ruled by the divine monarch, Jesus and not by a self-imposed or an elected General Overseer. When the emphasis is on the divinity of Christ, the scripture calls the church of Christ the church of God, as in Acts 20:28.

If the church is the kingdom of Christ, does not this fact necessitate his being its king right now? Jesus is not a 'crown prince' awaiting a temporal earthly kingdom to rule. He has been made the Head of all things for the church and is now King of kings and Lord of lords - Ephesians 1:22, I Timothy 6:14-15.

Peter explained that God's promise unto David to raise up the Messiah to sit on "David's throne" referred to the resurrection and exaltation of Jesus to the right hand {glorious power} of God -Acts 2:29-33. The Lord Jesus revealed Himself to John in Revelation 3:7 as "*he that hath the key of David.*" Thus Christ is already sitting '*upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom*' in fulfillment of Isaiah 9:6. Christ's ascension (Acts 1:9) was a necessary prelude to the inauguration of his kingdom and this kingship was given in an analogy in Luke 19:12-27. His kingdom is universal hence we preach to make subjects from all nations - Matthew 28:19. It is not really a question of whether Christ is now King, as it is whether you will bow to the authority of his divine majesty! Jesus must reign until the Father has "*put all things under his feet*" -I Corinthians 15:25. Thus He must reign until physical death is destroyed and this will be accomplished at the resurrection -I Corinthians 15:26 & 54. It is at the end of this gospel era that Christ, "*...shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and authority and power.*" That is, "*a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish*" - I Corinthians 15:24 & Ephesians 5:27.

Denominationalists say we should preach 'Christ only' and not the church also. They are evidently preaching "another gospel" from that of Paul or Philip who preached 'Christ and his kingdom {church}' -Acts 8:12 & 28:30-31. To preach Christ is to preach and teach the whole counsel of God -Acts 20:26-27. The Church was so important to Jesus that He bought it with His own blood - Acts 20:28. We can not separate the Head (Christ) from his body (church) and those who disparage the church "are kicking against the pricks!"

We now pray that God should expand and keep his kingdom, not merely "thy kingdom come." We teach of Jesus as the king of spiritual Jews (Micah 5:24, John 12:12-16) not as a future king for literal Jews in an earthly kingdom. Herod and all Jerusalem were worried when they learned of the birth of the Messiah born

to be king of the Jews. They like many today took the prophecies of his reign as literal. Once, on feeding about five thousand from pieces of bread and fish, the multitude wanted to "*come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone*" -John 6:15. He was eventually crucified for 'claiming' to be king of the Jews for he did not repudiate this fact when asked by Pilate. When Paul and Silas preached His kingdom at Thessalonica, some Jews raved "*these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus.*"

Not only is Christ reigning, he is also our "*high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens*" -Hebrews 8:1. He reigns from heaven above for he cannot be a priest on earth -Hebrews 7:14 & 8:4. Right now, in this dispensation, Zechariah 6:12-13 is being fulfilled; "*tell him this is what the LORD Almighty says: 'Here is the man whose name is the Branch, and he will branch out of his place and build the temple of the LORD, and he will be clothed with majesty and will sit and rule on his throne. And he will be a priest on his throne. And there shall be harmony between the two.'*" Jesus is the Branch of righteousness. He reigns!

THE TRUE JEWS AND NEW JERUSALEM

The Jewish nation, the descendants of Abraham through Isaac and then Jacob (Israel), was chosen by God for use -in the bringing of the Messiah for the salvation of the whole world. God desired to have a spiritual Israel or kingdom of all that will call on his name, and follow him fully with their heart. The Lord Jesus told his apostles, "*Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me. That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel*" -Luke 22:28-30. We have shown above that they received the kingdom or church (the two are used interchangeably, note

Matthew 16:18-19). They (and we) partake of his table in the memorial communion -I Corinthians 10:21. They were given authority to judge or instruct Christian belief and conduct -I Corinthians 5:12; 7:25; II Corinthians 10:8.

