**You Will Follow - Who You Listen To**

**Chapter 1 – Who Are You Listening To?**

*“The people came early in the morning to hear Jesus at the temple.”* Luke 21:38

The Lord taught in Jerusalem’s temple. We are called “New Jerusalem” (Revelation 3:12; 21:2). The Lord doesn’t teach in Jerusalem’s temple anymore. Where is He teaching then, and what time does He show up to teach?

As a born-again believer my body is called “the temple of the Holy Spirit” (1 Corinthians 6:19-20) where the Holy Spirit (who is the Lord) teaches daily.

*“Each day Jesus was teaching at the temple.”* Luke 21:37

Each morning the Holy Spirit is eager to teach us from the Word of God and to remind us of what Jesus said and did. Are we as eager to hear Him? The people came “early in the morning.” They left their homes and traveled some distance to hear Jesus. How far do you travel from your bed to your chair? How early in morning do you rise to hear what the Lord, who is the Spirit, has to say to you before all the cares and responsibilities of the day starts?

These people took their children with them to hear Jesus. Your children need to see you meeting with the Lord in His Book early each morning. When do they see you open the Bible to read and study and teach it to them? This is your responsibility as a parent; it’s not the responsibility of the organized church or their Christian school, if they are privileged enough to attend a Christian school. For a child, to see his/her parent in God’s Word each morning does something permanent in that child – that can’t be done anywhere else, or by anyone else. Seeing you in God’s Word will challenge and inspire your children to do the same. All other books are secondary to the Good Book. The fear of the Lord is beginning of knowledge. (Proverbs 1:7) But, fools despise wisdom and discipline. It takes wisdom and discipline to get up early to hear from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

Jesus said, *“If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make* ***our home with him****. He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.*

Is God “at home” in you? This “in you” part is most important, even to the home of your family. If you are at home with God then your heart and your home will be at peace. People will feel God’s peace when they are around you and they will feel God’s peace when they come to visit you at home. Are you at peace with your husband or wife and with your children? Or, is their contention, nipping, disorder? Is there peacefully godly order in your family, or is there a power struggle and competition for headship? (Children also compete for headship in the family.) Do you have lots of activities that keep you all going going gone? Or, do you have a real home-life? We’ve been made to think that we need be so busy doing things outside the home – that we have missed what a true “home-life” is all about. We’ve filled our homes with ‘things to do’ that separate us instead of uniting us to bring out the best in each other. What’s wrong with casually sitting around face to face and just talking to each other, laughing with each other, talking about the things that are praiseworthy?

*“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and* ***the God of peace shall be with you****.”* Philippians 4:8-9

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That which we think about, we talk about. You as a parent have a lot to do with what your children think about. And, just like your child, the Word of God has a lot to do with what YOU think about.

Is “the God of peace” at home with you and your family? Who are your counselors; your encouragers and your instructor? Do you know your real purpose in life, as one who is “in Christ?” Do you understand that ‘this life,’ in how you think and live for the Lord, determines how you will be recognized in the life to come?

*“All this I have spoken while still with you. But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.* ***Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you.*** *I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”* John 14:23-27

Then I read where Judas, whom Satan had entered to betray Jesus, watched for an opportunity to hand Him over to His arresters and persecutors who wanted to get rid of Him. (Matthew 26:14 and Luke 22:47) They did not want to hear what He had to say. Why? Probably because of the same reason the wicked today don’t want to hear the truth, the whole truth – so help them God.

They were deeply convicted every time they heard Him speak, and they did not want to feel guilty in His presence because they thought much more highly of themselves than they should’ve. It infuriated them to be shamed before their people! Hum. Whose people? We see this in most churches today where the pastor/pastors see the people as “their” people (possessions), instead of the Lord’s people of whom God has, if in fact He has, appointed them as overseers and managers of His Household. These pastors are afraid to give up control in fear of seeing what ‘they’ have built – fall apart.

Do you hunger to hear what the Lord has to say to you each morning from out of His Word? If not, what keeps you from wanting to hear what Jesus has to say to you from the Spirit of His Word?

