

BROTHERS AND SISTERS

Many people, some would-be writers amongst them, wonder how anybody begins to write an article based on biblical precepts, well of course I can only relate the way that I begin to do it. Firstly I think about a theme that most people can relate to, then I build the article around that theme using scriptural references that apply just as much now (and in many cases more so) as they did thousands of years ago. But oftentimes whilst setting out to do this, I find that in the writing of the article, the message of that article will not stay in an orderly fashion behind, and *solely* supporting, the original theme of the article. It begins to twist and turn as various scriptures that have been selected begin to take on deeper and much wider meanings and start to reveal hitherto unnoticed truths. This continuing scriptural revelation often takes many article messages beyond the confines of their intended borders, and I suppose that in a way this demonstrates how the Lord God's word is incapable of being confined to just one narrow subject. The more and the longer that any person looks into and studies the word of the one, true Almighty God, then the further that person will begin to 'see'. It can be a bit like climbing a very high hill. From the ground you see what you perceive to be its summit, but once you have made a certain amount of headway you realize that the 'summit' was only one of many contours that you eventually find make up that high hill, and finally, on reaching the *true* summit, you are rewarded with spectacular and unimagined views that have made the effort of the climb totally worthwhile. But just a word of caution, everybody must first learn to crawl before they can walk, and walk before they can run, so first, a person must learn how to climb the 'spiritual hills' before they even imagine to take on any of the 'mountains' as demonstrated by these scriptures, **Isaiah 28: 9-10**. 'To whom shall He (the Lord) teach knowledge? and to whom shall He make to understand the message? Shall it be to them who are just weaned from the milk and taken from the breasts? For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, and there a little'. And now the words of Jesus Christ from **Luke 14: 28-31**. 'For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost of it to determine that enough funds are available to finish the work? In case, unfortunately, after the foundations have been laid, the work is not able to be completed, and all that know of the matter begin to ridicule you saying, This man began to build, but was not able to finish. Or, what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first, and consider whether he is able with ten thousand of his men to meet his adversary who will come against him with twenty thousand men?' Now I'm not suggesting that I have by any means reached the top of the 'spiritual mountain' but I can say that I have a clearer understanding of just what it takes to try to reach the top, and at times it does become very hard going, but with Jesus' help we can *all* make it if we continually *and in belief* ask Him for that help.

Now, anybody reading this article must have noticed that as of yet the context of it has had nothing at all to do with relating to the title of it, this is because that by merely trying to come up with an introduction for it and by the use of just two scriptures it may well have become an article deserving of the title of something like 'look before you leap', this is how the word of God can lead each and every reader of it through the scriptures, 'here a little, there a little'. So, without further digression or deviation from 'the script', (not possible for me!), 'Brothers and Sisters'.

I imagine that all who are reading this already know that biologically, we God created humans are all intrinsically the same, except of course for the obvious differences between male and

female. We are all directly related to one another, we are ***all actually brothers and sisters in the flesh.*** We can be certain of this fact because the biblical scriptures tell us that it is so, they tell us that Adam and Eve are the divinely created progenitors of the *whole* of humankind. Let's remind ourselves of this fact by reading from **Genesis 1: 26-28.** *And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth. So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He, him; male and female He created them.* So, if I were to address anybody in the Lord's true church as `brother` or `sister`, it would be a truism, a true fact, just as it would be if I were to address anybody outside of the Lord's true church as `brother` or `sister`. Nothing then surprising or shockingly revealing about this. Surely there must be something more, or rather some `thing` more, that occurs between the people of the Lord's true church, some `thing` that brings us closer together than merely being very distantly related siblings of the flesh. We all know how `immediate` brothers and sisters can fight and argue with one another, even to the point of falling out completely and never speaking to each other again, or worse still, as in the case of Cain and Abel, one brother turning against and murdering the other, as we can read of in **Genesis 4: 8.** *And Cain talked with Abel, his brother, and it came to pass, that when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.* Now I'm not suggesting that some of the bretheren of God's true church would fall out with each other to the extent that they would want to or even try to kill each other, but we are capable of respectful serious debate and disagreement between ourselves from time to time, but this can be and indeed is, a healthy way for a church to grow, it allows everybody to have a point of view which will not necessarily be the next person's point of view and the way to resolve any differences between bretheren is for all to sit down together and consult the biblical scriptures, and find out what the word of the Lord God has to say on any disputed matter. This form of open debate prevents a church from becoming stuck fast in any suffocating dogma of past `in-church` experiences or erroneous teachings. Of course if a point of view that one of the bretheren may adhere to is known to be spiritually dangerous for them to have, that is to say it is or may become in time a `salvation issue` for that person, then for that person's sake and for the rest of the church's sake, it should be dealt with tactfully and skilfully. It should never be ignored in the hope that it will somehow fizzle out, Satan does not give up that easily! It should be with biblically inspired debate and reasoning that differing points of view within the Lord's true church should be discussed with empathy and with patient understanding, and only none `salvation issues` should be allowed to be `put on the back burner` if no definitive or positive resolution is to be immediately found. It is only when a matter is brought out into the open and debated that sooner or later a resolution *will* be forthcoming. It is neither wise nor healthy, for the Lord's true church as a whole, for a person within the church to have a point of view which they are frightened to talk about because of fear of ridicule from their fellow bretheren, their fellow brothers and sisters within the family of God. We all have different life experiences to `bring to the table`, and not all will be pleasant for others to have to listen to, but as family members we should all be `up to it`, the Lord knows this, and so did the apostle Paul as this next chapter of scripture tells us, the whole of which should be read, but for now we'll just read from this piece of **1 Corinthians 12: 12-14.** *For as the body (the church) is one, it has many members, and all the members of the body, although many, make up the whole body: so also is Christ. For by the one spirit we are all baptized into the one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have all been made to drink into one spirit. For the body is not one member, but many.* Yes I know that we