The church is figuratively called the twelve tribes of (the new) Israel. For example, James' epistle to the generality of Christians is "to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad" -James 1:1. Paul wrote unto Gentiles; "*Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham... And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise*" -Galatians 3:7,29. All God's people are now (spiritual) Israel, there is no more fleshy distinction, for Jesus has broken down the wall of partition -Galatians 3:28 & Ephesians 2:11-14. "*For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew, who is one inwardly and circumcision is of the heart, in the spirit and not in the letter...*" Romans 2:28-29. All Christians have been "circumcised with the circumcision made without hands" (Colossians 2:11) and are the true circumcision or Jews who now worship God in the spirit by Christ Jesus -Philippians 3:3. Jesus has brought in the "other sheep" into His one fold under one shepherd. By the cross, He was to "gather into one {body}" the children of God which were scattered abroad -John 10:16 & 11:52.

It is evident from Ephesians 5:23-32 and Revelation 19:7-8 that the church is the bride of Christ. Now, in Revelation 21:9, an angel told John; "*come hither, and I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife.*" What was the apostle shown? He tells us in vs.10..."*And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem...*" The new or holy Jerusalem is the glorified church! Note that in vs.14 the city is said to have twelve foundations and in them the name of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, this is implied in Ephesians 2:19-21 of the church. That the church is as a mountain was shown in Isaiah's prophecy earlier discussed. The

dimensions of the city as given in Revelation 21:15-17 with numbers such as foursquare, 144, and 12,000, is to show that the church consists of the universality of God's people. **Does plain scripture call the church the new Jerusalem?** If you are obedient to the call of the gospel including being baptized and are added to the Lord's church then, "*...ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels. To the general assembly and church of the first born, which are written in heaven...*" -Hebrews 12:22-23. The LORD put his name in the Jewish city of Jerusalem during the old covenant. It was called the holy city then, and God was her husband, maker and redeemer -Isaiah 52:1 & 54:1. National Israel or Zion was the woman that travailed to bring forth the Son. Compare the symbols of Revelation 12:1-2 and Genesis 37:1-10. Another woman in like manner was known as "Jerusalem above the mother of us all" which is the church whose seed have the testimony of Jesus -Isaiah 66:5-12 & Galatians 4:26.

THE 144,000 ON MOUNT ZION

A cardinal rule to be repeated and emphasized, when dealing with the book of Revelation, is that the interpretation of the book must not, indeed cannot violate any plain scripture found in the rest of the Bible. Jesus when dealing with the Pharisee's religious error said this, "...the Scripture cannot be broken..." John 10:35. In effect Jesus was saying the Bible does not contradict itself at any point, so we must be very careful in handling Revelation to insure what interpretation at which we arrive is in harmony with plain doctrine found in the Bible.

Having shown that the Church of Christ is spiritual Israel or Zion, it should be obvious that the 144,000 or 12 x 12 x 1000 represents the fullness of God's people under the old and the new covenants. I submit twelve points:

