



BATTLEGROUND VS PLAYGROUND

Pastor John Fresia
soundanalarm.com

Pastor John Fresia
soundanalarm.com

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It's difficult for men to walk by faith; they must have something to see, touch, taste, smell, or hear. It's much easier to go by experience than go by faith. The true church is waging a war and is fighting on a spiritual battleground, yet the present day church treats it as though it's a playground.

AUTHORS NOTE

The main reason for writing this book is because of the degradation that has taken place in the church over these last two thousand years in particular in the last 100 years. It's difficult for men to walk by faith; they must have something to see, touch, taste, smell, or hear. It's much easier to go by experience than go by faith. The true church is waging a war and is fighting on a spiritual battleground, yet the present day church treats it as though it's a playground. Therefore, when I compare the early church to the present day church they appear like two different entities. They are so dramatically different that one wonders whether or not

the 21st century church can be used in a viable way for the salvation of lost souls. Even though the present day church uses the Name of Jesus and does many of the things we see in scripture, the spirit of this church is entirely different. It's a user friendly church, which not only caters to the world, but it tries to imitate the world in so many ways. That's entirely opposite from what we find in the Early Church. ***“Christianity is not a matter of persuasive words. It is a matter of true greatness as long as it is hated by the world.”*** A quote by Ignatius' letter to the [Ro 3:3](#). (About A.D. 110).

During the last two thousand years, the church of Jesus Christ has changed directions many times. When a comparison is made between the present day church and the Early Church (40 - 180 AD) one will not find a valid comparison. The present day church comes in all sorts of flavors. On the protestant side you have a few hundred different denominations which span a spectrum from liturgical to fundamental Biblical belief. Within that spectrum you'll find many churches that are actually heretical by orthodox standards and the

remaining churches that do follow a proper doctrine of Christ fall short on holiness. The main issue is worldliness. Yes, the church today is not changing the world; the world is changing the church.

When it comes to obeying the Word of God, most Christians use God's Word as if they have options. We can measure this by what comes out of their mouth and what they actually do.

INTRODUCTION

It has always bothered me that most Christians I know treat Christianity as a hobby or some other low priority in their lives. When it comes to obeying the Word of God, most Christians use God's Word as if they have options. We can measure this by what comes out of their mouth and what they actually do. I notice that most Christians are extremely committed to their jobs and will not miss a day of work even if it conflicts with prayer, bible study or Sunday worship. This is a measure of which commitment gets the highest priority. Another conflict is evidenced by the preachers of the gospel on radio and television. Many, if not most, act as though

their ministries are part of the Hollywood scene, based on the “user friendly” church of show business.

My purpose is not to condemn but rather to sound the alarm on this brand of Christianity and attempt to answer the question of “Why is this the state of things in the Christian world?”

In order to answer this question, it is important to go back to the 4th century. At that time there was a pervasive heresy that had a profound effect on Christianity. This perversion is still very much alive today. A British monk by the name of Pelagius introduced the concept that had two major tenets of error that are heretical. The first error states that the fall of Adam has no direct bearing on man’s ability to do that which is good. This concept says that man does not inherit from Adam the sin nature (which is the bent to do evil continuously.) In other words, Pelagius threw original sin out of the window. The second error states that grace is available

equally to all persons and it consists of man's free will to choose or apprehend God.

Pelagius was saying that man, based on his own merit, could choose God, thus making God's predestination based entirely on His foreseeing goodness in the individual's life, and knowing this, God would choose that individual as a candidate for salvation. The early church father Augustine fought this heresy, which ultimately led to the condemnation and demise of the doctrine by the Council of Ephesus in 431 AD. This, however, was not the end of Pelagianism. It continued to prevail in a semi-Pelagian mode, whereby some have called it a doctrine of "synergism," which holds that man must help God in his salvation. This semi-Pelagian system acknowledges that Adam's fall caused man to inherit his sinful nature, but man still can make good choices. Semi-Pelagianism puts original sin back, yet it majors on man's free will.

This semi-Pelagian system is predominating contemporary Christianity. Most of the present day Pentecostals, Charismatics, Evangelicals, Free Will

Baptists and various other smaller groups hold to some form of freewill doctrine. This freewill doctrine is no longer called “Semi-Pelagian,” but has evolved into “Arminianism,” which comes from the teachings of Jacob Arminius, a Dutch reformed pastor. Jacob Arminius (1560-1609) was a Dutch theologian who studied, taught, and eventually broke with Calvinism. He was particularly at odds with John Calvin’s emphasis on unconditional election and irresistible grace. (This was not just a Calvinistic theology, Saint Augustine a few hundred years before Calvin taught the same doctrine, which is also consistent with the writings of Paul the Apostle as taught in the Bible). The Synod of Dort (1618-19) strongly reaffirmed ultra-Calvinism in reaction to Arminius’ growing influence. As a result, hundreds of Arminians – also know as Remonstrants – were removed from their pulpits. Nevertheless, Arminianism was not to be conquered. This method of salvic belief was condemned as heretical (the Synod of Dort 1618-19) yet it continues to be a major belief form for many born again believers. Its strong emphasis on freewill, salvation for all, and resistible grace, continued to be influential, finding perhaps its

strongest proponent in John Wesley. The theme of this book, and my contention, is that Pelagian, Semi-Pelagian, and Arminian theologies have brought in the “works salvation” ethic, which in turn has caused this humanistic, pragmatic gospel that we see in a large portion of Christianity.

When we look to the Bible we find verses such as Eph 1:4-5 that tell us that God did choose a people for Himself before there was anything on this earth, for the “good pleasure of His will.”

CHAPTER 1

What is Biblical Salvation?

Many of us that are born again Christians think of salvation as an outward act of receiving the Lord by repeating the sinner's prayer, repenting from our sins, renouncing Satan and making Jesus Christ the Lord of our lives. Now that salvation has come we are ready to go to heaven. Although there is nothing wrong with this scenario, it only tells a portion of the miracle of salvation. The complete story of salvation actually began before the foundations of the earth were established and has nothing to do with man's efforts. **Eph 1:4-5** says, **“According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world...**

Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.” When we examine the scriptures, we find that salvation is all God and nothing of man. Let’s look more closely at this.

The antecedent of salvation is predestination. Of all the doctrines we find in the Christian faith, predestination is probably the least understood.

When we finally start putting all the elements of salvation together, the idea that God chose “the many” to salvation before anything existed on earth goes beyond the capacity of human understanding and does not seem to have any practical significance. However, when we look to the Bible we find verses such as **Eph 1:4-5** that tell us that God did choose a people for Himself before there was anything on this earth, for the **“good pleasure of His will.”** In **Ro 8:29-30**, Paul gives us a sequence of steps in the process of salvation that is all

God. The word predestination comes from the Greek, *proorizo*, which means, “to mark out beforehand,” and occurs six times in the New Testament (**Ac 4:28; Ro 8:29-30; 1Co 2:7; Eph 1:5, 11**). It is saying that God, by His sovereign choice, marked out His elect in eternity past.

Predestination includes all events, not just individual salvation. However, for our purposes we will only deal with it according to the election of the children of God. The paradox of election and predestination is that it does not take away man’s responsibility to act on the faith given to him by Grace. **Eph 2:8 “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God:”** Man is held accountable for his choices. We don’t see anything in the Bible that gives man a reason for being lost because he wasn’t elect or predestinated; what we do see is the emphasis in scripture that man is lost because he doesn’t want to come to God. The Bible gives us several characteristics that show what predestination does with respect to salvation. It determines our status as adopted sons of God. **Eph 1:5**, says those that are “elect” will be

“...conformed to the image of His son...” The elect will also know their calling, as Peter says, **“Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for it ye do these things, ye shall never fall”** (2Pe 1:10). Those who are predestinated to salvation are also justified and the righteousness of Jesus Christ is imputed to them. Salvation is truly a miracle of God.

Predestination ultimately assures the elects' glorification. Paul says in the next verse, **“...what shall we say to these things...if God be for us, who can be against us?”** It is all GOD! Salvation is of God! That is why when God chooses someone to salvation He has predestinated him before the foundation of the world, they are adopted sons of God, conformed to the image of His Son, called, justified and glorified; Therefore, they can never fall away. God does not go back on His Word. God does not change His mind, **“For I am the LORD, I change not...”** (Mal 3:6). Remember the author of salvation is God and not man. Therefore, we find that by its very nature, the Christian faith represents something quite different from the way

in which we previously lived. We were once dead in sins totally separated from God, but now we have a new life in Jesus Christ. **“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2Co 5:17).** In that new life in Jesus Christ, we should find some proofs of genuine Christianity, and I am not talking about things like visible morality, religious involvement, intellectual knowledge, an active ministry or even a conviction of sin. These are outward evidences that neither prove nor disprove a person’s faith. A true Christian will demonstrate genuine humility, a love for God, true repentance, separation from the world, spiritual growth, continual prayer and study, selfless and obedient living. These are the evidences that show the fruit of true Christianity. If these things characterized your life then you can have the assurance that you are one of God’s elect and he is preserving you as you persevere day by day.