may get angry with one another, we may even depart seething and fuming, but the true Christian knows not to let this situation go on for too long within the church and that after a short `cooling off` period, agreements by all parties concerned should be diligently sought. I think that I should mention at this point that there have been over the years certain occurrences perpetrated by certain individuals (who in time left us anyway) within our particular church which, before I had been called and baptized, I would never have tolerated, and I would have simply `said my piece` and walked away, forever! But this is the difference that baptism can make, because of it there is now `something` much stronger at work within us that binds the true bretheren together, `something` more than merely just being biological brothers and sisters, `something` that prevents us from angrily walking away from God`s true church just because of one or two ignorant, controlling and arrogant so-called `ministers` in which (unfortunately for them), that `something` appears to be missing! This `something` lifts the bretheren above the everyday family attitudes towards one another. For instance, how many of you reading this know of an elderly person, perhaps a grandparent, who is living alone and has deliberately all but been totally forgotten of by their grown up and gone away sons and/or daughters. Their children only bother to communicate with them when *they* need something, or somebody reliable to babysit for them. These kind of grown up children have little sense of duty towards their elderly parents, and it would seem that they have even less love. The fifth commandment instructs each and every one of us to `Honour your father and your mother`, but like most if not all of the rest of the commandments, it is either not known about or it is arrogantly ignored. The fifth commandment is the first to have a blessing attached to it, but a warning for those who ignore it. Let`s read it from the book of **Exodus 20: 12**. `Honour your father and your mother, so that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord God gives to you`. Notice `so that your days may be long upon the land`, in other words so that you may have a long life and be living it in the land which was given to you, and where you want to be. So, who wants to grow old and with all of the associated infirmities? some may scoff. Well, with the Lord`s blessing and comforts accompanying a person into their old age, comes wisdom, understanding, patience and contentment and of course the comforting knowledge that death is just a new beginning for themselves, as opposed to the bitter resentment, fear and the overwhelming sense of despair and desperate hopelessness and the depressing and constant looking ahead to inevitable eternal death which is experienced by those who have no knowledge of the Lord or who have rejected Him and/or the obeying of His commandments.

There are many people who, in their old age, continually fill their days with a constant looking back on their lives to a time which they imagine to have *always* been better in practically every way. Of course they were younger and fitter then, life still had many mysteries to be uncovered, and a bright and rosy future was always `just around the corner`. The trouble with constantly dwelling on distant memories is that they are nearly always very selective and `cherry picked`, the good and the beautiful ones come to mind whilst the nasty and hurtful ones take a `back seat`, and in time are entirely forgotten about. This results in a person being `dead` before their time, for they have ceased to `live` in the present and instead they `live in the past`. In old age, even memories which with casual recollection appear to be `happy` can, with deeper consideration, be seen for what they really are/where. Remember all of the partying, the late nights, the over-indulgences in this and that, the uncontrolled urges given free rein and damn the consequences. In old age we may sigh and then laugh about the carefreeness and the callousness of our youth, but even so, the wise amongst us will realise just how shallow and wasteful and disrespectful it all was `way back then`, and oh the time that we wasted doing absolutely as little

as possible except enjoying ourselves usually at the expense of others, but mostly our parents! Let's read from **Job 12: 12**. `With the ancient (the old) is wisdom, and with a long life comes understanding`. If we do not eventually `honour our father and our mother` (and this opportunity may arise for a person after childhood has long passed) then we run the risk of not living long enough to attain wisdom (not to be confused with `scientific` knowledge) and all of the peace of mind that wisdom brings with it.

Wisdom that is gained from life experience is beyond price, and life experiences that have been very varied, even outrageous, can be the most precious of them all, providing that in the end, those experiences have brought that particular individual to the feet of the Lord in repentant humility. Remember the early life of the apostle Paul, or Saul as he was known then, and how he tormented and hounded the early church of Jesus Christ, even ordering some of the brethren to be dragged from their home to be taken away and probably `interrogated`. Let's read something of this from **Acts 8: 3**. `As for Saul (Paul) he began ravaging the church, entering into every house and and arresting men and women, and committing them to prison`. Jesus, now once again having taken up His divine role as God Creator, did not destroy Saul for what he had done to the church, but rather used Saul's life experiences and his zealotry to do work *for* the church rather than against it. Proper, worthwhile ingrained life-experience, is most often achieved by a person living a long life, a life which can be attained by the keeping of the fifth commandment. Remember, it is of no use shabbily treating your father or mother when they are alive and then trying to make amends by attempting to honour them when they are dead (as many try to do) by laying out as much as they can comfortably afford on a grand funeral full of ceremony, feasting and invited guests, what good is that kind of honour to a corpse? can the dead appreciate it? Honouring our living fleshly father and mother is so important for us to do because it lays the foundation for us by which we are properly able to honour our heavenly Father. Jesus Christ makes mention of the fifth commandment in **Mark 7: 9-12**. `And Jesus said to them, (the Pharisees and the scribes) Full well you reject the commandment of God, so that you can keep your own tradition. For Moses said, Honour your father and your mother; and, Whosoever curses father or mother, let him die the death. But you say, A man shall be free if he shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say a gift, (perhaps even chance) if anything worthwhile (honourable) comes because of me, to you.` Similarly, we can read in the new testament from **Ephesians 6: 1-3**. `Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour your father and mother, (which is the first commandment with promise;) so that it may be well with you, and you may live long on the earth`.