We must never forget that the Lord Jesus did not come to condemn us, but to save us and transform us; to set us free so that that we could finish what Christ Jesus started and become the sons and daughters of the Most High God, receiving all that the Father desires to give us of His Kingdom. When God’s Word makes us feel guilty about something – we need to take the next step of faith: humble confession. This is the first part of our freedom and fulfillment. Are you afraid to read God’s Word in fear of feeling convicted about something, or not wanting to be reminded that God isn’t going to let you forget about it? If you keep resisting the Holy Spirit, who is the helpmate of the Lord, what do you think the Lord will do? When children continually disobey their mother, a good father (and husband) will step in to do something about that. And, if it doesn’t hurt, it doesn’t work.

*“Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.”* Hebrews 12:10-11

The other part and next step of faith - is to live in obedience to what the Lord would have you to do in His Name and with His Spirit. In this way we become blameless as His faithful disciples. The enemy is experienced at blaming so that he can condemn you and imprison you, and prison can be the one you make for yourself that is just as real as the ones for real criminals. The devil will even make up something if he has to, and hire people to support his malicious lies, just like he did with the three older friends of Job (Job 2:11, 32:1-4, 42:7-10) who God rebuked, and just like he did with Israel’s priests and Judas for the arrest and death of Jesus. But he still has to get permission from God to do it to God’s children, as he got permission to do what he did to Jesus. (Job 1:6-12; John 13:21-32; Luke 22:31) If the Father allowed it with Job of whom He called an upright and blameless man, and with Jesus His ‘perfect’ Son, then it will happen to His saints as well, for a very good purpose: to further God’s Kingdom in one way or another. So we need to be hearing from the right source each morning so we can keep this wisdom before us as conflicts and tribulation come our way.

Do you really believe that you can go about your day, day to day, without first hearing from the Holy Spirit in the Word of God? Don’t think that just turning on your worship music is enough, nor is just praying to God enough. God did not allow men to die writing and publishing and circulating His written Word – so that you and I could let His Holy Scriptures just sit on our shelves each morning, or just to take with us to church on Sunday morning. Hypocrisy! The devil knows how to deceive God’s children that are not listening to the Spirit and daily in His written Word.

The devil also tries to deceive people when they do read the Bible, but the Holy Spirit is the guard of the written Word of God as well as its interpreter. Here is where we have all the “religions” of the world that use the Bible, with all their ‘divisions’ and ‘separateness.’ The devil has kept people debating and fighting each other over the Word of God, as to what it means.

Who’s teaching you? Who are you listening to each morning, throughout the day? Who’s in control of your day and of your life; it is you or Holy Spirit? Is it your president or demons? Is it your pastor or your flesh? Test it!

*“Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you — unless, of course, you fail the test?”* 2 Corinthians 13:5-6

How would we “fail the test?” If we are to overcome our sin and unbelief, then we need the Word of Christ that is more powerful than sin, and the Holy Spirit is more powerful than our unbelief!

Chapter 2 - Come out of Egypt

God sent **Moses** to Egypt to announce the approach of judgment unless Pharaoh set God’s people free. Moses didn’t know what God had planned, not all of it. God never intended for Pharaoh to let His people free until every last harbinger had taken place. God has a holy reason for not showing mercy. The Lord says, *“I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.”* (Exodus 33:19) We should not ever question Him about this either.

**Harbinger**: a messenger, forerunner of something, herald; to become aware of, to be warned, to threat, to signal what’s ahead, prophecy, curse.

God sent Moses to His people to tell them of God’s timing to deliver them out of slavery. Just as there are certain flowers that signal that spring is here; Moses was a harbinger both for God’s blessing on His people and His curses on those who had treated His people harshly. In both cases, the harbinger was to be taken seriously unto a change of heart and lifestyle, for both slaves and slave masters.

As we know, all the judgments God had planned “took place” until at last Pharaoh could take no more. Pharaoh was ready to let the Hebrews leave long before the final judgment, but God kept hardening his heart. God had set forth a plan and not even Pharaoh’s change of mind could cut that plan short of its fulfillment. A change of mind is not what God is looking for. He’s looking for a change of heart; true repentance. God knew Pharaoh’s heart better than Pharaoh. The same is true for anyone.