In many Pentecostal churches, you see the same people going forward for salvation week after week. This is the outworking of the Arminian system of

“works salvation,” where a person after every altar call goes forward to be resaved. The most radical and troubling aspect of Arminianism is that it teaches the loss of salvation. Arminian theology says a person must live righteously if salvation is to be retained, and if not, salvation can be lost and the person damned. This is clearly a violation of the teachings of God’s Word. One of the saddest realities is that the people under this kind of theology lack assurance of their salvation. They have no assurance of their security in Christ and that their sins are forgiven, knowing they have a place reserved for them in heaven. Arminian theology teaches if a Christian becomes too secure in his/her salvation, then it would be possible to become spiritually negligent. This is also the official teaching of the Roman Catholic Church.

Therefore, with “works salvation,” people being exposed to Arminian teaching believe in the deep recesses of their heart that they are a little bit good and not dead in sin, and totally separated from God. This is an anti-Biblical theology. **Eph 2:5**, this scripture says we were dead in sins; dead means dead. Sin dominated

our lives. A good example of the danger of this anti-Biblical theology concerns Mother Theresa. This devout Roman Catholic demonstrated her Arminian theology, by saying that other systems of religion can get a person to God and heaven. If this was true of her, then she was Biblically incorrect and cannot be in Christ, even though she did many wonderful deeds. The Bible would consider her a lost humanitarian sinner. None of her good works would help her in the least to secure her salvation in Jesus Christ. This is the danger of Arminianism, Semi-Pelagian or any system where man has to cooperate with God for salvation. A person can say they love the Lord and be a devout Christian, yet be as lost as a goat. There are many scriptures in the Bible that refute this system of works, one of the clearest is [Eph 2:8-9](#). Did you notice it says **“...not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:”** Man cannot do anything to help God with salvation; it is a gift of God. A person can say they love the Lord and be a devout Christian, yet be lost. The Roman Catholic system is another “works salvation” system whereby your salvation is in jeopardy from week to week. This will be address in more detail in a later chapter.

The Doctrine of Salvation covers a large area of Biblical teaching and human responsibility. This doctrine talks about conversion and regeneration, which deal with the change of our inward nature and spiritual condition. Conversion is the change as viewed from the human perspective; regeneration is the change as viewed from God's perspective. While there is human responsibility in salvation, there is first a Divine side to it in which God sovereignly acts to secure the sinner's salvation. The Word of God is replete with scripture that support this concept. These scripture verses will be brought forth as we go along in developing true Biblical Salvation.

The church today closely resembles the world; even though it would like to change the world, the world is changing the church.

CHAPTER 2

The Spirit of the Modern Day Church is Humanism

The 21st century church has completely changed from the early church. It's not just the outward show concerning dress, meeting places, modern day electronics, etc., but it's the spirit of the church. The focus and the motivation is completely different. The church today closely resembles the world; even though it would like to change the world, the world is changing the church. The result is a hybrid church. The high tech church of today has all the trappings of the world and in some cases, more. The early church was focused on getting out of the world, there was not the effort to try and amalgamate or adapt to the world

like today's church. It appears that today's church is moving more and more down the "broad way" spoken of in **Mt 7:13**. The Arminian gospel of cooperation with God for salvation is at the root of this trend. As stated previously, much of Christianity has attached itself to this "works-salvation" gospel that has failed to show the sinner he is a law breaker.

The church of this 21st century is steeped in humanism. It's not the blatant humanism saying that truth is relative and absolute truth does not exist. However, there is enough of the truth whittled away and rounded off that the outcome is much the same as saying absolute truth does not exist.

Make no mistake, humanism taken far enough becomes atheism and if only sprinkled here and there, becomes practical atheism. Obviously, in the church

it is not to the place where belief in God is an alien thought, it does not go that far consciously. However, the belief in the Word is not taken seriously; it is changed or not applied. I know that's a very serious indictment but the activities that go on in many places considered to be Christian show much evidence of this humanistic philosophy. This Arminian, Pelagian, Semi-Pelagian doctrine has spread like leaven throughout the church and is the cause of this downgrading trend of God's Word.

Not all that are in the church are called by God. It is like what the Apostle Paul said about Israel, **“But it is not as though the word of God has come to nothing. For they are not all Israel that are of Israel.”** (Ro 9:6) The ones that came out of Egypt were not all children of God, yet he brought them all out with the same concern - not one feeble - all crossed the Red Sea - all got the same promises at Marah Ex 15:26; all ate manna...etc., but not all got into the promised land. The majority still had Egypt in their heart (humanism), only Joshua and Caleb from the original batch would make it into the Promised Land.

The problem is that humanism, no matter what the dose, will eventually lead to apostasy. Therefore, even a tiny bit of humanism will deify man and humanize God. When Christianity operates using absolute truth, God will be exalted and man humbled. With that model, it now becomes easy to see if humanism is alive and well in these various Christian churches.

The Origin of Humanism in the Church

Humanism is an educational and philosophical outlook that emphasizes the personal worth of the individual and the central importance of human values. This doctrine had its roots in Europe being developed during the Renaissance. Many of the Renaissance humanists were devout Christians, promoting secular values and a love of pagan heritage and customs.

“This all started with an Italian humanist (Petrarch 1304-74, an Italian poet). Then it passed to Coluccio Salutati (1331-1406), and on to Leonardo Bruni (1369-1444). The work of Italian humanists soon spread north of the Alps, finding a receptive audience among English thinkers such as John Colet. (1467-1519), who applied

the critical methods developed in Italy to the study of the Bible. Desiderius Erasmus of the Netherlands was the most influential of the Christian humanists. In his Colloquies and Praise of Folly (1509), Erasmus satirized the corruptions of his contemporaries, especially the clergy, by comparing them with the teachings of the Bible, early Christianity, and the best of pagan thinkers.”

This is the root; this is where the basis of works-righteousness in the mind set of Erasmus (where man makes some kind of effort or contribution towards his own salvation) emerged, thus compromising Bible truth. This theology came forth and has progressed to an alarming place in this 21st century. The heart of the gospel is in danger of total corruption in many quarters. Erasmus followed Jerome in interpreting justification by works, which does despite to the grace of God. The true gospel says it's only after a person is changed, regenerated by no works of his own, then - and only then - will the good works follow.

Humanism grew and became a prominent philosophy because of the work of Erasmus. Bible truth, before

the growth of humanism, had been acknowledged as comprehending all phenomena, earthly or heavenly; now it had to coexist with a classical attitude that was overwhelmingly directed toward earthly life. The Bible is very clear that we are not supposed to be directed by earthly life. This was clearly stated by the Apostle Paul in the book of Colossians (**Col 2:8**).

Some of the original humanists warned the younger ones not to let humanistic enthusiasm take precedence over the holiness of Christianity. They realized there was an implicit dualism in this humanistic philosophy that could erode Biblical truth. Given the new philosophy and new authorities, humanists started to find fault with established commentaries and questioned traditional interpretations.

Does Man Have Free Will?

The problem with humanism embodied in Christianity is the aspect of “free will”. The well known book entitled “The Bondage of the Will”, written by Martin Luther who regarded this work as the most important piece of theological writing that ever came from his pen. What

this work by Luther deals with is one of the most basic of all doctrines, yet probably the most controversial and difficult doctrine to pin down. Essentially, what's at issue is whether human beings, after the fall of man, are free to choose good or evil. Erasmus, who was steeped in humanism, would say that man has the ability to make choices to choose good or evil; he can also resist the grace of God. Whereas Luther, steeped in Biblical truth, maintained that sin keeps human beings from having the ability to choose good and from working out their own salvation; their nature is such that they are unable to bring themselves to God. These two doctrines concerning salvation are the most important doctrines that we must reconcile so the church of Jesus Christ will *“prevail against the gates of Hell.”*



The present day 21st century church is in great turmoil, but it is not recognized because of the deception of humanism. The root cause is the erroneous Arminian/Pelagian doctrine that is systemic in a host of churches, but not recognized as the problem.

CHAPTER 3

The Deception of Humanism in the Church

As stated earlier much of Christendom is of an “Erasmus” persuasion, in other words, they believe in “free will”. I’m sure you’ve heard well meaning Christians say, “God will never violate your free will. The Holy Spirit is a gentleman and he will never go against your choice.” Therefore, you are free to choose God or not to choose God. This doctrine has found its way into most churches and it spills over into many other church doctrines. In fact, many Charismatic churches, because of this free will-humanistic teaching, despise doctrine. As proof of this, you will hear teachers/pastors say, “do not try to think or let your mind get in the way of the Spirit when

the teaching is coming forth.” In other words, you are not to examine what is coming forth, just go with it and do not reject it. However, the Bible tells us to be like Bereans: **“Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of the mind, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so” (Ac 17:11).**

I knew a woman who was a member of a Charismatic church when the laughing revival was in full swing. She attended some of the meetings that were taking place in the Toronto Airport. She was very animated about what was going on and even though some of the things that were taking place were not scriptural, they didn't seem to trouble her. While talking to her, I mentioned that these things were against clear Biblical doctrine. As soon as the word “doctrine” was mentioned, she lost control and started to scream, “STINKING DOCTRINE, STINKING DOCTRINE!”

