

## **Thoughts At The Beginning of 2014**

As this New Year begins and we look to the Lord to seek His will we sense that this 2014 will prove to be an eventful year as we are increasingly in serious times. It is important, therefore, that we not only hear the voice of the Lord but also examine ourselves, for we truly need to be changed. We cannot, of course change ourselves only humble ourselves before the Lord that He might change us.

As we look at that which goes by the name of 'Church' we cannot see many who are hearing the Lord, or if they are, they so often wrongly interpret what is being said, or apply to others what really is God's word to themselves. Most are still following their traditions and what they have known in the past. Men still consider men to be their leaders when Jesus said that only Christ was to be their Leader. Man is following 'man' and not the Lord. The true sons, those who are led by the Spirit, are hard to find.

We might ask ourselves the question, "How can we be right and everyone else be wrong?" except we realise it is a strait, narrow gate and a strait, narrow road that Jesus said few would find.

Many believe they are hearing the Lord, when they are not. It is incumbent upon us all, therefore, to stop and check whether we are truly hearing aright. Our safeguard in this is that we have the Holy Spirit within us to teach and lead us, and nothing will contradict the scriptures that He brought forth through men who spoke from Himself.

The realm of the Pentecostal and Charismatic typified by the Feast of Pentecost, with its permitted mixture, has existed for 2000 years, but as the end of this age draws near it has proved to be a more and more unsafe place to be. The realm of Pentecost is typified by the holy place in the temple of God, and whilst it is a necessary place to be as we approach God, it is an extremely slippery step that leads to the Holiest place typified by the Feast of Tabernacles. (The temple and tabernacle of God had an outer court, a holy place or inner court, and the holy of holies or holiest place. In the same way we move from Passover to Pentecost and on to Tabernacles, that represents fulness, in our individual walk with God. Likewise in type we also are corporately travelling through the Church Age through these same stages)

Sadly, some have chosen to stay in the outer court typified by the Feast of Passover, the Evangelical realm which denies the reality and gifts of the Spirit, denying the power of God that can degenerate into only accepting a form of godliness. This is perhaps understandable because the Pentecostal realm also sees Satan operating with a plausible counterfeit of every true thing that comes from God. The realm of Pentecost has spiritual gifts and ministry callings and supernatural events but just as there are true acts of God there are many counterfeits; whilst there are true angels, there are fallen angels passing themselves off as angels of light. Even true gifts and callings of God can be used for ulterior purposes for the gifts and callings of God are without repentance. There are miracles from God but also miracles originating from Satan. There are doctrines of men and doctrines of devils alongside the true doctrine of God; true prophecy as well as false. What cannot be counterfeited, however, is the true fruit of the Spirit. Just as Jesus taught, we can always tell any tree by its fruit.

Some react in horror at what they see in the inner court of Pentecost and return from Pentecost to the outer court that is typified by Passover, the Evangelical, and even the

nominal realm. Men shrink away from the realm of the Spirit of God to the realm of the Evangelical that relies on the seeming safety of their own intellect, but in doing so they deny the Holy Spirit's ministry as Teacher even if they do not realise they do. Some reject the real Baptism in the Holy Spirit along with that which is clearly from counterfeit spirits. Some even become cult hunters and throw out everything that goes with the true gifts of the Spirit and the call to that higher place that lies beyond Pentecost. Sadly many have already thrown out the baby with the bath water!

Others attempt to control what it is they rightly see as wrong. In the name of order men try and stop the errors and try and bring the Feast of Pentecost into a semblance of sanity. This will not work but only lead to greater deception. We cannot replace the function of the Holy Spirit in a brother by *our* control.

What is necessary is to move to higher ground and gain the life of Christ. It is not only that direct relationship with Jesus we need but also that close fellowship with our Heavenly Father. This is no new calling. It has been the calling for the whole of the Church Age but it is now becoming essential to a true walk because of what is coming upon the world and that which is coming upon that which goes by the name of 'Church'. Whilst the grace of God has seemingly covered the corporate walk which saw tares sown amongst the wheat, the end of the age sees a separation of those who are truly sons of the Kingdom from those who are sons of the evil one. This change has come whether or not it is discerned. Pentecost is over whether this is discerned and understood, or not.

This move to higher ground, typified by the Feast of Tabernacles, will cost us everything. All must be laid on the altar, even our gifts and callings. We must trust that that which is of God will not be destroyed by the fire of the direct dealings of Almighty God.

This move to higher ground necessitates true repentance. If our lives have portrayed deception and sins we must conclude that it is our rejection of the Truth that has given us over to any strong delusion. The sins seen within that which goes by the name of 'Church' are many. These include all sins of the flesh which are rife within its borders. The Church is seen to be no different to the world! But the Truth is really a person, the Lord Jesus Christ and He wants to reign and rule within our hearts as Lord and be our one and only Master.

Whereas it has seemed that the grace of God has covered much of what occurred in the court of Pentecost we must not think that it is acceptable to stay there. And let us be assured that even the worst of sinners can hear the call and come up to this higher ground that the Spirit of God is now calling every saint to attain. His grace remains but His judgement will not wait forever. But ours is not to be judge of our brother, only to judge sin and to examine ourselves. We are to be intercessors for all the saints, filled with faith as we are led by the Spirit in prayer. We will be called to snatch some out of the fire, having mercy with fear whilst hating the garment polluted by the flesh. (cf. Jude 23)

We can only attain, however, to the Holiest Place by finding the narrow way ourselves. It is not sufficient to just agree with God and His plan and purposes, we must be brought into compliance with His will and His ways. This can only be done if His life comes forth *in us* at the expense of our own life. Has it ever been any different? And we will not be able to help remove the speck from our brothers eye until we have removed the log from our own.