How many sane people really want to die young, before their time? young and full of unrepented of sin, of unaccomplished dreams and possibilities and untested talents? The elderly (and more particularly the elderly of the Lord God's true church) have been granted the time to reflect upon their lives and recognize and repent of their sins, many of which are habitual and hard to be recognized and admitted as being sin by those who commit them. The recognition of personal sin is an especially hard thing for the young to admit to, and so in regards to that, being allowed to live into old age can indeed be a blessing. The old have been granted time if not to *completely* overcome their personal sins, then certainly time to ask the Lord for forgiveness of them on a daily basis. For some of us, to stop sinning, (and I'm not talking about murder, rape etc.) can be a bit like giving up the habit of smoking. Some can stop right away, whilst others will make the effort but they have to cut down gradually until the day comes when they know that they can finally quit altogether. Continuing with the analogy of smoking, the question should now be asked, when and why does a person decide to give up that (to them) pleasurable habit?

Well the logical answer is when they realize that in time it will eventually cut short their precious life and kill them! *and it's the same with sin*. Humans very rarely do habitual things which are not pleasurable for them to continuously engage in, and so let's face it, sin is pleasurable to most of us and it is so easy for us to commit, it requires no effort and it is often socially acceptable especially these days, on the other hand, quitting sin is a whole different ball-game. The true Christian wants to stop sinning because: 1. We realize that our heavenly Father requires it of us, and: 2. In time we know that it will spiritually kill us, leaving us in great danger of being rejected by our God and of being cast into the lake of fire to be destroyed for evermore. Time, it's all a question of time. Should we imagine that *specific* time to try to stop sinning would be given to a possible Christian-to-be if the Lord realized that that person was only going to become more and more of an evil sinner instead of eventually repenting of their sins? We should therefore realize that if we are of the older bretheren in God's true church, even though our ageing bodies trouble us with various infirmities, aches and pains, we have been blessed, blessed with time, *living time*. Lets read **Ecclesiastes 9: 4**. *'For him that is joined to all the living, there is hope, because a living dog is better than a dead lion'*. Keeping with the smoking analogy, we all know that it is far better for a person to quit the habit whilst they are still in relatively good health rather than to try to quit when they have been diagnosed with early onset of lung disease, heart disease or some other smoking related illness. Packing in smoking, when serious illness because of it, has already been diagnosed, may well ease the condition for a while but it is by no means a cure for it, and in the end the illness will kill the person concerned. It is the same with sins, best thing to do is to try and give them up *right now*, while there is still time, while a person still has the life within them, while they still have the *living chance* to go before the Lord and ask Him for forgiveness of those sins and for his help to stop committing them, rather than having to appear before Him on the day of judgement still being bowed down by the destructive and deadly weight of them.

Of course I realize that it is not only the bretheren of God's true church who get to 'enjoy' long and even 'healthy' lives, many of the truly wicked prosper and get to grow old, often in much more opulent and pleasant circumstances than many reading this article, and why is this? well let's see what the scriptures have to tell us about such a thing, **Job 21: 7-11**. *'Wherfore do the wicked live, become old, yes, are mighty in power? Their seed is established in their lifetimes, and their offspring are before their eyes. Their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them. Their bull mates and fails not, their cows calve and do not miscarry. They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance'*. Not fair? well let's go a little further along and see what happens, **Job 24: 22-24**. *'The Lord draws also the mighty with His power: He rises up and no man is sure of his life. Though it be given him to be in safety, whereon he rests; yet His eyes are upon their (evil) ways. They are prosperous for a little while (in this lifetime) but are gone, and then brought low. They are taken out of the way the same as the others of their kind, and they are cut off as the tops of the ears of corn'*. Also, in the words of Jesus Christ concerning the God-less and the wicked (meaning the unrepentent, evil people) of this world, *'they have their reward'*, meaning that their 'reward', in other words their 'pleasure' and fulfillment is already given to them in this lifetime, because there is to be no other 'reward' for them in the next life, except of course that of judgment and sentence, which will be more often than not, eternal death. Now, still concerning the wicked, the really unrepentent, evil people of this world, I think that there is something which should be made clear, many reading this article will already have heard of or have read this next piece of scripture from the book of **Ezekiel 18: 4**. *'Behold, (says the Lord) all souls are Mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is Mine: the soul that sins, it shall die'*. Well, the first thing that will hit the

Christian reader right between the eyes with regards to that statement is the realization that we are all sinners! Christian or non-Christian! Yes we are and to prove it let`s read from **1 John 1: 8 and 10.** `If we say that we have no sin, then we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him (God, Jesus Christ) a liar, and His word is not in us`. So what separates us true Christians from any other sinner on this earth? where is our escape route from eternal damnation and death? Well, let`s now read the verse that I left out which will answer those questions, **1 John 1: 9.** `If we confess our sins, (through daily prayer, to God the Father and Jesus Christ) **He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness`.** This is not, as some may think, an easy `get-out-of jail-card` for every sin that a person (*any* person) may choose to use as and when it pleases them. The Lord God is not fooled, He recognizes true Christians, those who are His, those who try their best to keep His commandments and who come to Him in genuine belief and ask for forgiveness and for help to stop sinning. The *truly* evil people of this world follow their leader, Satan, they think that they too have an eternal life after death, a life of living and fulfilling every demonic pleasure and debauchery that enters into their head. **They are wrong!** they will be utterly destroyed along with Satan and all of his demons in the lake of fire. (Read the article, `Can Satan be Destroyed?`) There is a list of some of their kind, the unrepentent evil people of this world, in **Revelation 22: 15.** `For outside are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolators, and whosoever loves and makes a lie`. The fate of these evil ones is outlined in **Revelation 21: 8.** `The cowardly and the unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolators, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death`.