The death of Pharaoh’s son broke his stubborn will, but it did not break his stubborn heart towards the Lord God. But, we also know that it was God who kept Pharaoh’s will stubborn in order to show the holy wrath of God on those who proudly enslave God’s people.

God was also judging His own people in how they had become slaves in the first place. Had they been faithful to their God and to His Word – they would not have been in that sad sordid place; under the heavy yoke of Pharaoh.

*“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”* Matthew 11:28-30

Pharaoh did not let the people go out to worship God, so God instructed Moses to tell His people how to worship in their homes under His protective covering. Part of His instruction (through Moses) was to apply the blood of the sacrificed lamb over the doors and windows of their homes to protect them from the judgments He was sending on Egypt. We really need to see how this relates to us today, especially in “fallen America,” because we are no longer “one nation under God.” We are divided and we know what God says about division: *“Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and every city or household divided against itself will not stand.”* Matthew 12:25-26

It seems we have a man like Pharaoh ruling over our nation; a man with his own agenda and making laws that oppose God’s laws, and our Constitution.

The Hebrews applied the blood on their houses, but we have the blood of Lamb applied on our hearts, so that we’ve been given “new hearts;” hearts that have been captured by the love, truth and purpose of God.

*“For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.”* Ezekiel 36:24-28

How are we doing?

Once the blood of Christ has been applied to the door of your heart, you are to worship the Lord there in His temple, your body, day and night. Once the blood has been applied, you do not need to fear what happens in the outside world; the world as we know it will cease to exist the way it has, and is, and will – until the second coming of Christ. Glory to God!

Once the blood is applied to the door of your heart - you better be willing to come out of Egypt (worldliness), and fast; leaving the ways of the world without looking back (Exodus 12), and not wanting to return to what you had while enslaved. And, just because the journey forward is not what you thought it would be, you need to endure and persevere anyway – to the end of it – or lose big-time. As we read when they were in desert, God continually tested the heart and will of His people and intensively trained them for battle as they would be doing what God told them to do (through Moses) as they entered Canaan; taking the land He was giving them. This is what we go through on our journey to our Promised Land. We fight the good fight of faith in the way we are instructed by the teachings of Christ and with His Spirit.

*“The blood will be a sign for you on the houses (households) where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt.”* (Exodus 12:13) The Hebrews went through the first curses/judgments on Egypt to show them, God’s own people, as well as Pharaoh and the Egyptians, who the LORD is and that He should be feared and obeyed, for God’s people had forgotten – being enslaved for so long, generation after generation until they didn’t know any better (400 years later).

The Lord made a distinction between His people in the land of Goshen and all the Egyptians elsewhere, so that what happened to the Egyptians and their land did not happen to the Hebrews and the land of Goshen. (Goshen is the place in Egypt Pharaoh assigned the Hebrews to live.)

The Lord sent the flies (Exodus 8:22), then a plague that killed livestock (Exodus 9:3-5), and then He sent festering boils on all men and animals (Exodus 9:8-11), and sent huge hailstones (Exodus 9:13-21). Those who did not believe the word of the Lord through Moses, both Hebrew and Egyptian saw their animals, slaves, fields and trees destroyed by the hail. Then the Lord covered the land of Egypt, not Goshen, with locusts that ate what the hail left and even went into their homes to devour. (Exodus 10:3-6) Then there came 3 days of darkness so that no one could see a thing except in the home of the Hebrews. (Exodus 10: 21-23) *“Yet all the Israelites had light in the places where they lived.”*

*“Now the Lord had said to Moses, ‘I will bring one more plague on Pharaoh and on Egypt. After that, he will let you go from here, and when he does, he will drive you out completely. Tell the people that men and women alike are to ask their neighbors for articles of silver and gold.’ (The Lord made the Egyptians favorably disposed toward the people, and Moses himself was highly regarded in Egypt by Pharaoh's officials and by the people.) So Moses said, ‘This is what the Lord says: “About midnight I will go throughout Egypt. Every firstborn son in Egypt will die, from the firstborn son of Pharaoh, who sits on the throne, to the firstborn son of the slave girl, who is at her hand mill, and all the firstborn of the cattle as well. There will be loud wailing throughout Egypt — worse than there has ever been or ever will be again. But among the Israelites not a dog will bark at any man or animal.” Then you will know that the Lord makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel.’”* Exodus11:1-8