1. The symbology of the saved 144,000 from Revelation 14:1 derives from Jesus saving blood, which went backward as well as forward from the cross. In Hebrews 9:15 we read of the blood covering sins of the faithful under the first covenant. The blood of Jesus covers all sins of the faithful after the cross as well. In Hebrews 8:6-12 we note of the New Covenant, "...*For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.*" From these two facts we then can know that all righteous people under both the old covenant (Old Testament) and the new covenant (New Testament) are saved. The 144,000 then will stand for the completeness of the saved from both covenants.
2. How is it only 12,000 are saved in each tribe when Paul wrote, "All Israel shall be saved" in Romans 11:26? The number is symbolic, for not all fleshly Jews are of (spiritual) Israel -Romans 9:6. John the apostle only heard the number 144,000 in Revelation 7:4, when he looked he saw an uncountable multitude of all nations –verse 9.
3. The 144,000 were sealed Revelation 4, and so are Christians -Ephesians 1:13. Remember that Christ is our "Passover" -I Corinthians 5:7. God always seals his own people spiritually so that they may escape from the spiritual consequences of his judgments on the ungodly - Exodus 13:7-9 & Ezekiel 9:3-6.
4. Revelation 14:1 says the Lamb stood on mount Zion and with him the 144,000. That signifies Jesus and the saved of all ages for where the Lord is, he wants his servants to be also -John 14:3.
5. Revelation 14:1 says the 144,000 have his Father's name written on their foreheads. So have those whose faith overcame the world, and all who will enter heaven - Revelation 3:12 & 22:3-4.
6. Revelation 14:2-3 says only the 144,000 can sing the new song with their harps. All of God's people can sing the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb with their harps - Revelation 15:2-4.
7. Revelation 14:3 says the 144,000 were redeemed from the earth. All God's people are redeemed or purchased with the blood of Christ -I Peter 1:18-19 & Hebrews 9:15.
8. Revelation 14:4 says, "These are they that were not defiled with women; for they are virgins..." The church is a chaste virgin espoused to Christ -II Corinthians 11:2. She must not "allow or fornicate with Jezebels." She must avoid those who seduce with doctrines of devils.
9. Revelation 14:4 says of the 144,000 "...These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth..." Who else can these be but all true Christians? Please note John 1:29 and Matthew 16:24.
10. Revelation 14:4 says they are 'firstfruits' unto God. James 1:18 says unto Christians; "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth that, we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures."
11. Revelation 14:5 says they were without guile or fault. This is the very stand of the spotless church when taken to the heavenly presence of God -Ephesians 5:27 & Colossians 1:21-22.
12. Revelation 7:3 says they "are the servants of God." All saved people are the servants of God, and they all are heaven bound -Revelation 1:1 & 22:3. Nobody should think that some would be left behind to inherit this earth that is seen. Hope that is seen is no hope –Romans 8:24-25. There is one hope (Ephesians 4:4), and that hope is eternal life, which God who cannot lie promised before the world began (Titus 1:3). That hope is laid up in heaven for all who will obey his word -Colossians 1:5.

1000 - YEAR REIGN AND THE PRIESTS OF CHRIST

Revelation 20:1-9 reads; "*And I saw an angel coming down*

out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him a thousand years. He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations any more until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time. I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshipped the beast or his image and has not received his mark on their foreheads or hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years. When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth -Gog and Magog -to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand of the seashore. They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God's people, the city he loves. But fire came down from heaven and devoured them."

A note of interest is the 1000 years talked about in these verses. Is the 1000 years literal? In II Peter 3:8 is this verse: *"But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."* This shows that the time period in discussion in Revelation 20 could be a long indefinite period of time as understood by man. The thousand years is really an expression for some fleeting time, the number 1000 represents fullness and examples of this principal can be seen in Psalms 90:4 & 50:10.

It has been seen from the Bible that the church is God's

people and is represented in Revelation 21:2 as the holy city. There, after the judgment, all saints shall reign [live triumphantly] with Christ -II Timothy 2:12 & Revelation 22:1-5. Yet, in this dispensation that men are saved by the washing of regeneration (Titus 3:5), Christ reigns (Matthew 28:18, I Corinthians 15:24-25) and the apostles in their lifetimes were enthroned judging spiritual Israel or the church through the word of God which they received -Matthew 19:28.

Revelation 20:1-9 says:

- 1 Being raised to life is to partake of the first resurrection.
- 2 Those raised to life reigned for a thousand years.
- 3 Those raised were priests of Christ and a part of His city or kingdom.
- 4 To partake in the first resurrection is to be blessed and to escape the second death.
- 5 After the thousand years, the attacking nations led by the deceiver are to be destroyed with fire.