So, are the wicked, the truly evil people of this world, our brothers and sisters? Yes, yes they are, but with one big difference, they are our brothers and sisters in the flesh, and only in the flesh! as opposed to our fellow true Christians who are also our brothers and sisters in spirit, in Christ Jesus. Myself, and I suppose most if not all who are reading this article, were once amongst the damned and/or the unrepentent of this world, until we answered our calling which then proceeded to separate us spiritually from the rest of our fleshly brothers and sisters, and we can read of this fact in **1 Corinthians 6: 9-11.** `Don`t you know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor the effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind (practising homosexuals, paedophiles etc.), nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you, but now you are washed, you are sanctified (set apart), you are justified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the spirit of our God`. Although we are sinners, the true Christian can take heart. There will of course be a chance for all who have ever lived to repent, but as we in God`s true church already know, the best time is right now, in this present lifetime, because the rewards that go with overcoming this Satanically-driven world are great indeed! *Importantly it should be recognized, that the true Christian overcomes evil because of their love for Jesus Christ and all that He represents and stands for, and not because of any promised future reward!*

Let`s now return to dealing with the fact that many of the wicked people of this earth, our fleshly brothers and sisters, are seen to be allowed to grow old, have large families and generally prosper. We`ll go back to the book of Job and continue reading from where we read the last scripture, **Job 21: 12-15.** `They (the wicked) take the tambourine and the harp, and they rejoice at the sound of the organ. They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment (no lingering death) go down to the grave. Therefore they say to God, Depart from us; because we do not desire the

knowledge of Your ways; what is the Almighty that we should serve Him? and what profit should we have if we pray to Him? Well, there is One who is greater than Job who has something to say about this unevenly balanced state of affairs, about the `haves` and the `have not`s` of this world. Jesus Christ has given us all an insight into the fact that that which was happening back in Job`s time, was happening in His time upon this earth and is still happening in our time and will continue to happen until the `Day of the Lord`. We`ll read this scripture taken from Christ`s `sermon on the mount`. **Matthew 5: 10-12.** `Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness` sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, because you follow Me and keep My commandments. Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, because in like manner they persecuted the prophets who came before you`. The true Christian must also be humble when doing good works, they should be done `secretly` so if at all possible it is only the Lord who knows about them. Only the big-headed hypocrites of this world make a great show about doing charitable works and donating sums of money which they can all *easily* afford anyway! Let`s read about such things as spoken of by Jesus in **Matthew 6: 1-2.** `Take heed that you do not perform your charitable deeds before men, so that you can be seen to be doing them: otherwise you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. Therefore when you perform your charitable deeds, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may have the admiration of men. Truly, I say to you, they have their reward`. and **verse 5.** `And when you pray, you shall not be as the hypocrites are, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets so that they may be seen by people. Truly, I say to you, they have their reward`. So, should the true Christian in anyways be jealous, even just a little bit, of the lives that the wicked, their fellow sisters and brothers in the flesh, find so easy and enjoy so much? Let`s consider these next words of Jesus very carefully, `Therefore I say to you, Do not worry about the life that you live, of what you shall have to eat, or of what you shall have to drink; neither for your body, of how you will be clothed. Is not life more than food and drink? and the body more than clothes?` There is also this scripture which is worth bearing in mind, it`s from the book of **Proverbs 24: 1.** `Do not be envious of evil men, neither desire to be with them`. If the Law of God was to be *truly* recognized, *applied* and adhered to by those in authority instead of being just a wishy-washy series of compromises in favour of the criminal fraternity, which it has now become, then the evil works of evil men would not go unpunished in this lifetime, **Ecclesiastes 8: 11.** `Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil`. It is obvious that if everybody, evil and good alike, all had exactly the same to live on, ie. enough food and drink and adequate clothing, then nobody would have an honest reason to be envious of anybody else. It`s only when people start to look at one another with `evil eyes` that envy creeps in. So, what envious concern should it be of yours if your brother and sister down the road are evil criminals and have all of the wealthy trappings that go with their chosen position in life? The true Christian knows of the *final* consequences of living that life of crime, and that this very short lifetime is far better lived keeping the commandments of our great God and having the patience and the *faith* to wait for His *everlasting* reward in the next life, than for us to try and create ephemeral, undeserved rewards for ourselves in this one. The apostle Peter also has some valuable words for us to take heed of, for we must always bear in mind that although the true Christian has been called and chosen, none of us can afford to become smug and complacent in this knowledge, for as long as we are living this life we will always be in danger of becoming a victim of the relentless onslaught of Satan and his