The Lord told Moses to tell the Hebrews that He has done all this so that they would know Him, and follow Him and be faithful to tell their children and grandchildren, every generation thereafter (even now with us) how He dealt harshly with the Egyptians and rebellion to God. (Exodus 10:1-2) Have you told your children about this major event of “Passover” that was to set the first day and month of the calendar year? Or, do you celebrate Easter, a pagan celebration unto the fertility god with eggs and rabbits and all the rest?

After His blood was applied to your heart, how fast did you come out of the world’s systems, even though He has left you in the world as His representative and light? Are you still thinking like the world, still living in Egypt because you like that way of life; the way you were raised? After all His judgments that are happening right now before our own eyes, and are ‘set’ to continue on as recorded in the book of Revelation (as well as in Daniel and the gospels – according to Christ’s own words) are you preparing at home with your family to be obedient to the Holy Spirit in how to live and carry on in obedience - through it all?

We are told that the power of the holy people (Daniel 12:7) will be removed (broken off, taken out) at the start of the great tribulation. The “power” of the holy people is the Holy Spirit of the Church. When He is broken off the earth, taken out, it means “the rapture” will have taken place. But, we will still go through some of God’s judgments before that happens, in which we need to be prepared for. The Holy Spirit teaches us of the things to come and how to be blessed and positioned to finish the Father’s redemptive work in our time on earth; the work of spreading His Gospel and making disciples; making ready a people prepared for Him.

We are expected to come out of depending on worldly systems and false beliefs – by way of our freedom in Christ, trusting in His promises and being transformed by the washing and teaching of God’s Word through the indwelling Holy Spirit. (2 Corinthians 5:17, 6:14-18; Romans 12; Revelation 18)

2 Corinthians 7:1 *“Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.*”

Romans 12:1-2 *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God — this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is — his good, pleasing and perfect will.”*

Remembering the Lord and OFTEN (Communion: Luke 22:19-23) is not a ‘good idea’ but a ‘command from the Lord;’ for it brings spiritual healing, and spiritual healing brings physical healing by the same faith in what our Lord has done. Freedom brings spiritual and physical healing; for the spiritual and physical are connected.

*“Christ himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.”* 1 Peter 2:24-25

Our security and protection is under His blood and in obedience to His higher laws, and direct instructions according to the time we are living in. We joyfully and eagerly show our gratitude to our Lord by sharing His Truth, His Way and His Life - with others!

Jesus claimed: *“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”* (John 14:6) *“I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?”* John 11:25-26

Do we? Do we really believe this? If so, are we ready for it to cost us; maybe even our own physical lives?

Chapter 3 - THE BEAST with His Mark: What, or Who is it?

I really do believe that it is a system, or number of systems (organizations), that have been progressing for a VERY long time now. It’s all working together behind the guise of “for your protection,” but secretly for the purpose of exposing the true disciples of Jesus Christ. It’s been in process of establishing the world-wide need for a permanent scanning device (the mark of the beast) on head or hand of every human being and that has all our personal information since we were born, even our ancestry. They can get away with “it’s for your protection” because it’s for people who do not have “God” as their protection; they have no faith in Jesus Christ and what He said about “not” taking this mark.

Behind this web of systems is, of course the god of this world preparing for his grand entrance with his one-world order which the Bible calls the Great Tribulation under the anti-Christ. It’s called the “great” tribulation, for there have been many tribulations under other anti-Christs such as Herod and Hitler to just name two, but this one is the ultimate because of what this *Satan possessed man* does on the wing of the temple of Jerusalem. (Daniel 9:25-27 and Matthew 24:15-25) For the following 3 ½ years there will be such tribulation all over the world unlike anything before. Our God has cut this time short because God’s people in that time would not be able to survive his terror; remember that the power of the holy people (the Holy Spirit) will be off the earth in this time – with the ‘rapture’ of the Lord’s Spirit-filled saints. I tend to believe from what I read in these passages that this is what starts the *reign of terror* in full swing; the Holy Spirit who has been holding him at bay – is no here to do so.