There seems to be no appreciation for good sound teaching. People in these churches are more concerned

with emotional highs derived from the antics performed than preaching and teaching. Please note that I am not against moving in the Spirit and seeing the gifts of the Spirit manifest, but not to the extinction of doctrine. That surely cannot be the Lord. A false association of words often deceives people.

When I got saved, I was attending a United Methodist church. I realized very soon after my salvation experience that not all was well. Many of the words they used like faith, grace, and salvation were used in a non-Christian context. I started to realize that the church I was attending was actually a very humanitarian work, under the guise of Christianity.

They relate humanitarian works with the Good Samaritan, thus equating the belief system of

humanism with humanitarianism. Of course this acceptance of supporting humanistic projects, gives no glory to God. God has called His people to give alms to the poor in His name, not in the name of man. By giving in the name of man, we are building up the humanistic society and too often failing to make the same help available through the church. This applies to donations made to the United Way and other big name non-profit organizations. For most true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, this is not that subtle and most would recognize the error. Most evangelical believers recognize that many of the institutional churches are downgraded to the place where they have the same humanistic theology as the Unitarian church. These churches are hotbeds of humanists, who in many cases are also atheists.

The real problem is the deception that humanism poses for the believing churches, the Evangelical, Charismatic and Pentecostal churches. Most of these churches have an Arminian, Semi-Pelagian persuasion and therefore are set up for this spirit of humanism to permeate throughout. Without making a long historical

survey, one church that specifically embraced Arminianism was the Methodist Church of John Wesley, mentioned above as a personal testimony. It is perhaps significant that after John Wesley's death, it gradually became a liberal stronghold with little effort to arrest its decline. Why would an apparent vibrant Biblical church become such a hotbed of liberalism? My contention is because of the Arminian theology that it was based on, which has man cooperating with God for salvation. Blindness to one important error is likely to induce blindness in other areas also. John Wesley was an Arminian through and through.

The Evangelical, Charismatic, Pentecostal movements major on their high level of evangelism, and its call to sinners to "make a decision for Christ". Both of these relate to an Arminian conception. The leaders are convinced that the unsaved person has free will to choose or reject the Gospel. This theology justifies bringing the maximum psychological pressure to bear in order to persuade the person to make the "right" decision. This is done through music in conjunction with emotional calls to give your heart to Jesus. If

the eternal life of the person depends upon such a decision, where the use of music and emotionalism is used to achieve this end, then this method can be legitimately put into practice. Charles Finney, who invented the altar call in the 19th century, practiced this kind of evangelism. Billy Graham in the 20th and 21st century has practiced a similar theology. Some have called Billy Grahams particular; method, “decisional regeneration”. Billy Graham is an Arminian whereas Finney was a Pelagian to the core.

It is interesting that the Roman Catholic Church and many of these Arminian based churches have the same mentality. As mentioned in an earlier chapter, they both use the Greek mentality, where the end justifies the means, in other words, “Whatever It Takes”. It does not matter if it is the Roman church or the Evangelical, Charismatic, Pentecostal movement; God has no control over who finally will be in heaven, but it depends entirely upon the “free will” decision of individuals. In both cases, entry into the “kingdom” depends upon the utterance of certain words and the affirmation of certain beliefs. This is reducing God to

looking on, while others are deciding the membership of his eternal city. The effectiveness of this man made influence brought upon the people and their mental, emotional and spiritual state at that time becomes solely responsible for the decision that they make.

Accepted or Received?

This may not seem like a biggy, but you can always tell a person that is of Arminian or Pelagian persuasion. When talking about how their salvation came about, they will always say, “I accepted the Lord”. Again, that may not seem like a big problem, but if you analyze the basis of that statement, then it becomes very telling. Let us analyze this statement, “I accepted the Lord”. What does the Bible say with respect to one having Jesus Christ becoming the Lord and Savior of one’s life? In the Gospel of John, the Word tells us **“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His Name” (Joh 1:12)**. The Word of God, tells us **“...as many as received him...”** it didn’t say as many as “accepted” Him. When using the word “accepted” or “accepts” it carries with it a

general sense of approval. That would mean that the person who is the accepter does the approving of the one being accepted. That means that man is in the driver's seat and makes the decision. This is called "decisional regeneration".

When one states that they "received" the Lord, this now carries a very different concept. To receive something is to come into possession or to acquire something. Therefore, when one receives the Lord Jesus, we are not the one that initiated this reception. This is similar when a gift is given; the person who receives the gift does nothing, but yield to the giver.

The Bible is very clear on this in many places, but especially in the book of Ephesians. **"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves:**

it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.” (Eph 2:8-9) This is very clear and to the point, that salvation is a “gift of God” and no man can work for it or approve of it, it is all of God; man can only “receive it”.

A non-Biblical Repentance.

Another area of deception that must be pointed out with this humanistic Arminian system concerns repentance. In this movement, the positive is stressed to a high degree, portraying the Christian life as the answer to all of one’s problems with victory as a given. The positive results are placed much higher than the deep sorrow and acknowledgement of sin. What is preached is that you can overcome your problems (drugs, marital problems, loneliness, alcohol, whatever) by simply “accepting” Christ, instead of a deep acknowledgement of one’s sins, where one approaches God in brokenness and sorrow with repentance. Therefore, a deep contrition and sorrow for one’s past godless life is not the first consideration. What is the problem here? The convert does not die to his earthly desires, he is only redirected to what he is told is a higher, better life. In addition, this

is something the convert has done; he has cooperated with God.

John MacArthur wrote a book entitled “The Gospel According to Jesus” and when it appeared in 1988, it caused a furor. MacArthur said that many members of evangelical churches throughout the United States were fooling themselves into thinking they were saved when they were not, because they had not fully received the Lordship of Christ over every part of their lives. Thus, they had “made a decision” and regularly attended church, but apart from that, they were hardly distinguishable from any well-behaved unsaved person. In order to demonstrate that they were not truly “born again”, he makes the trenchant comment - *“As a pastor, I have re-baptized countless people who once ‘made a decision’, were baptized, yet experienced no change. They later came to a true conversion and sought baptism again as an expression of genuine salvation.”*

This is typical, it is more the norm than not. There is a local church that I am familiar with founded by two

electrical engineers I knew quite well. These men started a meeting as an orthodox Christian church, which remained that way for a number of years. The growth of the church was spotty. Then a few years ago, a different group of people took over the leadership and this assembly has sustained tremendous growth. At this writing, this church is looking to purchase a large plot of land to build a huge mega church. What was the reason for the inordinate growth? These men patterned this church after “seeker friendly” meetings like Willow Creek in Illinois and Rick Warren’s Saddle Back church and others around the country that have pragmatic programs that appeal to the flesh.

The present day 21st century church is in great turmoil, but it is not recognized because of the deception of humanism. The root cause is the erroneous Arminian/Pelagian doctrine that is systemic in a host of churches, but not recognized as the problem. This has resulted in practices that differ sharply from those that are delineated in the Biblical record. It starts with a works-righteousness salvation, which is the foundation for many other unscriptural practices. I contend that these

unscriptural practices are the fabric of this Arminian, Pelagian movement. These other unscriptural areas like women in leadership, modesty, headship, holiness, unscriptural divorce and remarriage, celebration of pagan holidays, involvement in politics, and many more aspects of holiness, will be addressed as we go along. The cause of these perversions is Arminianism/humanism, which is the root of this Evangelical, Charismatic, Pentecostal tree.

As soon as a person starts to walk by sight and not by faith, that person is in danger of trusting the flesh.

CHAPTER 4

Humanism, The Default of Man

Humanism is an ideological, political, and religious belief that denies the existence of God. Atheists are humanist, as are new-agers, and many others. The creation and theory of evolution developed by humanists was to create a world devoid of God. Humanism today is prevalent in our media, schools, and government. The religious humanist believes, as the Humanist Manifesto states, *“the religions of the world are outdated due to a vastly increased knowledge and experience, and are powerless to solve the problem of human living in this time. Christians know the power of God, but to the humanist the human is divine and must be responsible*

for furnishing adequate human goals and providing for the spiritual needs of today. Humanists believe that the universe and its peoples self-exist and are not created; they also believe humanism is the only religion capable of leading humans along the evolutionary path to 'Christ Consciousness'. In humanism, there is no right or wrong, only experience and an endless struggle to become enlightened, to evolve."