demons who are always ready to kill us spiritually us if we let our guard down. Satan always tries to get his agents, demons or otherwise, to infiltrate God's *true* church. We can see how supremely successful he has already been in influencing and thereby spiritually destroying the *whole* of the so-called `christian` churches of this world, mainstream and otherwise! Those of us who have been called and chosen will suffer the worse condemnation if we start to slide back into the evil and misguided ways of *any* of the false `christian` churches of this world. **2 Peter 2: 9, 10, 14, 17 and 20-22.** `The Lord (Jesus Christ) knows how to deliver the godly out of trials, and to reserve the unjust until the day of judgment to receive their punishment. But chiefly those who walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and who despise authority, for they are presumptuous and self willed and are not afraid to speak evil of law abiders. They have eyes full of adultery and cannot cease from sinning, they are beguiling (enticing) and unstable souls, they have a heart that is well exercised in covertous practices; they are cursed children. These are wells without water, clouds that are carried along with the storm; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved forever. For if, after having escaped from the corruptions of this world because of and through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therby and therein, and overcome, the latter end for them is worse than the beginning, because it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than, after having known and experienced it, to turn from the holy commandment that had been delivered to them. But it happened to them as according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to eat its` own vomit; and the sow that was once washed has gone back to wallow in the filth`. And now for one very sobering piece of scripture for those who think that they can explain away to the Lord their belonging to a false `christian` church by saying that they were merely deceived, **Jonah 2: 8.** `They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy`. What about the prayers that are offered up from within these false `christian` churches on their false `sabbath` day which they call `sunday` and on their other numerous false `christian`, pagan assemblies and festivals such as `christmas` and `easter`, does the Lord hear and act upon them? or are they, like the rest of their false worship, just a waste of time because they are deliberately ignoring the commanments of God? well let`s let the scriptures answer that, **Proverbs 28: 9.** `He that turns away his ear from hearing (obeying) the law, even his prayer shall be an abomination`. One thing is for sure for *all* of us whether we be sinners or saints, we must all eventually die. For some of us death will be gradual and expected, for others tragic and unexpected. But for the Lord`s chosen the transition from death into a new, incorruptable, *eternal* body will be `in the twinkling of an eye`, as opposed to the truly evil who will be raised from the dead only to face the judgment and the wrath of the Lord. **1 Corinthians 15: 51-52.** `Behold, I reveal to you a secret. We shall not all sleep, (die, and then wait in death) but we shall all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead (that is to say the dead in Christ, His followers in this lifetime) shall be raised incorruptable, and we shall be changed`. Even right up to the great and terrible `day of the Lord`, the great tribulation, the world will still be carying on in its` same old, evil ways, until suddenly. . . well let`s allow the words of Jesus Christ tell us what will happen, **Matthew 24: 37-39.** `But as happened in the days of Noah, so shall also the (second) coming of the Son of man be. Just as in the days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, right up unto the day that Noah entered into the ark. And they did not believe that the flood would come upon them, and then it came, and took them all away; in like manner so shall the (second) coming of the Son of man be`. As in the days of Noah, the people of this world, our fellow brothers and sisters in the flesh, were given many warnings, and opportunities to repent of their evil, commandment-breaking

ways, but they did not believe that which they were told, and so they suffered the terrible consequences of their un-repent-ed-of, pagan, Satanic ways. Some of the saints who will be alive right up until the beginning of the great tribulation will be `taken` and so spared from having to go through it as Jesus further tells us in **Matthew 24: 40-41**. `Then shall two people be in the field, one shall be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding at the mill, one shall be taken and the other left`.

Make no mistake, when we who have repented of our sins, or those of us who have died not fully realizing that we have sinned, (that is to say, NOT deliberate, wilfull sinners) are dead, we are dead, we enter into ``the Lord`s rest``, and there we remain until the Lord `awakens` us. There is no `heaven` where our dead loved ones live out eternity in some kind of fluffy existence of supreme happiness and contentment, (not to mention extreme boredom) but there is a `hell`, a place where the souls of the wilfull and unrepentant wicked, wait for their ``day of judgment``. There are no `ghosts` of dead humans, there are no wandering, `tormented spirits` of dead people, and there is nobody dead trying to contact loved ones from `the other side`, there are however the demonic spirits who pretend to be departed loved ones!! Let`s read **Psalm 6: 5**. `For in death, there is no remembrance of You (the Lord): In the grave, who shall give You thanks?` And also this from **Psalm 88: 10-12**. `Will You (the Lord) show your wonders to the dead? shall the dead praise You? Shall Your loving kindness be declared in the grave? or Your faithfulness in destruction? Shall Your wonders be known of in the dark? and Your righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?` And, **Psalm 115: 17**. `The dead do not praise the Lord, neither do any who go down into silence`. And also from the book of **Ecclesiastes 3: 19-20**. `For that which befalls the sons of men also befalls beasts; even one thing befalls them: as the one dies, so dies the other, yes, they all have but one breath; so that a man has no pre-eminence over a beast: for all is vanity. All go to one place, all come from the dust, and to the dust they all return`. What? is there to be no life after death then? is a man really just the same as a beast? well, as far as being flesh and blood is concerned, yes! but let`s read the next verse, **verse 21**. `Who can tell (where it goes to) the spirit of a man that goes upwards, and the spirit of a beast that goes downwards to the earth?` As we have just read, there is a difference between men and beasts as far as `spirit` is concerned, and this is confirmed in **Job 32: 8**. `But there is a spirit in mankind, and the inspiration of the Almighty gives them understanding`. So where does a person`s spirit go when they die? we have read that it `goes upwards`, but what can that mean? well we have the answer further on in the book of **Ecclesiastes 12: 7**. `Then shall the body return to the earth where it came from, but the spirit shall return to the Lord God who gave it`. Having read that last scripture, this question must now be asked; if the spirit, (now `used` as it were) gets returned the rightful owner who gave it in the first place, should we suppose that He would want to keep it if it is (because of unrepented of sin) damaged or corrupted beyond repair? We should make no mistake, the spirit of the Lord that at first dwells in each and every baptized, true Christian can be damaged, even to the point of it being quenched (put out, killed) altogether, and we can read of a warning for any person not to do this in the book of **1 Thessalonians 5: 19**. `Quench not the spirit`.