Revelation 20:1-9 does NOT say:

- 1 Bodies of martyrs came to life to reign; rather it was souls that came to live!
- 2 Anyone apart from those being martyred for their testimony came to life to reign.
- 3 Christ shall reign for a thousand years; rather it says some partook of his rule for that period of time.
- 4 The priesthood will end after the thousand years; rather it is their reign that is limited to that period.
- 5 Christ shall physically reign on earth for a thousand years.

Beloved reader, Christ was the divine messenger (John 12:49) who came down from heaven and bound Satan-Colossians 2:8 & 15. Those enthroned and they that were being

killed for the gospel's sake that reigned were the saints being persecuted for the gospel of Christ. It is traditionally reported that with the exception of John, all the apostles were martyred. By the end of the apostolic era, many early Christians were killed, fed to lions, etc. for holding to their faith and not bowing to the Roman emperors' paganism. These were included as reigning, in a figurative sense, as an encouragement to those undergoing or about to undergo severe trials also. Though priests, we do not reign in the same sense as we are not equipped with miraculous gifts to reveal and confirm the law of Christ as the apostles and early Christians.

The Lord said, "verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour cometh and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live" –John 5:25. For the spiritually dead, now is the accepted time to obey the gospel, arise and Christ shall give you light -Ephesians 5:14. However, when we die physically then our life on this earth is over. In Hebrews 9:27 we read; "it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this {physical death} the judgment." This is the reason that such teaching as that the physically dead saints are to be raised to reign and be priests on the earth are against biblical principles and as such are in violation of God's will. Recall the teaching of Jesus concerning the story of Lazarus, a certain poor man who died and went to Abraham's bosom in Luke 16:19-31? The rich man begged that Lazarus be sent to his brothers. Remember the answer he received back? "And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." Lazarus was not allowed to be physically raised so as to go and preach to the five brothers of the rich man. We then understand from this principle that the application of Revelation 20:1-9 **must be in a spiritual sense and not a physical sense.**

When Christ entered his glory, it was said in heaven: "with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a

kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth" -Revelation 5:9-10. From the epistles, we understand that the spiritual birth occurs at baptism for the repentant sinner turned obedient believer. This birth is the first resurrection of the human soul. The scripture shows this by saying unto Christians; "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism unto death that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we should walk in the newness of life... yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead..." -Romans 6:4 & 13. But because of his great love to us God, who is rich in mercy, "made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions... and seated us with him in the heavenly realms..." -Ephesians 2:1 & 6. "Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your minds on things above, not on earthly things..." -Colossians 3:1. "You are a chosen people, **a royal priesthood**, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light" –I Peter 2:9.

Friend, the 1000 year reign and priesthood of saints is in this gospel era! You too can escape the second death (John 5:24 & Revelation 2:11) and be blessed now in Christ (Galatians 3:8-9, Ephesians 1:3) who "has made us to be a kingdom and priests to God and his Father" (Revelation 1:6). For we, "like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" -I Peter 2:5.

THE ANTICHRIST BEASTS

Prior to writing the book of Revelation, John wrote (I John 2:18-19) to believers: "Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but

their going showed that none of them belonged to us." Paul also wrote in II Thessalonians 2:3-12, "Don't let any one deceive you in any way, for the day {of Christ} will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. He opposes and exalts himself over everything that is called God or is worshipped, and even sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God. Don't you remember that when I was with you I used to tell you these things? And now you know what is holding him back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time. For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way. And then the lawless one shall be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendour of his coming. The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refuse to love the truth and to be saved. For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness."

In the Book of Revelation, two beasts were mentioned:

1. The beast out of the sea (the sea represents peoples and nations -Revelation 13:1 & 17:15).
2. The beast out of the earth having some characteristics like a lamb but speaks as a dragon - Revelation 13:11.

Both beasts represent evil political and religious leaders of the gospel era, particularly of the Roman Empire. To the people of John's day, this beast represents paganism, especially as it was manifested through the practice of Emperor worship (Revelation 13:13-14). While Emperor worship was a great evil in the first

century, any system of false worship and religion can be a challenge to God's people at any time.