Obviously, the present day church has not gotten to the place to fit the above "Humanist Manifesto". However, humanism can be found in the church in various elements. Some of these elements have already been addressed. The reason I continue to explore this vile religion, yes it is a religion, is because it is the largest threat to Biblical faith. The areas that I have already touched on like "pragmatism", salvation at any cost, "what ever it takes theology", are rooted in humanism. In this 21st century there is hardly a church that has not dabbled in this abomination, particularly when it comes to salvation. Where did this blasphemous system start?

Arminianism, Semi-Pelagianism or any works-faith religion can be very subtle, and as one keeps practicing this *free will* theology, it takes on a life of itself. In fact, if you were to ask those people who are involved with this work system, they would not be able to talk about it. Much of 21st Century Christendom really has no idea what they theologically believe. I have had the opportunity to ask various Christians if they knew what Arminianism is and I have yet to have anyone tell me the right answer. Walk into any church and ask the difference between Arminianism and Calvinism and you will find a variety of answers, none actually theologically correct. Many seem to think they know what Calvinism is, but largely their answers are always some extreme form. I will admit my sampling is not very large, but what I have sampled is 100% the way I have described it. Most have not even heard of Arminianism. However, if you were to ask Christians whether man has free will to choose God, the answer would be a resounding yes. Yet, I do believe there are some today who do hold to historic Arminianism, and who do believe the depth of Arminian theology historically. The result is a “works salvation” doctrine, becoming more and more

humanistic. This is the default of man. Only grace can combat this tendency, where man totally relinquishes all of his works and “lets go and lets God”.

So humanism is the default of man and even one who calls himself a Christian can find himself pursuing humanistic endeavors in the church. How does this manifest? A Christian person is always being tempted not to trust God. It started in the Garden of Eden and has never stopped, because **“...Satan is like a roaring lion going about seeking who he may devour.”** It is so easy for man who now has had an experience with God to go back to his humanistic roots. As soon as a person starts to walk by sight and not by faith, that person is in danger of trusting the flesh. The Bible is very clear that everything begins with a thought. **“As a man thinks in his heart so is he.”** (**Pro 23:7**) This is a profound understanding. It is a fact that everything we do has to begin with a thought in our mind. Now Man is made of body, soul and spirit. Paul the Apostle speaks of this in **1Th 5:23** where he says, **“May the God of peace himself sanctify you completely. May your whole spirit, soul, and**

body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” The soul is who the person is; the soul consists of three parts, the mind, the emotions and the will. The soul is where the enemy can bring his temptations. **2Co 10:5** says that we are to be **“Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.”**

The Word of God tells us not to allow the fiery darts that Satan fires at us, in the form of thoughts, to overcome us; we are to bring them to the Lord Jesus Christ. If we allow negative thoughts or any of the thoughts that the Devil fires at us to remain, this will defeat us.

The reason is that **“...as a man thinks in his heart (mind) so is he.”** If we do not bring these thoughts

to the Lord Jesus Christ, then they can follow a progression that will eventually lead to very serious consequences. This is how it works: When a thought comes in to your mind, then the emotions come into play. Many times a thought will cause the emotions to desire what the mind thinks; then the will has to make a decision. Once the will makes a decision, then what started, as a thought becomes an action. The action is the person actually doing what the thought suggested. This can form a habit, which will mold character and eventually lead to one's destiny. A diagram of this would look like this:



The thought comes to the mind, the emotion has the desire, and the will makes a decision whether to act upon the thought or not. All of this occurs in the soul. Acting upon the decision of the will brings the entire process out of the soul realm and into body realm. Repeating this behavior will develop a habit, which can mold the character, and eventually lead to one's destiny. It all starts with a thought.

The unregenerate person really does not have a chance to make the right decisions, because he is spiritually dead. The apostle Paul tells us in **1Co 2:14**, “**...the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness to him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.**” The natural man, the unregenerate man, cannot understand the things of God, because his spirit is dead to God. Separation from God because of his sin causes him to be dead to God. **Eph 2:1** says, that you who are born again and have received the Lord Jesus Christ “**...you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.**” He says, that you are now alive (quickened) to God and the Spirit

of God has delivered you who were once **“...dead in trespasses and sins.”**

So the unregenerate person is always going to be driven by their flesh, they have no choice. Yes, some will become religious and even do many good works, but they still have no relationship with the Living God. Conversely, you who are born again can now by **“... grace... through faith...”** be obedient to the Word of God, have life, and have it abundantly.

However, when a Christian doesn't have the right theology concerning salvation and thinks that cooperating with God for salvation (Arminian “free will” theology) is the real thing; and still somehow believes that man is not totally depraved and totally **“...dead in sin and trespasses...”**, that man will eventually go back and operate in humanism, remember, that's the default. That is the premise I started with, saying that this kind of free will theology (Arminianism) is very dangerous. It robs a person's salvation.

God is sovereign and has the right to give his creatures what commands that He thinks are proper.

CHAPTER 5

The Entrance of Humanism into the Biblical Record

It starts at the very beginning, it always has been lurking just waiting for a chance to make its mark. Before I go back to the beginning, I must define how humanism manifests. The religion of this world is humanism; therefore it is not considered a problem. It is only when one is “born again” and has a personal relationship with God through the Lord Jesus Christ that humanism becomes a huge problem. While being in the world and not a Christian, everything we do, all the principles that we operate in have a humanistic base. A person who is in the world puts their trust in all of the systems of the world. Everything a person does in the world usually

depends on other people. Remember, as addressed in the opening definition of humanism, a “...Human is divine and must be responsible for furnishing adequate human goals and providing for the spiritual needs of today...” “In humanism there is no right or wrong, only experience and an endless struggle to become enlightened, to evolve.” When a person is “born again” and now has a relationship with God, there becomes an immediate conflict in every area of life. Where did all of this start? It started in the Garden of Eden. The man and women (Adam and Eve) had a perfect relationship with God, until the serpent entered the scene and brought a temptation that would change the very essence of the human race. That temptation was to tempt Eve to eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, which God said, **“ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.”** The serpent wanted Eve to eat of that fruit and not trust God, but trust in the knowledge that both her and Adam would gain from eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Even though God had clearly said, **“of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou**

shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Ge 2:16b-17).

The serpent said that she wouldn't die **“Ye shall not surely die:”** It was a setup and she chose to obey that “old Serpent” the Devil, and she gave the fruit also to her husband, who should have known better, **“and the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked” (Ge 3:7).** Reading further in this narrative we see that the disobedience of the man and woman brought about the curse we see in Genesis chapter three. The woman would now experience multiplied pain and sorrow in bringing forth children, the man would rule over the women. The man would have to work much harder to bring forth the fruit of the ground. Thorns, thistles, and all kinds of work would be required to bring forth the food needed to survive; bringing forth bread would be by the sweat of his face, nothing would be easy anymore and being taken from the dust to the dust, he would return (Ge 3:19). Death has entered into the earth as the Lord said in Ge 2:17 **“...in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shall surely die.”** This principle in (Ge 2:17) is very critical

to our understanding concerning whether man still has free will or did something take place when the man and women disobeyed God? Yes, the man and woman had free will in the garden because they had the ability to obey God or disobey God. There was a stipulation that the Lord gave them, however and that was not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

God is sovereign and has the right to give his creatures what commands that He thinks are proper. Adam and Eve, being intelligent creatures created by God, must show accountability. It would be absurd to have intelligent creatures without a law to regulate their conduct. Man must always obey God and be under His authority knowing His sovereignty, which he could not do without a rule of conduct.

Of course, the rule of conduct cannot be beyond their capabilities. What did God do? There was a certain fruit bearing tree in the garden that he said they could not eat of and if they did they would surely die. **“Thou shalt surely die.”** Literally, a death you will die; or, dying you shall die. You shall not only die because you will lose the life of God, separation from God, but from the moment you disobey, you shall become mortal and you shall continue in a state of dying until you die. This is being literally fulfilled, man is continually dying every moment of his life, until the soul and body is separated.

Death came into the land. Now the man and the women were sinners and by **“one man’s offence death reigned,”** continuing to reign even until now. Man is born with a sin nature, no longer having the ability to exercise free will, as did Adam before the fall. Man without the grace of God is destined to eternal damnation. Man no longer can do well, **“As it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable;**

there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulcher; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes” (Ro 3:10-18). This is true not only of gentiles but also the Jews. This is true of every man that is born into this world in his natural and practical state. The only way this would change is by the mercy and grace of God through the Lord Jesus Christ. This is rank human depravity not only spoken of by Paul the Apostle, but the Psalmist that Paul is quoting. In verse 12 where it says, **“...they are together become unprofitable...”** That’s saying they are useless, good for nothing, the literal Hebrew says, “they are putrid.” It’s as though he sees the whole mass of mankind slain and thrown in heaps, to putrefy. This is the corruption of human nature. This is the depravity of man. This all started because of one man’s disobedience that has propagated to the total

depravity of mankind, where the only thing that man can do is sin.