We are all of the family of man, the same family that began with Adam and Eve, nearly six thousand years ago, we did not `evolve`, we were created by the `Elohim`, two almighty Gods both equal in power and love, and who we know of as God the Father and God the Son. We were created to exist as brothers and sisters in the flesh, the only and significant difference between each and every one of us was to be and still is, how we use our precious gift of free will and of our willingness to sacrifice some of that free will in order to comply with the commandments of

our Creator. Sadly, for most of the people of this world, our fellow brothers and sisters in the flesh, this is too high a price to pay, it just `gets in the way` of what their Satanically led, carnal minds desire to do, and what they more often than not want to do is to disobey the Lord God`s instructions, *this is what sin is!* Ultimately, our sins against others are sins committed directly against God! Yes they are, let`s read from **Psalm 51: 3-4.** `For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is continually before me. Against You (the Lord God), and You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight. . .` The ten commandments are more than just a lot of `killjoy` rules and regulations that have been put in place to make our lives less enjoyable, they are in fact `a way of life` that leads to *eternal* life, they are the key objectives, to anybody who sincerely tries to keep them, to be able to accurately and honestly state that they truly do know and love our Creator, Jesus Christ. Let`s read Jesus` own words about this in **John 14: 15.** `If you love Me, keep My commandments`. Simple! So simple in fact that so-called `christians` who willingly and disobediently and defiantly keep `sunday` in place of the commanded Sabbath day, (the fourth commandment) have no excuse, and they have no right to say that they know and love our Saviour Jesus Christ! How can they possibly have that right??? That right has to be earned. The keeping of the one and only Sabbath day has always been a struggle for those of us who are determined to try their best to please our Lord God, but it is even more of a struggle in these 24/7, Satanically-inspired-religion led times, in which we find ourselves living. Even so, the Lord our God is so gracious. All of the true Christians will certainly receive immeasurably great rewards for their faithfulness, but as for the `also rans`, the followers of the great false `christian` churches of this world, well it`s really not for me to say, but maybe they can take comfort in these next scriptures which will apply to some of them, **Exodus 33: 19.** `And the Lord said, (to Moses) I will make all of My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before you, and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will show mercy on whom I will show mercy`. Now we`ll couple that scripture with this one, **Romans 4: 6-8.** `Even as David also describes the blessedness of the man, to whom the Lord imputes righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin`. But even so, why would anybody want to take the risk of playing `Russian roulette` with their eternal life? It is far better for a person to make honourable and acceptable `sacrifices` to the Lord in this life than to be continually faced with uncertainty about their chances of being allowed to exist at all in the next.

Those of us within the true church of God will be protected if any are alive upon this earth at the time of the great tribulation. As for the rest of the world, our fellow brothers and sisters in the flesh, it is our duty at this time is to warn them of the dire peril that they are in, not only from the great tribulation to come, but because of their present and continuing, deliberate disregard for obeying *any* of the Lord God`s commandments. We in God`s true Christian church can only do our little bit as individuals and as one body the church, and in most cases *it is* only a little bit, but if the Lord is to use any of our efforts now matter how small they may be, they must all be done to the best of our capabilities. Let`s read the words of the Lord God from the old testament who, as we are told in the new testament, was to be born flesh and blood and then be named Jesus, **Isaiah 58: 1.** `Cry aloud, do not hold back, raise your voice as loud as a trumpet, and show My people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins`. Let`s face it, if we were charged with warning and protecting our immediate biological brothers or sisters, or indeed any of our family or friends, and we had the ability to do so, then we would, mainly because we know and love them. Even so, we can warn the rest of the world, we do not have to know them or they us, and as for loving them, well, the fact that we try to warn them at all is in itself an act of love!

