

## Discerning the Spirits of the World

Certain people outside of the Community have a problem with our saying that Christianity is the most degraded religion that has ever been under the sun. This means that Islam isn't. Obviously, it hasn't degraded. It is the same as it has always been. They have the same beliefs, they dress the same, have the same manner and customs, and have the same agenda. They are getting greater, I guess.

But Christianity has degraded into an established religion, an established church, supported by the civil authorities. It is getting more and more that way, even in America. It started out perfect, filled with the Holy Spirit. But it *became* something different, which indicates *transition*. This probably offends certain Christians. She has been brought into disrepute, to the point of matching the description in Rev 18:2:

*And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird!"*

In the beginning, the church, the Edah, was a dwelling place of His Spirit. Then Rev 18:2 says she *became* a dwelling place of evil spirits. Gradually, they left their first love, just as David exhorted Solomon *not* to do, "...for if you seek for Him you will find Him, but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you" (1 Chr 28:8-10).

Christianity is a religion forsaken by God, but not forsaken by unregenerate men. It has become a dwelling place, not of God's Spirit anymore, but of spirits masquerading as spirits of righteousness (2 Cor 11:13-15). The word *degraded* means fallen into a degeneration of structure and function. Christianity has not the same structure or function as the First Church. It is analogous to someone who has forsaken his or her righteousness. The Church has forsaken its righteousness. Acts 2 and 4 gives a picture of the structure and function of the Body of Messiah. Christianity has degenerated from

that time, when it was called “The Way.”<sup>1</sup> It was the way to life. It is no longer the way. It degenerated into what would be called *salable*, meaning “possible to sell.” Something no longer salable is no longer fit for marketing. Our maté would no longer be fit for marketing if it had been sitting for years, as some people sell aged maté, saying, “Oh yes, it has been sitting for years. It’s aged and dry...” (but they don’t say, “all the nutrients are gone”).

The Church has fallen to a state of disgrace and of low esteem in the sight of God. It is a building in disrepair, unable to be restored. The foundation is wrong and everything is totally unable to be restored. Other religions have not fallen as far from where they began. Christianity has fallen farther than any religion. It is not us saying that Christianity is fallen, but the Word of God says it (Rev 18:2).

### **1 Jn 2:15 — What is Loving the World?**

I guess the enemy wasn’t working against the other religions as he was against the true religion. Maybe he was promoting them. Now the enemy is promoting Christianity. It is a fallen religion. Jms 1:27 says that Christianity is a fallen religion too, for it is stained by the world. Jms 1:26 — Bridling your tongue is an individual thing, and we are to be careful what we are saying. We have to draw the line somewhere. We can’t go over the boundary where our words hurt others. If you cross these lines, your religion, as Jms 1:26 says, is in disrepair — worthless, useless.

We will probably write a book or paper on Super Bowl Sunday. We were trying in 1975 as best we could to fit in with the way things were, but they closed down church for Super Bowl Sunday night. That was the last time we entered the door of the church. The next Sunday we gathered in the park.

If you had a test or a quiz to see how many things most Christians consider the things of the world in 1 Jn 2:15, what would be on it? What would be left off of it? What

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<sup>1</sup> As in verses like Acts 9:2; 19:9,23; and 24:14, etc.

are the “things of the world” in that verse? What would you list if you were to apply it to today as the Holy Spirit meant it? There was no Super Bowl back then. Would they have meant the Greek games? There were no television, radio, and newspaper sports sections then.

What are the things of the world? What did the Holy Spirit mean when He said that through the apostle John? 1 Jn 2:15 — What would be included (and left out) on our list of all the things that are of the world? What would you leave out? You could probably name fifteen things. What is a thing that you love? You look at 1 Jn 2:15. There are two ways love is spoken about here. If you *love* the things of the world, the *love* of the Father is not in you.

“Do not love the world. If any man loves the world then the love of the Father is not in Him.”<sup>2</sup> What does it mean to love the world? To find one’s joy in it? You may find joy in volleyball. So does that mean it is of the world? Just because you find joy in it doesn’t mean it is of the world. You have to learn what is of the world. Our Father has given us volleyball to learn to interact with one another without getting hostile or angry. It could be a thing of the world if it became a big event.

Christians will not admit that football, basketball, and baseball are things of the world. They would not consider Pastor Ben Haden of the First Presbyterian Church in Chattanooga to be of the world. Some would say he is the “greatest preacher” on the face of the earth who even has a television and radio program called “Changed Lives” — even though he closed his church for the Super Bowl on Sunday night. I guess he did it because he knew no one would come. So, did his church have true religion, unstained by the world?