Yet the Lord God in His mercy clothed them with coats of skins. This clothing of skins of an innocent animal is so clear in speaking about Salvation by grace, excluding every bit of human works or effort. This was the first lesson that God taught man after man had sinned by disobeying the Creator. Adam had tried by the works of his own hands to cover his nakedness, but God rejected his fig leaf covering of works, and then proceeded to provide a covering of bloody skins of a slain animal, showing a salvation by grace. There is no question that at the very beginning the Lord laid down the principle that salvation is of the Lord and that any attempt by man to provide his own covering (salvation) has no value or worth in redemption. It was not long after that the Lord drove the pair out of the garden.

True and False Religion

“And Adam knew his wife; and she conceived and bare Cain...she again bare his brother Abel”

(**Ge 41:2b**). After these two brothers grew up the Holy Spirit teaches us once again the truth of “salvation by grace through faith.” This is the account of Cain and Abel and their sacrifices that they brought forth to God. Cain brought forth of the fruit of his own labor and was rejected. Abel presented to God an innocent lamb as a sacrifice, which the Lord accepted. This teaches a very profound lesson, which remains unto this day. Abel and Cain are symbolic of two religious systems. Even though there are a multitude of religions in the world today, they essentially can be narrowed down to only two. One is true and the other is false. One could go on and name a whole group of different religions of the world, which would also include many different denominations of Christianity. Nevertheless, the real essence of the matter is there are still only two religious classifications: (1) Cain’s religion is salvation merited by a system of works based on humanism. It does not matter how miniscule man cooperates with God to secure his salvation, it still will be a salvation

by works. (2) Abel's religion, is salvation by grace. It must be all God and all **"grace through faith"** to be legitimate. Whatever group or denomination calling themselves Christian by doing anything to obtain or earn their salvation, is false. It is a fig leaf religion and becomes an offering of Cain.

Satan, deceived Adam and Cain in making them feel they could do something to help God for their salvation. That is exactly what humanism is all about. It does not matter to what degree man provides his help; God will not accept man's help.

CHAPTER 6

Fig Leaf Religion in the Present Day Church

What has this Adam and Cain business have to do with humanism? It should be very clear that Satan, deceived Adam and Cain in making them feel they could do something to help God for their salvation. That is exactly what humanism is all about. It does not matter to what degree man provides his help; God will not accept man's help. Satan is still the same as he has always been trying to get man to believe that he can please God by his works and efforts. Here is the problem; man will admit that he is a little bit sick, but to believe that he is totally "dead" in sin and totally depraved is a bit much for him to swallow. Nevertheless, God said

that until man is willing to admit that his good works to help God for salvation is totally unprofitable, he cannot be saved. He must rely totally and completely on the grace of God, now we can go to the New Testament and nothing has changed. This is and has been the fundamental message concerning salvation from the beginning. Yet, from the beginning, man has tried to enter his own works to help God and it has never stopped, even to this writing. This is the major problem with the professing Christian church presently.

If we now ratchet up to our present day, we see many churches involved with humanism to one degree or another - fig leaf religion - the religion of Cain. It does not matter what label you put on it, it still is an abomination to God. In present day Christianity, it is subtle, and hard to identify. Many churches practice an Arminian theology; however, the average attendee would not know what Arminian theology was all about. Most Christians who are part of these churches do not know what is behind this theology; it just seems that these pragmatic techniques are a valid thing to do when it comes to seeing people saved. That is the sad part,

because Arminianism is and always has been a heretical theology since it conceives of salvation as a joint effort by man and God, something that's maintained through the doing of good works, it concludes the believer can never be absolutely sure of his salvation. Why? Because if my salvation depends on God and me, I might mess up. Whenever you have a theology that involves human effort for salvation, there can be no true security or assurance because human beings can default. *“But historical biblical theology declares that salvation is entirely the work of God, which leads to the concomitant doctrines of security and assurance.”*

Roman Catholicism Fig Leaf Religion

From the time of the reformation up until the early 20th century, most orthodox protestant theologians had no problem in saying that the Roman Catholic system was heretical. In fact, many went so far as to say that the Pope was an antichrist. Since the advent of the Charismatic movement, there has been a melding of Roman Catholics and Charismatics. Now we see many in protestant ranks (Evangelicals and Charismatics) who have embraced Rome as brothers in Christ. The key

element that ties these protestant groups with Rome is the Arminian connection. They all have a “works salvation” mentality, which binds them together. In fact, in 1994 Charles Colson and Fr. Richard Neuhaus (Lutheran who converted to Catholicism) authored the ecumenical documents “Evangelicals and Catholics Together.” The comfort for these groups to come together also hinges on some other common elements that the ECT document states, from which the following quote is. *“We give thanks to God that in recent years many Evangelicals and Catholics, ourselves among them, have been able to express a common faith in Christ and so to acknowledge one another as brothers and sisters in Christ. We confess together one God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit; we confess Jesus Christ the Incarnate Son of God; we affirm the binding authority of Holy Scripture, God’s inspired Word; and we acknowledge the Apostles’ and Nicene creeds as faithful witnesses to that Word.”*

This small paragraph from this document states that the common threads are some of the main criterion for belief as a Christian. However, the aspect of “works

salvation” is not mentioned which should be the basis for total rejection. The Roman Catholic foundation, built on Arminian theology, has always required good works, or what one has done for God.

Good works, of course, are pleasing to God, and they have a necessary and important place in the Christian life. It naturally follows if one has true faith, then good works are the fruit of that faith, performed out of love and gratitude to God for the great salvation that God has bestowed. Therefore, good works are not the cause and basis of salvation, not what the person does to earn salvation, but the good works are the fruit or the proof that salvation is present and operating. (Tit 3:5)

One of the most grievous doctrines of the Roman

Catholic system is how it deals with sin. *“This is seen in the doctrine of penance. She does not require genuine repentance and sorrow for sin, nor any genuine purpose to turn from it, but accepts as a substitute an act of allegiance to the church and the penitent’s fear of punishment.” Accordingly, the penitent receives pardon on comparatively easy terms, particularly so if he is on good terms with the priest. He is assigned some task to perform, usually not too hard or irksome, sometimes merely the recital of a given number of “hail Mary’s.”*

There are so many other heretical doctrines too many to mention, such as: indulgences, infallibility of the Pope, purgatory, relics, prayer for the dead etc., which only scratches the surface of a very, very abominable system that has almost a billion people trapped in bondage. One wonders why any born again person would want to unite with this mega-heretical system. My personal belief is because of the basic connection or “works-salvation,” fostered by Arminianism.

There are many religious movements today that may seem new to us. However, most of their ideas and policies were practiced for centuries. They take on new names with new faces, but their goals are still the same; to turn people's focus away from God and towards man made ideas and icons.

Hence, you will see women pastors, divorce and remarriage, women dressing immodestly, celebration of pagan holidays, (**2Ti 1:15, 2:17-18**). Other scripture (**2Ti 3:1-5, 4:9-15**) also Jude and 2 Peter talk about character of many in the last day.

When the Word of God is brought forth, developed and not truncated to satisfy the pews so they can get home to gratify their flesh, that's reformation time.

CHAPTER 7

Wrong Priorities!

I would like to quote a very famous teacher and preacher from the 19th century who was warning the church during his day about the downward slide that he saw was overtaking Christianity. His name is Charles Haddon Spurgeon and here is a quote from this man that was and is very much in play today: *“Everywhere there is apathy. Nobody cares whether that which is preached is true or false. A sermon is a sermon whatever the subject; only, the shorter it is the better.”* This is the fruit of Arminianism being manifested, showing forth its humanistic tendencies.

In my estimation, it appears that nothing has changed very much from what Brother Spurgeon spoke in that short quote. The church hasn't gotten better. There are small pockets here and there that have always obeyed the Lord as they had the Word revealed to them, but the Evangelical/Charismatic world has not changed one iota; it is still on the downgrade. Again, let me quote a man who is no longer alive, but may have added a degree or so to the slope of the downgrade with his remark when he wrote, *"People, I've discovered, will forgive even poor theology as long as they get out before noon."* What does that say? What kind of attitude is that? It's what I was speaking about in my brief introduction. Christian folks have the wrong priorities. This quote was said in an article eighteen years ago, however, nothing has improved in modern Christianity; it has gotten worse.

In fact, people today do not care if they hear the Word of God preached at all; they would rather have it sung.

Modern Christianity doesn't care about solid doctrinal theology; oh no, they would rather have poor theology and get out sooner. If they can get out of church meeting before noon, then they can still go home and have their barbecues, feeding their mouths instead of their souls and watch the Sunday NFL game. It's not something that we should be surprised about. That is the modern way; it's what has been termed the "McDonald" mentality, from fast foods to fast sermons. The real problem is not even so much the speed of the Sermon; it's what the Sermon says. However, to develop a good sermon, it usually takes more time than the "McDonald" mentality will allow.