It is also my strong belief, based on study in God’s Word, that those that are left behind (those that were taken, or ‘raptured’) are those that believed in Jesus Christ but never did anything with that knowledge of Him. Head knowledge is not enough for God; there must be a heart commitment to follow Jesus like His first disciples did. Most church members and participants will be left behind and out of those some will set their hearts on the Lord while the rest will give up on Him. There will be many martyrs during, but the rest of those who set their hearts on the Lord will survive the Great Tribulation, and can you guess how? God? Yes, but how? God always works through His people! I believe He will take care of them through those that God has told to set up provision for them, before we (New Jerusalem) are taken out with the Holy Spirit. (Daniel 12:7 and Revelation 3:8-13)

As we are now beginning to see the need (wisdom) to physically prepare for very difficult and disastrous times (as Jesus warned), what we do in preparation for ourselves (our families) will work on the behalf of the saints in the Great Tribulation – after we’ve been taken off the earth “at the last trumpet.” (Revelation 3:10, 1 Corinthians 15:51-52, 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18)

The last trumpet (the 7th) announces the opening of the 7 seals of world-wide effects, and the 7th seal announces the pouring out of God’s 7 deadly bowls on earth. So as we see in Scripture, we will go through some of God’s judgments in which we need to prepare for. And as I said, this wisdom of preparation will be the help our brothers and sisters need to survive on as they are left to endure the worse time on the earth: *“the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth.”* The test is whether they will finally surrender to God, or not. If they surrender, then they will obey God’s command not to take the mark of the beast, but trust Him instead to meet their needs. How does He do that? Mostly through us with what we’ve left behind, but also in miraculous ways as these tribulation saints are beginning to learn how to believe God for *the impossible*. We can’t take it with us – what we have as far as food, clothing, vehicles, money, etc. right? But might we be thinking about all that we have – in a very different way now; not just for ourselves only. We all have precious family members, children, grandchildren, spouses, aunts and uncles, cousins, grandparents and parents – that we are praying for. And, like the Lord said about His coming for His people: He will come like a thief in the night!

Jesus addresses those believers that have been blessed with wealth and riches – to see “their stuff” in the right way, His way. He tells us to buy from Him, using what we have been blessed with: our stuff and our money to help people come to know Him, because we can’t take it with us. Gold represents our obedient faith.

*“So, because you are lukewarm — neither hot nor cold — I am about to spit you out of my mouth. You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes,* ***so you can see****.”* Revelation 3:16-18

Do we see it? Or, do we only see what we want to see; that which only concerns us now, and not what concerns our brethren later, after we’re gone – whether in death or rapture? This vision and wisdom of *storing up for the Tribulation Saints* is best understood with Proverbs 30:25

*“Ants are creatures of little strength, yet they store up their food in the summer.”* Ants know that winter is coming when they will not be able to find food so easily. In our case, what we have stored up will mostly be used for the next ‘dependents’ taking over “our stuff.” It’s so simple in theory, just like the simplicity of the survival of ants from year to year. What God has called us to do is not hard. We make things hard by trying to do things our own way, and trying to cling to “our stuff,” for our own personal benefit.

The church of Philadelphia is called by the Lord: His people of “little strength,” just like the ants are referred to. And yet, He has set us up to go through doors (plural) of great opportunity – in order to bring people to Jesus our Savior and to prosper us so that we have all the means in which to finish the work we’ve been given to do on earth before we go home.

*“What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open. I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut. I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. I will make those who are of the synagogue of Satan, who claim to be Jews though they are not, but are liars — I will make them come and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you. Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth.”* Revelation 3:7-10

Jesus also taught us about the talents that He gave us. To some He gives less than He gives others based on what He knows about each of us – what we are capable of, but no matter what we’ve been given to put to work for His kingdom, we better be faithful with it whether it produces a lot or a little, or else end up like the “wicked lazy servant.” (Matthew 25:14-34) *“For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”*

*“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.’”*

Jesus goes on about how we use what He gives us: *“Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me. Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you? ‘ The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.’”* Matthew 25:34-40