Having just read some relevant scriptures we know that there are, and will continue to be, many of our brothers and sisters in the flesh *and* in the spirit (the spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ) who will suffer in one way or another, before they/we die and there will be others who will not suffer so much, if really at all. Some suffering that a fellow true Christian undergoes can be because of the direct intervention of our Lord God rather than being the result of pure chance, a `hands on` intervention if you like. The Lord is not being nasty or sadistic when He invokes or allows one of His family of chosen ones to suffer, He always has a good reason for it and He knows that the final outcome for that person will be an improvement if not necessarily materially then certainly spiritually. In the book of Job we can read of the terrible things that the Lord *allowed* Satan to inflict upon Job, and Job was not an evil man, in fact he was righteous in God`s eyes, but he had one thing wrong within himself, he *knew* that he was righteous, and he did not handle that knowledge in a way that was altogether pleasing to the Lord. Not many, if any, of us should expect to have to suffer the horrible things that happened to poor old Job, mostly I suspect because we are not righteous enough to endure such testing, however we will be tested with suffering but not so much of it that we cannot bear it, and there is a new testament scripture that tells us as much, **1 Corinthians 13**. `There has not been any testing of yourselves except that which is common to all men: but God is faithful, He will not allow you (as individuals) to be tested above that which you are able to bear, and so alongside the testing He will provide a way to end it, so that you will be able to bear it`. All of humankind suffers, all of our brothers and sisters, some more than others, good and evil, but the true Christian has the advantage, we have our faith to comfort us and to carry us through, even to the point of being able to comfort those who have no faith as we can read of in **2 Corinthians 1: 3-4**. `Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in our afflictions, so that we are in turn able to comfort them who are afflicted because of the comfort which we receive from our God`. The Lord God, in the shape and form of Jesus Christ, suffered and died, tortured to death for agonizing hours upon hours so that we should have a means of escape from the punishment of eternal death. God knows what suffering is. He, as Jesus Christ, did not suffer a *lifetime* of pain, but He had to live with the knowledge of the agony that He would have to one day endure for the sake of mankind, for thousands or maybe even millions of years. He could have decided at any time to reject the plan of becoming `Emmanuel`, God with us in the flesh and, when undergoing that slow, agonizing death on that cross-piece attached to the torture stake, He still had the power to stop it, *instantly*. Jesus did not know how long He would have to endure, He left all that in the hands of His heavenly Father. Because of the manner of the torturous death of crucifixion, Jesus could have been left to suffer for a day or more, and He knew it, but God the Father stopped His suffering, He provided a way out after about six agony-racked hours. So, those of us bretheren within God`s true church, who sometimes begin to despair because of the state of our weak, fleshly bodies and start to feel that we alone have somehow been singled out to experience pain and/or misery above and beyond that of anybody else, need not think that way, because we are in the greatest of company. Not only have thousands of saints preceded us in their sufferings including healthy young men, women, and even children but also the Creator of all life, Jesus Christ Himself, and these all gave themselves up to suffer and some to be murdered because of their faith. Some will have had doubts, they were afraid, but ultimately they overcame all such things because they possessed the sure knowledge (faith) that there are far more precious things to aim for (and which will exist for eternity) beyond this present life. We can read of just some of the trials which our brothers and sisters who have gone before us had to endure, but endure them they did! **Hebrews 11: 35-38**.

Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance (by giving in to their torturers) so that they may receive a better (reward in the) resurrection. Others had trials of cruel mockings and floggings and of being chained and imprisoned. Others were stoned, they were sawn in two, or tempted (possibly with bribes), some were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins (no nice clothes) being destitute, afflicted and tormented. (Of whom the world was not worthy) they wandered in deserts and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. If we, the brothers and sisters of the Lord God's true church who are alive now, never experience pain or suffering in this life, how can we ever expect to have anything in common with or be on an equal footing with our brothers and sisters, the saints, who have lived, suffered and died before us? Love, suffering, sacrifice, endurance and faith should be the things that we all have in common, because if we do not have these things in common, then ultimately anything else that we do have, isn't worth having. It should be understood that the greatest of these characteristics is love, because if we have love, love for our fellow brothers and sisters in this present world, then personal suffering, sacrifice, endurance and faith automatically follow! Let's read this piece of scripture written by the apostle Paul from the book of **1 Corinthians 13: 2.** 'And although I might have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and have all knowledge, and if I had complete faith in so much that I could move mountains with it, but I did not have love, then I am nothing'.

We who are the bretheren of the Lord God's true church cannot escape the fact that we *are* brothers and sisters *in the flesh* with *all* of humankind, but we strive to go one step better, and this step begins with our baptism into the living church of God. In order to become brothers and sisters in spirit, we must first receive the *holy spirit* which is freely given to us through the laying on of hands *directly after* our baptism, and it is the holy spirit that binds us together more completely and stronger than any flesh and blood relationship ever can, but more importantly, it brings all of us together into the very family of God Himself, our *eternal* family! Let's read from the book of **Galations 4: 3-7.** 'Even so we, when we were children, we were held captive by the principals of this world, but when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law in order to redeem them that were under the law, so that we may possess the right that is accorded to all sons. And now, because you have become sons, the Lord God has sent forth the spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, (Daddy) Father. Wherefore you are no longer a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of the Lord's through (by way of) **Jesus Christ**'. Without God's holy spirit dwelling within us we would soon go the way of all fleshly families, falling out amongst ourselves and never forgiving, bearing grudges, being covetous and jealous, fighting, and drifting away and forgetting one another. Now there will be times when the holy spirit moves one or more of us to depart from the immediate company of the rest of the bretheren, but this is more often than not to do any further 'work' that the Lord may require of us, and although it may not feel 'comfortable' to have to do it at the time, a true Christian's faith will see him or her accomplish it. This is why baptism and the laying on of hands is so important, it creates a very special bond between the true bretheren of God's true Christian church. Of course it may not, for a long time, 'feel' that way, a true Christian may still 'feel' that they love their flesh and blood brother or sister more than they love their spiritual brother or sister within the church, but there will be a day when the true Christian comes to realize that love is more, *much more*, than just kind words, 'hugs and kisses'. So, do you want to know what *true* love is? Do you want to know who/what our God is? **1 John 4: 16-21.** 'And we have known and we believe the love that God has for us. **GOD IS LOVE.** And he that dwells in love, dwells in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made complete, so that we