Pentecost is now over as it is no longer a safe place to remain and the Day of Atonement is coming. All who have operated in the court of Pentecost will know of the terrible demonic intrusions in the midst of the beauty and wonder of what was of God. The enemy, posing

as an angel of light, has been able on occasions to deceive many, even the very elect, but for them these are but preparations for the time we are now in. We have had to learn not to be naively innocent but wise, purified from that which has so easily entangled us as babes in Christ and has prevented us growing up to the fulness of Christ to a mature man. Maturity is really not an option but a necessity.

With all this in mind the trumpet has been sounding ever more loudly over these past years. Our deafness may require us to hear the trumpet sound several times but in the end there comes a day for each of us that the trumpet sound will cease. The warnings typified by the Feast of Trumpets is a finite time.

Those putting the trumpet to their mouths will not be liked. But if the watchman who sees the enemy coming and does not sound the alarm, the blood of those he has not warned will be upon his hands. (cf. Ez. 33:1-20) The stakes are extremely high. The problem is now immense. The 'Standard' must be raised.

Spiritual adultery has seen many so called Christians claiming to hear and speak for God. Those listening to man and not to God find encouragement from one another. Some false teachers and false prophets have even surrounded themselves with true brethren to give credence to their message. But falsehood produces false children. Sadly on the last day Jesus will say, "I never knew you!"

Spiritual fornication always manifests itself in the natural realm. The only remedy is repentance and even this requires the grace of God for He is the only one that can really show us the depth of our deception. Only God can enable us to fully turn and repent of our our self life, our own ways, and our seemingly good ideas that set us up for great delusion and deception and the operation of error from the enemy. Let us be assured, even a little leaven will *definitely* leaven the whole lump. The call is to come unto the Lord Jesus Christ and be separated unto Him, and Him alone. Let us flee to the mountain, that secure place of being hid in the very life and nature of the Lord Jesus Christ. The time has come for judgement to begin with the household of God. We are the temple of God (1Cor.3:16 and 2Cor. 6:16) and the Lord is already cleansing His temple. The Lord is coming back for a church that is without spot or wrinkle. Nothing else will suffice but true holiness and our being separated fully unto the Lord.

And let us not think that we are already there; that we are already changed fully into His likeness. Let us humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, recognise any stiffness of our own necks and be open to whatever is necessary in God's perfect will for our lives to be changed.

The warnings have been sounding for many years as Pentecost was coming to its end. But let us recognise the door has closed on that period of church history and let us look towards the soon coming Feast of Tabernacles, that place of fulness the whole Church must enter. God is already shaking both the heavens and the earth so that which remains will be only of His Kingdom. Warnings are coming that point to the greater judgement to come after Christ comes to gather His elect when the Righteous Judge will come to those who have not accepted Him as their Saviour and Lord.

Prophecies from the past foretell of great events, however, even before this time. There are awesome judgements of God that have been spoken out and which will be used to gain man's attention before God pours His full wrath upon this last corrupt generation. And in the soon coming time of great tribulation that will precede the great and awesome Day

of the Lord when God pours out His wrath, the good news of the Kingdom of God will be preached to all the earth for the way of escape is still available and the channel will be the true Church that has herself already broken free.

Coming is a day typified by the day of Atonement. Another step in this progression the true Church has to make. Those who reject the warnings of the Feast of Trumpets and refuse to repent and die to self will yet be cut off. A great falling away is prophesied! So as we enter this new year, 2014, let us seriously consider before the Lord our own state and examine our own selves. Let us ask for that wisdom and understanding that only the Holy Spirit can give us and all discernment which He alone can impart.

The vision given to Ezekiel in Chapter 37 shows what man is like when separated from God. Can these dry bones live? He wants us to recognise we are all the same in this respect. There is no good thing, that is in our flesh, dwelling in us. The Lord wants to show us our true state of our own selves. Not in our brother but in *us*. May the Spirit of God give us a vision of what we are like apart from His grace and may we look to our Saviour as never before that His breath might give us fully of His life.

Let us not deceive ourselves but recognise that only the pure in heart, those who are hid in the life of Jesus Christ, have direct access to the throne of God. There will be a pure, clean manifestation of the character and nature of God in His people, as a testimony to the Kingdom. The religious hypocrites of Pentecost will be taken out of the way, those who have not entered themselves and who have prevented others from entering the Kingdom of God. The stage will be set for this gospel of the Kingdom to be presented to the whole world for a witness to all nations. The righteous will multiply. Jesus is coming back for a multitude from every tribe, tongue, people and nation. What is coming soon will bring about a confrontation the likes of which we have never seen before, and will bring great tribulation, for Satan will have great wrath for he will know that his time is short. We will soon see a final confrontation with Babylon in every aspect of religion, politics and the economic system of the world. The battle will also be against humanism that endeavours to counterfeit and deceive and against Satan, the god of this world.

But let us not be discouraged. The battle that began in the garden of Eden will be won. Jesus will yet be glorified and seen as King of kings and Lord of lords and this victory belongs to the whole of His body, who we are by the grace of God. Let us lose *our* lives that His life might be seen in us. It is time for consecration.

Colin Winfield based on an article by Russell Stendal - January 2014