I believe there is a direct parallel and connection with the “ants” as to what the last day church should be doing with what they have in both material possessions and spiritual gifts. Instead of worrying about “our stuff” and our lifestyle of self-indulgence; even the basics of what we will eat, drink and wear, and instead of trying to organize to prevent terrible things from happening all over the world like Jesus said will happen (and can’t be stopped) we simply need to be prepared for it. We need to learn wisdom from what Jesus said to Peter when Peter tried to stop what was going to happen to the Lord – when he drew his sword and cut off the ear of one of the soldiers that came to arrest Jesus. This persecution won’t stop until the Lord returns to reign on the earth. Only now it’s to the Lord’s disciples, generation after generation – until He returns. Jesus told His disciples that they (we) would be persecuted and even killed for our obedient faith in Jesus Christ. What can separate us from His love and Kingdom? NOTHING and NO ONE! Amen?

If we are not careful about our thought-life, our love will grow cold; the love we have for the Lord and His purpose in our lives, and the love we have for one another – in doing what we need to do for each other, and for those ‘coming in behind us’ especially.

The “mark of the beast” on people (except those in Christ with His mark of the Holy Spirit), like a brand on cattle, will be welcomed by those who do not know the truth (or they just refuse to believe the truth) because of all the problems and chaos in the world that the mark will ‘supposedly’ resolve.

This system is in process right now, being set up for the very near future (in our lifetime more than likely), and being programmed into the minds of people by those that are producing chaos and fear so the system of the beast will be quickly favored and accepted. Satan’s puppets of disorder, disunity and destruction to everything holy – are a reality.

Chapter 4 – Our Brethren Going Through Great Persecution

Revelation 6:9-11 *“When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. They called out in a loud voice, ‘How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?’ Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and brothers who were to be killed as they had been was completed.”*

As we watch and hear of the martyrs being added under heaven’s altar, let us not forget to pray for the men, women and children – facing ongoing persecution, torture and death – that they hold up strong with their faith in Christ Jesus, not denying the Lord who bought them with His own blood and not giving up on the truth and promises God. May their love for Christ and His kingdom never die out.

Hebrews 10:32-39 *“Remember those earlier days after you had received the light, when you stood your ground in a great contest in the face of suffering. Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution; at other times you stood side by side with those who were so treated. You sympathized with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions.*

*“So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. For in just a very little while,*

*‘He who is coming will come and will not delay. But my righteous one will live by faith. And if he shrinks back, I will not be pleased with him.’ But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved.”*

Matthew 24:9-14 *“You will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people.* ***Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved****. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.”*

Does it make you angry to see what’s happening in our nation today, and in other nations? It should, but if we don’t turn our “righteous anger” into something constructive for the good of God’s kingdom, then our love WILL grow cold and we will not do what still needs to be done for God. Do you fear that if you do what’s right and speak out with the truth that trouble will come upon you? It will, but we must remember not to give up doing what the Holy Spirit compels us to do and say.

Revelation 2:25-26 *“Only* ***hold on to what you have until I come****. To him who overcomes and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations.”*

Hold on to the good; avoid every kind of evil. (1 Thessalonians 5:21) Hold on to your courage and to the hope in which we confess. (Hebrews 3:6) Hold on to faith and a good conscience/integrity. (1 Timothy 1:19, Titus 2:7, Proverbs 10:9, 13:6) Hold on to your crown. (Revelation 3:11)

Daniel 7:23-27: The angel gave Daniel this explanation: *“The fourth beast is a fourth kingdom that will appear on earth. It will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth, trampling it down and crushing it. The ten horns are ten kings who will come from this kingdom. After them another king will arise, different from the earlier ones; he will subdue three kings. He will speak against the Most High and oppress his saints and try to change the set times and the laws.* ***The saints will be handed over to him for a time, times and half a time*** (3 ½ years of Great Tribulation)**.**  *But the court will sit, and his power will be taken away and completely destroyed forever. Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him.”*

Revelations 13:5-10: *“The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise his authority for forty-two months* (3 ½ years)*. He opened his mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven.* ***He was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them*** (to overpower, plunder and kill them)***.*** *And he was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation. All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast — all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world.*

*He who has an ear, let him hear. If anyone is to go into captivity, into captivity he will go. If anyone is to be killed with the sword, with the sword he will be killed.* ***This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of the saints****.”*

The saints of the Great Tribulation need us to be faithful now to what God is telling us to do for them. Even though these future saints don’t know that yet, they will when they are denied basic things to live on.