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<sup>2</sup> For more on this, see the teachings, “Four Kinds of Love” [2001.01.17-T01] and “My Servant Israel” [2002.05.00-T02], especially the section titled “The Love of the World” on pages 3 and 4.

But Jms 1:27 is not even talking about them, really, but about us, who can still be stained. Christians are totally stained by the world. The letter was written to the First Church, which was then being stained by the world. The first letter of John was written to combat the Gnosticism that was taking them over. Look for the word “know” in 1 John. Count them: “know, know, know...” 1 Jn 2:15 could apply to us according to what we find our joy in.

The joy that comes from something that our Father considers a thing of the world is a joy that comes from other spirits. It comes from other spirits because the world is controlled by spirits, as we know and understand by 1 Jn 5:19. You can understand from 2 Cor 4:4 and Jms 4:4 what loving the world is, and what fellowship with the world is, and what fellowship with those spirits is. It is not talking about the people of the world, whom God loves, but the evil spirits in the world.

Jms 4:4; 2 Cor 4:4; and 1 Jn 2:15 is talking about the spirits of this world. It is finding one’s joy socially in the things of the world. We used to say, “You can shout your head off over a football game, grind your teeth over a lost golf ball, but be strangely unemotional about the Kingdom of God.” We came in from the world and knew every player, their weight, where they came from. You kept up with it because you found your joy in it.

The love of God is not in your heart if you love the world and the things of the world. [*Yoneq repeated this statement three times.*] It is in it no more than if you see a brother in need and you don’t do anything about it (1 Jn 3:17). Therefore, you can know the love of God is not in your heart if you don’t go to meet his need, helping him, praying for him. This is the 1 Jn 3:16 type of love, the love of God, which causes us to lay down our lives for our brothers as He laid down His life for us.

## **The Love of the World and the War in Iraq**

1 Jn 2:15 – What is an example of the things of the world? What can you get socially involved in, so that you find your joy in it, or are fascinated by it? It is the direction of the will and becomes more thrilling than a teaching, more exciting than the Word of God. People get so excited about the war in Iraq, saying we need to slaughter the Muslims, or at least the government. So, what would happen if America took over? Well, Hollywood and pornography would come in.

ha-êmeq – They could quit wearing those Bible clothes and start to look like everybody else.

So, we can't get involved, especially emotionally involved, in the war. We don't know what we are doing if we do. The United States thinks it is doing good, but it might be doing the most evil thing in the whole world.

We have to be careful that we don't love the world, or the things of the world, or take our social pleasure in it. When we become emotionally involved, we are being stimulated by those spirits. 2 Cor 4:4; Jms 4:4; 1 Jn 5:19 – Satan is working everywhere.

The right wing, fundamentalist viewpoint sounds right, but that is what will bring the Woman in on the Beast. You have to be careful what your motive is for choosing sides. We have to be careful that we are not being led by another spirit and that our viewpoints are not stained by the world. What happened in Sardis? Only a few hadn't been stained by the world.

Rev 3:4-5 and Jms 1:26-27 – Only a few in Sardis hadn't been stained by the world. They were stained by the games. "Well, Paul talked about the games, so let's go there." You can believe that if you want to, as Christians do, but if you do, you will end up stained. It is good for us to be wise so that we can talk to others. We have to not take sides for the sake of the gospel.

## What is Love?

Love is the direction of your will, where you find your joy. That is what it means in the expanded Greek definition. By the direction of your will every aspect of your personality — physically, emotionally, mentally, and then spiritually — can get involved in something, dragging you down and proving you don't have the love of God within you. If you find your joy in it, you are stimulated intellectually. This friend of ours gave me a whole set of commentaries. I don't know what to do with them. They are just intellectual knowledge about the Bible.

Your will is directing you. It guides your social, mental, physical, and spiritual aspects. We became physically involved in volleyball today, and there was conflict between two sons of God, and they were in the Spirit, right? No, they were in the flesh. I guess volleyball is good, for it teaches us to have control over our emotions.

You hear one person's side, "Yea!" you say, "He's right." And then you hear the other person's side and say, "Yea! He's right." You believe the first until you hear the second. I guess these things are good, for they teach us. But what we have to do is make sure the sun never goes down on our anger. Then it has eight to ten hours for the anger to go into our soul. Make sure you make it right before the sun goes down and the anger goes into your soul.