may have confidence in the day of judgment, because as He is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear, because fear brings torment. He that fears (that is a cowardly fear) is not made perfect in love. We love God because He first loved us. If a man says that he loves God, but he hates his brother, then he is a liar, because he who does not love his brother, who he has seen, how can he love God who he has not seen? And so this commandment we have given to us by God, that he who would love God, should also love his brother`. Also, any *true* Christian should not become arrogant in their faith towards their *fleshly* brothers and sisters, we should always remember that we were once as they are, and that it is only because of the love of God towards us that we have been given the knowledge of Him that we have, let`s read from **Titus 3: 2-6**. `To speak evil of no man, not to be brawlers, but to be gentle, showing gentleness to all men. For once, we ourselves were also foolish, disobedient, deceived, indulging in various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, being hateful and hating one another. But after that, the love and kindness of God our Saviour appeared (to us), not because of any works of righteousness that we may have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration (baptism), and renewing of the holy spirit which He shed abundantly upon us through Jesus Christ our Saviour`. Baptism is so important for the would be Christian to undergo, so important in fact that even before Jesus started His ministry in earnest upon this earth, John the baptist was pre-ordained to come before Him and start baptizing the people who believed in God and who recognized that they were sinners and that they needed to be washed of their sins so that they could pick up and continue their lives with a `clean slate`. But when Jesus appeared `on the scene`, baptism took on a whole lot more significance. Let`s read **Luke 3: 16**. `John (the baptist) answered, saying to them all, I indeed baptize you with water, but One mightier than I comes, the strap of whose shoes I am not worthy to undo, for He will baptize you with the holy spirit and with fire`. I wonder how many people, true Christians or otherwise, recognize the fact that even God Himself, in the shape and form of Jesus Christ, *did not* begin His ministry here on earth *before* He was baptized. Now, bearing that fact in mind, how much less capable then should we suppose any `christian` to be, in trying to do the good work of the Lord if they themselves have not been baptized and undergone the laying on of hands to receive God`s holy spirit? Quite simply, baptism, (full, water immersion baptism) is a right of passage, *the only way*, by which any true Christian may begin the work of the Lord that has been allotted for them to perform.

And so to re-iterate, it is this post-baptism laying on of hands which allows God`s holy spirit to dwell within each true Christian, and this holy spirit binds all true Christians one to another in spiritual brotherhood and sisterhood. Of course, just as any fleshly brothers and sisters, we in God`s true church may agree to dis-agree on some things, but these `things` should never be `salvation issues`, if any of these arise then they should be taken very seriously indeed, they should *never* be shrugged off and `buried under the carpet`, because this is how Satan begins to destroy a church.

Although all true Christians have many good things in common, we are all still individuals and should remain as such and be respected as such. The Lord God does not want a church full of `yellow pencils` with all of the bretheren being dressed the same, all thinking the same, all liking the same kind of music and driving the same kind of car. If the Lord had wanted this then He would have settled upon having Adam, cloned billions of times! The Lord especially does not want any of His children to be committing amongst themselves the same sin or sins because they are all following the dictates and ideologies of their minister or pastor instead of reading the scriptures for themselves and making their own informed and openly debated decisions, because,

well, let's read what this this next scripture has to tell us

Philippians 2: 12. `Wherefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not only when I am present with you, but now much more in my being absent from you, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling`. Now, that being the case, nobody, `christian` or otherwise, will have any grounds whatsoever, come the day of their judgment, to be able to turn round and blame another person for the mistakes that they have made as regards their proper worship and conduct towards the Lord God in this lifetime. The Lord God wants a family of children, of brothers and sisters who are slavishly alike in only one important thing, and that is our complete obedience to, and our complete trust, in Him, and only Him! This will not be difficult, because if we *truly* love Him, then obedience and trust will go hand-in-hand with that love.

As most of us must already know, growing up from a child to adulthood is a `painful` process, but on reflection the hard and `painful` lessons that most of us learned were, on the whole, a necessary and a vital part of our early development. Reading and coming to understand that we must obey God's word is the same for the would-be true Christian as once again having to grow up from being a child to eventual adulthood. It is this realization that can dissuade many from undertaking the true Christian spiritual journey, after all, who in their `right mind` would want to go through something like puberty all over again? Now, bearing that in mind, we can better understand that being a true Christian is not initially something that a person chooses to be, it is what the Lord God calls that person to be, but having been called there is yet one further step that the individual has to take, he or she has to accept and act upon that calling, be baptized and even then, after all that, the individual has still to be *chosen* by the Lord. Knowing this then, it can be clearly recognized that by merely going to university or some other such government recognized institution, and obtaining a degree in `divinity` means absolutely nothing in the eyes of the Lord God as regards that particular individual's capabilities or credentials to be a suitable ambassador who represents Him or His teachings. Therefore be warned, because it is more likely than not to be the opposite, the world's so-called `christian` churches are full of ministers who are in fact antichrists! Growing to be a mature, true Christian is a life-long learning experience, and as we learn little by little then we know to teach others little by little. The Lord knows the importance of *gradual* learning and growth as we can read of in **Isaiah 66: 7-8.** `Before she was in labour, she gave birth, before she was in pain she was delivered of a man child. Who has heard of such a thing? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for after Zion had been in labour, she brought forth her children`. Now couple that scripture with this scripture which we have previously read at the beginning of this article, **Isaiah 28: 9-10.** `To whom shall He (the Lord) teach knowledge? and whom shall He make to understand doctrine? those that are weaned from the milk and newly drawn away from the breast? For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little`.

Yes, as begotten children of God, and therefore brothers and sisters in spirit, there is something that binds each and every true Christian together. It is something stronger than fleshly, human family ties, it is something that keeps us (whenever possible) constantly gathering together to keep the weekly Sabbaths and the yearly holy days and feast days. Some of us will be removed from our fellow brothers and sisters, perhaps for the rest of our present lifetime, but we should always remember this, NOTHING can or ever will separate us from the One who provides us with that binding which keeps us so closely together spiritually. For a closing scripture we'll read from **Romans 8: 35-39.** `Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall

tribulation or distress, or persecution or famine, or nakedness or peril or war? As it is written, For Your sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord`. Brothers and sisters in spirit we are, and brothers and sisters in spirit we will remain, *for ever!*