It is well known that shortly after the first century, the Roman Empire adopted Christianity as the state religion but it soon fell into a great apostasy. This system denied the authority of Jesus, was ungodly and produced its own lying miracles. It perverted even further into great wickedness, when men usurped the authority reserved for God and set up a perverted church instead of obeying Jesus and becoming a part of His one true church. Even till now, her leader is addressed as 'his holiness, the Lord God the ----.' This false religion still bears the marks of II Timothy 4:1-3. Together with her harlot offspring or latter denominations, the entire antichrist system by means of unclean spirits working fake miracles (II Thessalonians 2:9-11) is deceiving all them that dwell on earth that neither receive nor love the unperverted gospel of Christ.

No man or angel will literally stamp "Christian" or "666" on your forehead. It has been said by some that the meaning of the number 666 is that it falls short of completeness raised to perfection 777 and it indicates complete evil. Nevertheless, the marking discussed in Revelation 13:11-18 is spiritual and is determined by whom you have decided to follow -Christ or the Deceiver.

Certain facts are rendered from various angles. A careful study shows that the message and central teaching of the following passages are the same:

1. The mystery of iniquity that was hindered during the time of the apostles was later to be manifested, and go into perdition at the coming of the Lord -II Thessalonians 2:1-8.
2. The beast out of the sea was wounded almost to death but was revived by the beast out of the earth, to go and make war with the saints -Revelation 13.
3. The beast that was, and is not, and that shall ascend out of

the bottomless pit was to make war with the Lamb and his faithful -Revelation 17:7-14.

4. Satan was bound for a thousand years during which some souls reigned with Christ; later Satan was loosed to gather his followers against the beloved city -Revelation 20:1-9.

THE TWO WITNESSES

In Revelation 11:1, the temple or church was measured to portray divine examining of God's people as in Ezekiel 42 & Zechariah 2, etc. Under the Old Covenant, national Israel and her prophets were the ones that stood before the LORD to give his oil or word unto the world -Zechariah 4:11-14. Of them, we read; "*He suffered no man to do them wrong, yea, he rebuked kings for their sakes, Saying, touch not my anointed and do my prophets no harm*" -Psalms 105:14-15. In their mouths, his word was as fire (Jeremiah 20:9; 5:14; 23:29). Elijah was one through whom such were literally fulfilled. After rebuking wicked king Ahab and withholding rain in the land for three and a half years, the nation had another relatively more peaceful three and a half years before Elijah was caught up to heaven. The terms above are used to describe the church in chapter 11 of the book of Revelation.

The church is represented by the candlestick in Revelation 1:20. The church was to be subdued apparently in the eyes of the world by the beast for 'forty two months' or '3 ½ years' or 'times, time and half a time'. The Lord's witnesses may seem totally powerless to men but he answers their prayers and pours his warning judgments upon the ungodly. His church shall be caught up on the day of Christ, and this is signified in by the witnesses obeying the voice that says, "come up hither." This was followed by the death of the fullness of the people of the great city, which spiritually is called 'Sodom and Egypt.' II Thessalonians 1:5-10 reads, "*Seeing it is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God...to recompense tribulation to them*

that trouble you... And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels. In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, when he shall come to be glorified in all his saints and to be admired in all them that believe..."

These plain scriptures knock out the Premillennialist timetable of Rapture, Tribulation, Millennial Reign, Second Chance, etc. The persecution of saints has been going on for a long time and Christ's second coming marks the destruction of the antichrist system. He is not coming back as a Priest but as a Judge. In the resurrection, they do not marry or rear children (Luke 20:35), and there is no second chance (Hebrew 9:27).

THE TRIBULATION AND SECOND COMING

The most popular belief of self-styled 'born-again's is that they will be "secretly raptured" before a so-called great tribulation. Yet the Lord Jesus Himself teaches in Matthew 24:29-31 that, "*Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.*" As is stated in verse 31, He will send his angels to gather His elect from the entire earth. The passage states that it is **after**, not before the tribulation that Christ and his angels will return to gather his elect, which is the church (Colossians 3:12). This is again stated in Mark 13 and Luke 21. The problem with most

folks is lack of understanding of these cryptic passages. Here is an overview of Matthew 24.