Is it worse to *play* in the football game or to *watch* it? Or to pray, like I used to, "God, I want to make more tackles than anyone else," because I wanted to see my name in the paper. That is all you live for, to see your name right there. That is what stimulates you and gets you to pray — the desire to have your own glory. We never failed to pray before we went out to play, "Let's kill those City Hill Dominos," and those Dominos were praying to kill us. What kind of god were we praying to? It must be the same god both sides prayed to in the Civil War.

We get involved and waste our emotions, which have to be involved in something good and powerful, like the Word of God. Don't waste them on the Super Bowl Sunday. We are going to write a paper or book called "Super Bowl Sunday Night." We couldn't even conceive of the fact that they closed their doors for the Super Bowl. We were just little old nothings, but we wanted to do God's will. We wore our Bibles out. We would actually wear our Bibles out underlining them. We would have to get people new Bibles. So, anyway, that is the last time we darkened church doors.

Shemuel – In the end, Christianity is listed in Rev 18:2 as that woman, the dwelling place of every unclean spirit. This contrasts with the woman in Rev 21. It made me think of our Master's prayer in Jn 17, how He is in us, and our Father is in Him. I was reading there and I saw that right above those words He talks about the world — that they would be in the world but not of it. I was looking for the reason the two are so close together in His prayer. He prayed that we would be protected from evil one, which made me want to preserve our unity.

I realized when you spoke about the volleyball game how a spirit of the world can come in and disrupt our unity. It made me so much want to not let that happen, but be concentric and focus on what our Father is doing. I don't want to come to the gathering, barely able to concentrate, because my mind is set on what I gave myself to all day.

If your mind is set on the Spirit that day, what you hear at the gathering will go along with it. It is so rewarding, satisfying, to actually hear from our Father. It is so much better than giving myself over to what is so temporal – all that is passing by in the world. I am not there yet, but I want to be.

You are learning. Our Father is teaching us.

Benyamin – The hardest words our Master spoke was to the religious people (Mt 23). They were such deceivers. I see it so clearly when these Christians come and get so upset with what we are doing, and supposedly we serve the same God. Our God is salty. We can't compromise because we have to continue to abide in Him. It is like our Master cleaning out the Temple. We have to keep our salt, like our Master did. He had to clean out that temple, and we have to stay on that same foundation, for we are going to be confronted with so much more. Someday they will want to kill us.

*“If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.” (Jn 15:19)*

Worldly spirits hate you – meaning the spirits of the world in people.

Yedidiah – Christians can't cope with the fact that God is not the God of confusion, so they have to make up this mystical Body of Christ to justify all the confusion in Christianity. They try to smooth things over for there is no way they can mesh what they do with the Word of God. But what you taught the other day about strongholds makes it so clear, that when we are connected to our Master, we are not involved in what is happening in the world. There is no fog. The Word of God makes it so clear.

Soreph Gamaliel – We have heard so many wonderful things these last two days. We have such a tendency to take sides, as in the war in Iraq, but it would alienate so many people if we do that. We are not on either side; we are on our Father's side. If we take sides people won't be able to hear the good news from us, and we would have offended them to no purpose.

The things we see in the current events of the world make us want to take sides, but that is an invitation from a spirit, quite literally — a persuasion. We have to stay above that and on the narrow way to walk with and hear from our Father. We are in a place where we can hear from the Holy Spirit. I am so thankful for that.

Natan – I am thankful to hear about the spirits in the world. Volleyball is the perfect place to see these things in us. I was going over the net and I didn't see it, but when Jeremiah did it, my emotions got all worked up. It is like we say, “I want to help you with your blind spots.” We see our brother do something, and five minutes later we do the same thing. We could say, “Let's not play volleyball,” but we have to use it as an opportunity. We have to not lose our peace. I am thankful to hear what we heard tonight. I don't want to be one who causes things because of my inadvertence.

It is just like we said about the straw that breaks the camel's back. That one last straw that broke the camel's back meant you were in the flesh all day. When you woke up in the morning you didn't offer your body as a living sacrifice. It was what caused you to react.

Jesse – I can see that I totally let my emotions get involved and I thought it was the right thing to do. I couldn't even see how I was treating my brother. I didn't pray to God that I could win, but I had the same spirit. I



don't want to let my emotions get involved in a volleyball game. I want to let the things that I hear affect me and rule over my emotions.

It was amazing how Simchah shared yesterday. She totally admitted everything, and it really made us feel bad about her, didn't it? No, we loved her. It is so wonderful that you could be honest. It bonds us with one another. We forbear. It is so wonderful. If there is anything that you see wrong in yourself, admit it, and it will bond the two of you together.