Revelation 13:16-18 *“****He forced everyone****, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on his right hand or on his forehead, so that no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of his name. This calls for wisdom. If anyone has insight, let him calculate the number of the beast, for it is man's number. His number is 666.”*

When King Jesus returns the first thing He does is to throw Satan into prison for one thousand years. Here is how great the hate and pride of Satan is; that after his one-thousand year imprisonment he sets out to do what he did before to God’s people:

Revelation 20:7-10 *“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 on the seashore. They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God's people, the city he loves.* (Jerusalem)***But fire came down from heaven and devoured them. And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.****”*

Hallelujah to the LAMB of GOD! Glory to our KING forever and ever and ever and ever………! Now just imagine the new world of our King:

Imagine a world where everyone honors and serves their heavenly Father;

where everyone uses their God-given abilities, authority and power with which to thrive and benefit others.

Imagine a world where absolutely no one goes unnoticed and everyone is valued, even in the womb;

where every child is cherished and raised to their full potential.

Imagine a world where there is no need of protection and no insurance to be paid;

where the threat of harm, terror and deception are unheard of.

Imagine a world where trust is as natural and as certain as the law of gravity;

where the laws of God are taught and upheld in every home.

Imagine a world without death and despair;

where words like ‘disease,’ ‘addiction’ and ‘infection’ are found only in history books.

Imagine a world when the only tears that fall are tears of joy and gratitude;

where respect for all God's creation is as certain as the air we breathe.

Imagine a world where a cemetery can't be found;

where every family member is known personally through endless generations.

Imagine a world without greed and corruption; where the only debt that’s felt – is love;

where no one goes hungry or thirsty or homeless.

Imagine a world where the whole earth gives forth a plentiful harvest in every season;

where God's good earth receives her seventh year rest from producing.

Imagine a world where sports, construction, entertainment and sales have nothing to do with selfish ambition and vain conceit;

where every song, movie, bill-board, commercial and human endeavor is rooted in virtue.

Imagine a world where there are no warnings and ratings necessary;

where every form of entertainment and education increases godly wisdom, creativity, productivity and joy on the earth.

Imagine a world without a monetary system; where integrity barters;

where Father blesses all productivity in the world and makes everyone to succeed in life and love.

Imagine a world where our God is welcomed by all and His favor is on each family;

where there is no demon, darkness or doubt in man.

Imagine worlds of eternal generations on planets yet to be fashioned by the talented and gifted children of God;

where man’s imagination is holy to the Lord and the eternal universe is filled with the worship of our Father God.

Try to imagine what our Father God imagined; for it shall be just as He imagined.

Jesus prayed and so it shall be: As it is in Heaven – it will be on earth!

So who are you listening to? Who has your ears, your time and your heart?

When it was time for Jesus to go to the cross He told His disciples to prepare the place for the Passover meal. They did not realize what this particular Passover meant for the rest of time; that the One who was to fulfill the requirements of the Passover meal was standing right there with them, talking to them about it. Jesus said to them:

*“I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God.”*  Luke 22:15-16

HE’S THE FULFILLMENT of our complete redemption, and when He welcomes us into His kingdom we will eat with Him around His table of celebration!

*“Then after taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, ‘Take this and divide it among you. For I tell you I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.’”* Luke 22:17-18

After our celebration (during the Great Tribulation on the earth) we will drink from the earth’s new fruit of the vine with Him in celebration of His kingdom that has finally come; just as He ‘said,’ and ‘described,’ and ‘promised!’

Brothers and sisters in Christ; let’s put our faith, hope and love – IN THIS!!! For, none of His words will fall to the ground – not fulfilled, but will have their complete fulfillment on this earth and beyond, for eternal life.

So, who are you listening to? Because, you will follow - who you listen to. I want to follow Jesus! I want to live with Him forever! How about you?