Vs.1-2: Jesus came out of the Jewish temple and told his disciples that the temple would be destroyed.

Vs. 3: His disciples asked him two questions;

(a) When shall these things (the destruction of the temple) be?

(b) What shall be the sign of his coming, and of the end of the world?

Vs.4-14: The Lord tells His disciples the signs of the end of the Jewish age.

Vs.15-28: Jesus answers the question of the destruction of Jerusalem.

Vs.29-31: Jesus answers the question about when He is coming again.

Vs.32-35: Jesus gives the Parable of the Fig Tree to tell those who are discerning of the imminent destruction of Jerusalem.

Vs.36-44: Jesus answers the question of His coming and the destruction of the world.

Vs.45-51: Jesus gives the Parable of the Faithful and Evil Servant to stress the importance of always being prepared.

Rome ruled Israel throughout the New Testament times. This gospel era is the seventieth week of Daniel! Surely the beast confirmed his covenant of peace with Israel before overturning it in the middle of the "week." History records that Jerusalem was besieged and fell to the Roman army by A.D.71. The Jewish temple was violated and destroyed. There was great tribulation then, there is tribulation for all God's people now and there will be more tribulation, as the Devil's time gets shorter. For example, John wrote 'Revelation' as one already "*in the tribulation and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ*" -Revelation 1:9. The

Lord said to the church in Smyrna, "*I know thy works, and tribulation...ye shall have tribulation ten days...*" -Revelation 2:9-10. That is for a while -Genesis 24:55. Here was an apostle in tribulation, writing unto a church in tribulation. Yet those who propound a literal 1000-year reign do not believe that the tribulation is with us and has been since the time of the Apostles, how inconsistent! The church on earth passes through great problems and persecutions for "*through much tribulation we enter the {heavenly} kingdom of God*" -Acts 14:22. One of the twenty four elders told John that saved people are they "*which came out of great tribulation and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.*" -Revelation 7:13-15. **No saint will escape tribulation because** the beast out of the sea "*has been given power to try the patience of them that have the faith of Jesus*" -Revelation 13:7 & 14:12.

There is no secret rapture and several comings of the Lord to battle the antichrist. "Armageddon" has nothing to do with the world wars or gulf war or other such wars. Have you put on the gospel armour that you may be able to stand in the evil day? "*Though we live in the flesh, we war not after the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal...*" -II Corinthians 10:3-4. Even so, Christ's battle is not carnal but spiritual. He is coming to destroy the antichrist system with the two-edged sword or the spirit of his mouth and will judge the world in righteousness by his word. Sinners would be indifferent as in the days of Noah but when scoffers least expect, doom comes -for Christ shall come as a thief in the night -I Thessalonians 5:1-3. Some think that the world would continue after Christ come for his saints, let us read the teaching of Jesus on this issue. "*But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed*" -Luke 17:29-30. When he comes to gather his wheat into the garner, he won't delay to burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. The harvest is the end of the world and the reapers are the angels -Matthew 3:12 & 13:39. Peter sums it up

beautifully; *"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the element shall melt away with fervent heat, the earth also and the works therein shall be burned up"* - I Peter 3:10.

THE RESURRECTION AND THE JUDGMENT

At the sound of the last trumpet of God, it shall be said *"...And thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldst give reward unto thy servants, the prophets and the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great, and shouldst destroy them who destroy the earth"* - Revelation 11:18. This verse shows that the bodily resurrection is for all the dead of all ages, not just God's people alone. This is also shown in I Corinthians 15:52-54. The appointed Judge is the Son of God. *"Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation"* - John 5:28-29. Christ there, was not teaching of two bodily resurrections on different days but of the day of *"a resurrection of both the just and the unjust"* - Acts 24:15. From II Corinthians 5:10 we read this of the Jesus part in the judgment, *"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."* All those belonging to Jesus shall be raised up on the last day - John 6:39. They will be rewarded with everlasting life on the last day - vs.40. All who reject Jesus shall be raised up and judged on the last day - John 12:48. **The last day is the very LAST**, there can and there shall be no other days after the last day.