Even at the time of this writing, I believe the church has gone further down that slippery slope. There have been many men in our day who have been warning the church about its demise. I mentioned Brother Spurgeon back in the 19th century, who was warning the church of his day, but with little success. There were some backlashes against men like Charles Spurgeon, by church leaders of that time who were completely unreceptive to such warnings. We have people today

like John MacArthur, Hank Hanegraaff, Dave Hunt, and other not so well known men sounding the alarm. Yet, as many of the warnings these men have given, it seems as though the modern church is on that ever broad way leading to destruction. Why are there so many on the broad way? The Bible says that it's not going to change; however, just maybe this warning can wake a few up before it's too late.

In **Lu 13:24** we read, **“Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.”** Strive, literally, agonize. The word is taken from the Grecian games. In their races, wrestlings, and various athletic exercises, they strove or agonized, to put forth all their powers to gain the victory. They were long trained for the conflict, and the honor of victory was one of the highest honors among the people.

Jesus says that we should strive to enter in. He taught that we should be diligent, active, and earnest; that we should make it our first and chief business to overcome our sinful propensities and to endeavor to enter into

heaven. This same figure or allusion to the Grecian games is often used in the New Testament: **1Co 9:24-26**; **Php 2:16** and **Heb 12:1**. In **1Co 9:25** Paul says, **“And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.”** The word “temperate” is a good summation word; it means to exercise “self-restraint.” Where it says **“for many... will seek-desire”**; that is, it is more of a mere wish or lazy attempt. Then he says, **“and shall not be able,”** because it must be made a life-and-death struggle. Let’s face it; he’s talking about serious business. That is the main issue we find in modern Christianity today. They make a lazy attempt and it is not a life and death struggle; they don’t see it as being serious business.

There always have been heretics in the church from the beginning. We know that the Apostle John and Paul both battled with Gnostics seen in the Pauline epistles, especially the book of Galatians, coming against legalism and the Judaizers. The epistle to the Galatians is what many have termed the “Magna Carta” of the Bible dealing with Law and Grace. So

far I've only addressed the un-energetic church; I've not gotten to the heretics and the error in the Word of God they teach, it is legion. I've been addressing the sloven, slothful behavior of mainstream Christianity which produces "broad way" Christians.

The main problem is that Christian people have gone away from the root of Christianity, which is the Word of God. They want to be entertained, however, the Word of God comes forth and doesn't entertain but rather brings **"...reproof," "correction,"** and **"instruction in righteousness"** (2Ti 3:16). The Word of God is to bring reformation, designed to reform a believer. It reforms by **"renewing the mind,"** so essentially when one goes to church they are attending a reform school. That's right!

When the Word of God is brought forth, developed and not truncated to satisfy the pews so they can get home to gratify their flesh, that's reformation time.

What is Bible Preaching?

Preaching is the proclamation of the Good News of salvation for the whole man through man to men. The Gospel cannot be sung and be considered preaching, neither can it be proclaimed by means of the written page or printed book, for that also is not preaching. Even when we have a man standing in a pulpit preaching to men, it doesn't mean it is Gospel preaching. Much of what is heard from Christian pulpits today can be anything from politics, current events, talk about popular people, and a host of other topics sprinkled with a few verses from the Bible. Usually there will be an opening verse that is taken totally out of context and used because it may have a word in the verse that is similar to the political situation or current event the preacher wants to talk about, closing with a Bible verse that is taken out of context just for show. Pastors/teachers are more interested in church growth than in growing the inner man. Many of these pastors go to conferences and seminars that outline the steps in growing a church. These steps and techniques use marketing methods and the secular ways that corporations use to attract people to buy their wares.

There has always been a church growth movement; it's a Biblical principle. It's called "The Great Commission" found in **Mt 28:19** and **Mr 16:15f**. What does it tell us to do? In Matthew it tells us that we must go and **"...teach all nations..."** Teach them what? **"...to observe all things whatsoever I (Jesus speaking) have commanded you..."** In the Gospel of Mark it is very similar except he tells his disciples that **"...In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."** This is the method that the Lord Jesus Christ put forth in His Word to have church growth. In fact, the first time the disciples had the opportunity, Peter preached a solid Biblical message after receiving the "Gift of the Holy Spirit" which was what the Father had promised to them in the Book of Joel. In fact, it was called the **"promise of the Father."** Jesus told them **"...not to depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the 'promise of the Father'."** They obeyed the Lord and waited on the day of Pentecost and **"...they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with**

other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

There were many people who gathered in Jerusalem at that time because of Pentecost and they all heard these men speaking in their own languages. Peter didn't waste any time; he didn't bring out his latest marketing techniques; no, no. He started to preach the Word of God quoting from the book of Joel and eventually bringing it down through David and then to the Lord Jesus Christ (**Ac 2:14-36**). What was the people's response? **“Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the Apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (v37)** Well, Peter and the apostles didn't try to understand what their “felt needs” were, trying to appeal to these customers' desires. Oh no; Peter said, **“Repent and be baptized every one of you in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and Ye shall receive the Holy Spirit” (v38)**. That's the method that the Bible teaches, so where is the church going wrong?

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”

CHAPTER 8

Where is the Church Going Wrong?

In today's church salvation is treated as though it is something that man must do in order for it to be accomplished. Oh, if you were to talk to many of today's Charismatics or Evangelicals, they would say that salvation is of God. Yet, when we examine the methods and madness that takes place, we find all sorts of manipulation. In one Assemblies of God church, a huge banner behind the pulpit measuring ten ft long and four ft wide read "Whatever It Takes." What do you suppose was meant by that saying? It didn't take long to find out; the pastor referred to the banner quite often regarding salvation. That's right; whatever

had to be done to get someone saved, you better do it. The “end justifies the means” theology, seems to be where the contemporary church is today in many places. Why is this? The main reason is the bulk of professing Christendom is of Arminian persuasion. You have people in this system going forward each week getting re-saved. Remember this is a “works salvation system,” therefore the same new converts are taught to go out to get other folks saved with their schemes and methods.

Because we have the ideology of “Whatever It Takes,” salvation becomes a “Sacred Cow.” Nothing to them is as important as “Salvation.”

Why? Because most of the church has taken on the burden to be the saving agent. They believe that they must facilitate all the circumstances to enhance the probability of seeing salvation manifest. Again, if asked, they would say that salvation is of God, yet the

application is as if salvation is of man. Hence programs, schemes and manipulations take place, instead of just the preaching of the word and allowing the Holy Spirit to do the work through the Word. Remember, this works salvation system all stems from the heretical origin of Pelagian, Semi-Pelagian, and Arminian Theology that the church originally decried as aberrant.

This is where the majority of the church is today. We will see various churches having all sorts of humanistic and, many times, occult entertainment. The church that had that large banner saying “Whatever It Takes” had a “magic show!” You heard me right; a “magic show!” To attract more unregenerate to be saved! Do anything to get people saved. The method doesn’t matter; the main purpose is salvation the higher good. You best not come against “Salvation,” because that is the highest good in the estimation of most of these humanistic, Arminian, Pelagian churches.

It does not stop with a “magic show,” many of these churches have miming, puppets, drama, dance, stand up comics, and movies. Of course, they would

say these are “Christian” entertainments not worldly entertainments. Some churches even do Halloween by having people dress up as Biblical characters. This is all done with the idea of saving the lost. Is this what Jesus intended? He said:

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”

How do we teach (“...**them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded...**”) by having magic, miming, puppets, drama, dance, comic, movies and many more of these humanistic endeavors? That’s not what the Lord prescribed. The problem is having a works salvation theology in the church and as long as

that prevails we will see more and more of man-made schemes and methods to get people saved. Salvation is the “Sacred Cow” of Christendom. This all goes back to having the wrong doctrine of salvation.

Salvation is of the Lord; it's not of man. We don't have to scheme, plan and manipulate in order to get people saved.

We were told to “**...teach all nations...teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you...**” That doesn't sound like Whatever It Takes. Sadly, Christianity has become a pragmatic business, using many marketing techniques to get people in the church. One of the main reasons for this pragmatic move is that doctrine has become a secondary issue; therefore pragmatism has taken the place of doctrine.

What is Pragmatism?

The world we live in today is one of rapid changes. We have all sorts of advances in technology and science, and everything is being sped up and the church is no different. People have geared their lives toward the “McDonald mentality,” resulting in pragmatic behavior. To keep up with this mentality, the church has also given in and now we see this kind of Christianity being served up.

This new philosophy is actually very straight forward: *“The church is in competition against the world and the world is very good at capturing people’s attention and affections. The church, on the other hand, tends to be very poor at selling its product. Evangelism should therefore be viewed as a marketing challenge, and the church should market the gospel the way all modern businesses sell their products. That calls for some fundamental changes. The goal in all marketing is ‘to make both the producer and consumer satisfied,’ so anything that tends to leave the consumer unsatisfied must be jettisoned. Preaching - particularly preaching about sin, righteousness, and judgment - is too*

confrontational to be truly satisfying. The church must learn to couch the truth in ways that amuse and entertain.”