The last day or day of the Lord is that day which is unknown to all except God (Matthew 24:36) on which the Son returns in the glory of his Father to reward every man according to his works. Now, I Thessalonians 4:13-18 is used to support the

teaching of 'secret rapture and multiple bodily resurrections.' The passage reads; *"But I would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, and that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep {die} in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent {precede} them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."*

Beloved, Paul did not teach everything about the resurrection in that passage but what is taught there shows that Christ's return at the sound of the last trumpet shall be visible and audible as John states in I John 3:2 & Revelation 1:7. Paul's aim was to give bereaved saints hope and comfort by stressing the manner of their final departure from this world hence he did not dwell on the fate of the ungodly. He prayed for those Thessalonians (I Thessalonians 3:13) that God should uphold their hearts *"at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints."* Did he mean that they would miss your 'rapture'? I ask this because he taught the expectant Thessalonians that the Lord would come with his saints, and Jude (14-15) taught that Enoch prophesied, saying, *"Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince {punish} all that are ungodly..."*. Scriptural harmony shows that on the last day, when Christ comes, the following shall occur:

- 1 He comes with his angels.
- 2 Dead saints are raised to meet them in the air while living saints are changed and caught up to join them 'in the twinkling of an eye.'

- 3 Jesus destroys the earth with fire and the unjust are raised up also with a new body.
- 4 Every knee bows and every tongue confesses that "Jesus Christ is the LORD."
- 5 Everyone stands before the great white throne of judgment.
- 6 The righteous are told, "Enter into the joy of thy Lord."
- 7 All whose names are not found in the book of life are told; "depart... into everlasting fire..." whence the destruction foretold in Mt 10:28 will be fulfilled.

Do not misunderstand I Corinthians 6 concerning the judgment of the world by the saints. The present holy lives of the saints are their judgments of ungodly practices while they are alive on this earth. By discerning the good and rejecting the evil, they do cast their judgment on wicked practices and those who do those ungodly things (unbelievers or fallen angels). These ungodly beings are those who have spurned the commands of God. The doctrine that the saints will sit on literal thrones of judgment during or after the 'millennial reign' is false. When Christ said that the men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment to condemn the Jews which rejected Him (Matthew 12:41), he meant that the repentance of the inhabitants of that city after Jonah's preaching would be a testimony against the Jews. Noah in his own generation, did not sit on a literal throne to judge the world but the scripture terms him, "a preacher of righteousness" (II Peter 2:5), who "being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house, by which he condemned the world" -Hebrews 11:7. Noah's obedience was his judgment upon the world and the same is true for any Christian today. There is only one Lawgiver who shall judge the living and the dead at His appearing. Is your present manner of life an evident token of judgment upon the world? Or is the name of God blasphemed because of you?

THE REWARD AND ABODE OF THE SAVED

Material blessings and afflictions may vary now but the reward in the hereafter is determined by the Lord and we need not speculate about its details. All the unrighteous shall be wiped out to be no more along with the Devil and his angels inside the lake of fire. They will be consumed or devoured not preserved in the fire -Psalms 21:8-9; 37:20, Isaiah 33:14, Heb 10:26-27; 2:14; Ezekiel 28:16-18. All saints shall have 'an eternally blessed life' before the Lord's throne -Revelation 21:3-5 & 22:1-2,14.