The people who promote this kind of market driven philosophy seem not to understand or care about the Biblical model. The reason is - if I may state it very pragmatically - they only care about nickels and noses. I know that most of these men who have given themselves over to this kind of evangelism would deny that the motivation is to get as many people as possible. But they would appeal to the idea that salvation of a soul is worth Whatever It Takes. Consequently, salvation becomes the Sacred Cow. The obvious question then is what kind of salvation is being perpetuated using these techniques? Many of these churches that have committed to these pragmatic marketing techniques, to draw people into the church, have not spared any expense to attract the masses. Let me quote from an article written by T.A. McMahan from the Berean Call: *“Looking past the swans gliding across a mirror lake, one sees what could be mistaken for a corporate headquarters or a very upscale shopping mall. Just off*

the sanctuary is a large bookstore and an extensive eating area supplied by a food court with five different vendors. A jumbotron screen allows an overflow crowd or those enjoying a meal to view the proceedings in the main sanctuary. The sanctuary itself is spacious and high tech, complete with three large screens and state-of-the-art sound and lighting systems for multimedia drama, and musical presentations.

While impressive, this facility is not unique among mega-churches with a reach-the-lost-through-whatever-turns-them-on-mindset. Mega-churches across the country have added bowling alleys, NBA regulation basketball courts with bleachers, exercise gyms and spas, locker rooms, auditoriums for concerts and dramatic productions, and Starbuck's and McDonald's franchises - all for the furtherance of the gospel."

The problem with all of this is that the lost are not being attracted by the Word of God, which ministers to one's spirit. These men are trying

to appeal to what interests people,
which will only attract the flesh.

So my question would be, what kind of new convert is this type of market driven evangelism birthing? This philosophy would not be able to get off the ground if the Biblical doctrine concerning salvation was adhered to and taught.

We live in a market driven society and the various Evangelical leaders are very concerned with church growth and even employ people who survey what will make a church grow.

CHAPTER 9

The Churches Gospel is a Means of Happiness, Rather Than One of Righteousness

The present day church has degenerated to the place where we must make people happy rather than righteous. The church does everything it can think of to make the Sunday experience pleasant, so that it will get the folks coming back. The church has failed to show the sinner he's a law breaker. This can't be done by a twenty minute sermonette. The church should be a place of correction, admonition and rebuke over a framework of edification, exhortation, and comfort. The saints must leave a church meeting feeling they have to start addressing needed change. The Bible is very clear that we come **"...unto a perfect man, unto the**

measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ”

(Eph 4:13). That’s right! He wants us to be just like the Lord Jesus Christ and how will the church ever get to that place on a diet of psychology, topical, therapeutic, political, self-centered fulfillment. It’s always how the Lord can meet one’s needs and help solve one’s problems. This is all because we live in a market driven society and the various Evangelical leaders are very concerned with church growth and even employ people who survey what will make a church grow. T.A. McMahon who publishes “The Berean Call” with Dave Hunt has the following to say about this 21st Century church: *“First of all, the gospel and, more significantly, the person of Jesus Christ do not fit into any marketing strategy. They are not products to be sold. They cannot be refashioned or image-adjusted to appeal to the felt needs of our consumer-happy culture. Any attempt to do so compromise to some degree the truth of who Christ is and what He has done for us. For example, if the lost are considered consumers and a basic marketing commandment says the customer must reign supreme, then whatever may be offensive to the lost must be discarded, revamped, or downplayed.*

Scripture tells us clearly that the message of the Cross is “...**foolishness to them that are perishing**” and that Christ himself is a “**rock of offense**” (1Co 1:18; 1Pe 2:8). Some seeker-friendly churches, therefore, seek to avoid this “negative aspect” by making the temporal benefits of becoming a Christian their chief selling point. Although that appeals to our gratification-oriented generation, it is neither the gospel nor the goal of a believer’s life in Christ. Secondly, if you want to attract the lost on the basis of what might interest them, for the most part you will be appealing to and accommodating their flesh. Wittingly or unwittingly, that seems to be the standard operating procedure of the seeker-friendly churches.”

That shouldn’t be a surprise to anyone because most of these churches are based on what can we do to get a person saved. To just preach the Word of God and allow the Holy Spirit to bring conviction is out of the question. That’s too boring for the present day church they need to have more than a man standing in a pulpit bringing forth the word of God. Yet we know that Jonathan Edwards would read his sermons in

a monotonous droning sort of way; without props, music or theatrics and many would get convicted and receive the Lord. In fact, when he preached his most well known sermon at Enfield Connecticut, “Sinners in the hands of an angry God” it helped stimulate that great revival know as The Great Awakening in New England. Nothing in his style or presentation could account for what happened that day at Enfield. An eyewitness, Stephen Williams, wrote in his diary, “We went over to Enfield where we met dear Mr. Edwards of Northampton who preached a most awakening sermon from these words, **Deu 32:35**, and before the sermon was done there was a great moaning and crying went out through ye whole House.... ‘What shall I do to be saved,’ ‘Oh, I am going to Hell,’ ‘Oh, what shall I do for Christ,’ and so forth. So yet ye minister was obliged to desist, ye shrieks and cry were piercing and amazing.”

Williams continued, “After some time of waiting the Congregation were still, so yet a prayer was made by Mr. W. and after that we descended from the pulpit and discoursed with the people, some in one place and some in another, and amazing and astonishing

ye power of God was seen, and several souls were hopefully wrought upon that night, and oh ye cheerfulness and pleasantness of their countenances.”

Today we hear much about “revival”, but is it the same spirit that brought about The Great Awakening? No! The Great Awakening was brought about by preaching the Word of God and showing that man is a sinner and an enemy of God and needs to receive the Lord Jesus Christ or eternally burn in hell. In today’s church what one hears is how much God loves the sinner and how He wants to make him healthy and wealthy and solve all of his problems.

The Christian faith should be a great disturbance of the peace of the world. The peace that it disturbs is not the righteous peace of God, but a carnal peace that Amos comes against (**Amos 6:1**)! *“The more at peace the church is with the world, the worldlier the church becomes.”* It really got rolling in the fourth century when Constantine’s edict made everyone a Christian. Tradition says, he gave everyone a white robe and 30 pieces of silver and said, “You are now a Christian”. This is the first time on a large scale the church had

something to lose. The church was now amalgamated into the world and became acceptable. With this new position the church needed to keep a relationship with the world that would promote compromise as the order of the day. This has been something that has cursed the church and quenched the Spirit, all for the cause of maintaining social acceptability.

Times of worldly prosperity can really cause dangerous times for the church. As Amos reminds us it's never a time to take our ***“ease in Zion.”*** When the church is accepted by the world, there comes this sense to let down. This in turn supports a tendency to bring into the church luxury, pride, and vain values. This leads to indifference to God's ways, because of all the gross sins that follow along with these attitudes. Hence we find those who were once striving after godliness, now flow with the world and they lose their ability to bring conviction over men's consciences. The word being preached from the pulpit is no longer aimed to bring reformation, but it's a message to make one feel good.

This verse in Amos truly fits the present day church which is a description of pride, security, and sensuality, for which God will reckon. Careless sinners are everywhere in danger; but those at ease in Zion, who are stupid, vainly confident, and abusing their privileges, are in the greatest danger. Yet many fancy themselves the people of God, who are living in sin and in conformity to the world. It's not only those in the pews but also those in the pulpit.

There should always be some points in a sermon that make the believers feel uncomfortable about their present state and the unbelievers should sense they are law breakers and need a savior.

CHAPTER 10

We've Failed to Show The Sinner That He's A Law Breaker

In today's average American church and especially the charismatic wing, what we get at best is a pep talk. It's designed to make folks feel good about themselves and their relationship to God. Some of that is important and can be very helpful, but a steady diet of this kind of preaching will never reform a believer and it definitely won't bring the sinner under conviction. This type of preaching will attract many who think they're believers and want to feel good about themselves, but it will never bring the people to the place where they mourn over their sin and hunger for righteousness.

The church should be a place where we are instructed about Holiness, because without it we will not see the Lord (**Heb 12:14**). There should always be some points in a sermon that make the believers feel uncomfortable about their present state and the unbelievers should sense they are law breakers and need a savior. First of all the church is not the place where we should be evangelizing sinners, but because of this humanistic gospel being preached we find it attracts many religious non saved persons.

The present day charismatic and evangelical church is all about “winning souls.” As I have already spoken about they will do anything to get more souls. The criterion isn’t whether they are genuinely saved; no the goal is to get someone to say the sinner’s prayer and sign a membership card so they can count them on the church rolls. Then they can boast that 200 or whatever amount of people gave their life to the Lord.

“We are living in a day and age where man is taught to think good thoughts, high thoughts, wonderful thoughts about himself. Within the last 20 years or

so there has been a covert invasion in Christianity in America without a whimper of protest. This invasion can best be described as ‘Christian’ psychology, which is nothing more than watered-down humanism. While there are millions of people searching for answers to their complicated problems created by their increasingly complex lives, psychology comes along and attempts to answer and solve man’s sin problems and its consequences through the building up and restoration of man’s self-esteem and self-image. We are told today to get in touch with our inner self and ask the question: ‘How do you feel about yourself?’ The bottom line is, it doesn’t amount to a hill of beans what we think or feel about ourselves, but what does the Bible say and teach.

This matrimony between psychology and Christianity has created an unholy alliance which is producing some strange children that are permitting, promoting, and preaching deceiving, dangerous, and damnable false doctrines. This diabolical psychobabble of self-love is sweeping through churches today among self-seeking men in a self-centered society whose greatest

problem is a desire to worship at the altar of self. The apostle Paul warned us that one of the characteristics of the last days would be that ‘men shall be lovers of their own selves’ (2Ti 3:2).

I’m afraid many so-called fundamental/evangelical churches and preachers have fallen into the trap of teaching this mushy self-worth propaganda that seeks to camouflage itself in robes of charity and tolerance. Churches and preachers alike are abandoning their God-called purpose of holding up the mirror of God’s Word and graphically revealing to man what he really looks like in the sight of a holy God. The missing message in modern-day preaching is the Biblical doctrine of repentance, where a sinner is convinced and convicted of his exceeding sinfulness and lost condition.”

Repentance is a major doctrine in the Bible, both in the Old and New Testaments. In the New Testament the doctrine of repentance appears to be very prominent. As an example, John the Baptist began his public ministry with a call to repentance (**Mt 3:1-2**) as did Jesus with a call to repentance (**Mt 4:17**). In Acts 2

sermon on Pentecost, Peter commands repentance. In Acts 3 sermon at the Beautiful gate of the Temple, Peter interchanges the phrase “turn again” at a similar place in his presentation. This is a constant theme throughout the Bible and very systematically in the New Testament. When Jesus sent forth messengers to proclaim his gospel, he commanded them to preach repentance (**Lu 24:47; Mk 6:12**). On the day of Pentecost when the disciples were baptized with the Holy Spirit and began to **“speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance”** this being the feast of Pentecost. At that time there were dwelling in Jerusalem **“Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.”** These men heard them speak in their own language. They didn’t understand what was happening, they didn’t know what this meant. Some thought that these men were drunk, but Peter stood up and told them that what they were witnessing was not a bunch of drunkards, but they were witnessing **“that which was spoken by the Prophet Joel: And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your**

young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Ac 2:17-21). After Peter told them what they were seeing he went on to Preach the gospel concerning who Jesus is and what He did in order that men might be saved (Ac 2:22-36). In (verse 37) we see the result of Peter’s message, **“Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?”** What is the first thing that Peter says to them? Peter didn’t say, Jesus loves you and He’s waiting at the door of your heart knocking to come in. No, no! The very first word out of Peter’s mouth in response to their question of “What shall we do” was “REPENT” (Ac 2:38)!

Repentance is the very first thing a person must do in order to receive the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Nature of True Repentance

What's the nature of true repentance? There is a three-fold idea involved in true repentance.

The Protestant reformer John Calvin said that repentance “may be justly defined to be a true conversion of our life to God, proceeding from a serious fear of God, and consisting in the mortification of the flesh and of the old man, and in the vivification of the Spirit.”

He further said that “it will be useful to amplify and explain the definition we have given; in which there are three points to be particularly considered.”

“In the first place, when we call repentance ‘a conversion of the life to God’, we require a transformation, not only in the external actions, but in the soul itself; which, after having put off the old nature, should produce the fruits of actions corresponding to its renovation... In the second place, we represented repentance as proceeding from a serious fear of God. For before the mind of a sinner can be inclined to repentance, it must be excited by the knowledge of the Divine judgment.

It remains for us, in the third place, to explain our position, that repentance consists of two parts—the mortification of the flesh and the vivification of the spirit...Both these branches of repentance effects our participation of Christ. For if we truly partake of his death, our old man is crucified by its power, and the body of sin expires, so that the corruption of our former nature loses all its vigor...If we are partakers of his resurrection, we are raised by it to a newness of life, which corresponds with the righteousness of God.”

True salvation can only come when a genuine repentance takes place, where conviction of sin takes place where man sees himself as lost, guilty, desperately wicked sinner without hope or help, in danger of hell.

The message that Paul preached was: “repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ” (**Ac 20:21**). In repentance, there will be confession of sin to God (**Ps 32:5**; 51:1-4). That is saying that the sinner must recognize that he has sinned against a righteous and Holy God.

Then there must be **contrition**, where sin is abhorred and he can see himself as God sees him. He hates the sin he sees in himself and now has a godly sorrow. The scripture talk about this in the following way: **“For I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin.”** (**Ps 38:18**); **“For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of...”** (**2Co 7:10**).

When a person hates sin then he truly loves God. True repentance not only hates sin and its consequences, but it knows how displeasing it is to God and therefore wants to have no part in it.

Then **conversion** where sin is totally abandoned and is completely forsaken. **“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon” (Isa 55:7); “He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy” (Pr 28:13).** Repentance is not only a heart broken for sin, but also *from* sin. We must forsake what we would have God forgive. It should be stressed that it is not enough just to turn away from sin; one must also turn to God for salvation:

True Repentance is a Gift of God

True repentance is a “turning of life to God,” where there is a transformation, not only in the outward doings, but it has to come from the soul itself. This means that

the old nature must be put off and then it can bring forth fruits that can be in concert with the change or transformation that has taken place. A passage in the Bible that reveals the true nature of repentance is **Jer 4:1, 3-4**. What He is saying, is it won't do you any good to pursue righteousness, until the wickedness be first cast out from their inmost heart. Relating this to today's evangelism we can see that this little sinners prayer without genuine repentance will only result in the "matrimony between psychology and Christianity that has created an unholy alliance which is producing some strange children that are permitting, promoting, and preaching deceiving, dangerous, and damnable false doctrines."

A second aspect of true repentance has to be based on and induced by the fear of God. Before the mind of the sinner can even start to think of a turn around of his life style, it must be awakened by thinking upon Divine judgment. The sinner must have his thought process thoroughly fixed that God will some day finally mount His judgment seat to demand a reckoning of all words and deeds and these thoughts will not allow the man

to rest or breath freely without the continual reminder that there is a right and wrong, no matter how much he has tried to deny it so often. Scripture is replete where it mentions judgment and points to repentance. Paul's sermon to the Athenians: **“And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained...”** (Ac 17:30-31) It's because of the depravity of man's nature that God has to use severity in threatening man.

It is truly hard or better impossible to put off ourselves and move away from our inborn nature. The Bible says in this condition all emotions of the flesh [because of its carnal thoughts and purposes] is hostile to God [Ro 8:7]. So man cannot obey the laws of God and deny his nature, unless he is violently slain by the word of the Spirit and brought to nothing. The case we stated is that it is impossible for a man to put off his old nature and receive The Lord Jesus Christ unless somehow his nature is changed.

Let's now understand how this change comes about. True repentance has to take place for salvation to manifest. As we will see in the **Bible** faith and repentance are like two sides of a coin, they are always found together when a person becomes a Christian. Faith has to be in place first in order for a person to repent. Faith is the basis for repentance. The reason should be apparent, because no one can repent of their sins until they have heard the gospel concerning God's judgment against sin, and His offer of pardon and forgiveness in Jesus Christ. If the person believes this, it becomes the motive for genuine repentance.

As it has been said all along, repentance is a gift from God. God gives repentance, just as he gives faith. In scripture we see that God gave repentance to Israel (**Ac 5:31**). He gives repentance to the Gentiles (**Ac 11:18**). However, though repentance is a gift, it still is the responsibility for man to act upon it and do the repenting. In (**Mk 1:14-15**) Jesus preached that men were to believe the gospel and repent of their sins. As we already mentioned, in (**Ac 17:30**) Paul said that God **“commandeth all men every where to repent.”**

This means that when God bestows the gift man repents under the influence of the Holy Spirit to the message of the gospel. A man who has truly repented of his sins cannot and will not remain in those sins, because he has been “born again” to a new life in the Lord Jesus Christ.

This brings us back what was the motivation for this chapter, “that the church has failed to show the sinner that he is a law breaker and cannot gain the kingdom of God unless he truly repents.” There are so many today that say they are “born again”, but they continue to still live the same life styles as the world. Their interests are still worldly and the reason is because the churches that they attend are worldly, so there can never be conviction, contrition and conversion. The truly repentant person recognizes that he is guilty before God, and acknowledges it. It will manifest in his abandonment of all resistance and rebellion against the truth, God and His commandments. He will relish God’s commandments in his life and his mind changes toward everything which can be seen in his actions, so he no longer walks in sin.