The parable of the vineyard owner who agreed and paid the same wages to labourers called at different times is to show that all saints shall be spiritually equally rewarded in this life, whether they are converted to the Lord early in life or late. It is not how long or how much you labour that counts but how faithful you are in his service, with the talents he bestowed upon you. Paul, who laboured more than the other apostles (I Corinthians 15:9-10) did not teach that anyone will receive 'work-rated, star studded crowns.' After he had completed his work and was about to be martyred he wrote, "*Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing*" -II Timothy 4:8. This is the same crown of life of James 1:12. You better receive the Bright and Morning Star now, in the scriptural manner so as to be among those that would be scripturally positively rewarded. It is now that he rules with a rod of iron. It is now that our faith overcomes the world. We long to sing his praise forever before the throne. The degree or variation of reward or punishment should be left for the Lord to apportion.

II Peter 3:13 reads; "*Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.*" This means a 'new order of things' where godliness reigns. The Christian hope is eternal life in heaven not on this earth, for the earth will be burned up -II Peter 3:10. We know God will be there personally to fulfill his word

which states that "*...the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them and be their God*" -Revelation 21:3. That would be heaven! For heaven is where His throne is. The houses of gold in heaven need not be taken literally. For there, we shall not be living with carnal families or staying in seclusion. We shall not be marrying, sleeping, etc. When Christ said, "*In my Father's house are many mansion's...*" he meant that there is enough room (space) in heaven for all who will come into heaven; he did not mean that we shall be given bungalows or duplexes! The house each saint will receive is the glorious incorruptible body of immortality at the resurrection. Paul explains, "*For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven. If so be that, being clothed, we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life*" – II Corinthians 5:1-4.

Materialism and carnality leads one to a distorted view of discipleship, Christ's kingdom and of heaven. The Bible says to the spiritually minded: "*Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.*"

CONCLUSIONS

Beloved friend, let us reason together that we may be united upon the teachings of Christ and his apostles. That was the Lord's own prayer, and it is not impossible if we decide to do nothing against the truth which God has revealed and spoken authoritatively in the Bible.

Pentecostalism started in Midwest America and Britain at the beginning of the twentieth century. It was popularized through the sect called 'Assemblies of God.' It is a religious system in which "feelings, personal experiences and testimonies" are believed and exalted more than the word of God. The Bible has been used to expose the major errors of Pentecostals. While some may not be convinced, I know that they "shall never remain the same again." You are entitled to defend a system to which you feel bound for one reason or another but please do not hastily oppose or brush this work aside without first considering all the questions and scriptural passages that have been raised. This very work may serve as a reply to any rash response. Yet, my goal is heaven so I remain open to correction should anyone conscientiously, logically, scripturally and practically refute my assertions.

Those persuaded should without delay, repent and be baptized into the true body of Christ where the Lord's name and word is honoured. The unperverted gospel of Christ "*is the power of God unto salvation ...and this is the word which is preached unto you... For this is good, and acceptable in the sight of God our saviour who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth... The Lord will stand by me in every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To Him be the glory and honor and praise forever and ever. Amen.*"

Yours sincerely,
ASHY (S.O.A)

About the Book

This treatise is a response from an ex-Pentecostal to a practicing one on why he abandoned the denomination for Christ's gospel message. It examines the teachings and practices of Pentecostalism contrasted with New Testament Christianity. A material that should interest anyone who ponders on the fundamentals of true religion from a Biblical viewpoint as it relates discussions on:

1. Salvation, Worship and Church
2. Apostleship and Miraculous Gifts
3. The Doctrine of Premillennial Rapture

About the Author

Ashy (then an engineering industrial attachee at DSC), sought directions to any close-by Pentecostal church in Ovwian, Delta State. While trying to locate a given address, he was attracted by the signpost of a Church of Christ and branched there instead, for he has always believed that is the ideal name each church should bear. He studied with them and was relieved to find Biblical answers to the deviations, contradictions and facade of the religious world. Upon becoming a New Testament Christian, Ashy wrote this manuscript as a Youth Corper. He has grown in faith and professionally over the years, and is now determined to annually reprint and circulate the book pro-bono. He may be contacted via asaolu@yahoo.com or P.O.Box 148, UNILAG, Lagos, Nigeria.



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