

A Defunct Religion *(and the Analogy of Chlorophyll)*

Lk 17:2-21 — The kingdom or reign of God has not been in the midst of or among the nations of this world since Christianity, as a defunct religion, took over in the second century AD, as the letter of James to the twelve tribes indicates. Jms 1:26-27 shows what makes for a defunct (worthless) religion: an unbridled tongue, not caring for widows and orphans, and being stained by the world.

James wrote in the second century. It wasn't James, the brother of our Master, or James the apostle, but it was another James. Christians say the letter of James was written in 40-45 AD, but it is impossible that the church had fallen so far in its first 10 or 15 years. It was vibrant in the 40s and 50s, but when this James wrote, they weren't even caring for the widows and orphans. There wasn't anyone helping them, encouraging them, making sure they had their needs met. There wasn't anyone looking after them. So James' letter is a witness against them (Mal 3:5). Obviously, the church went down after that. Their religion was defunct; it was no true re-linking to God. *Religion* comes from the Latin *re-* (again) and *ligare* (to bind, as in *ligament*). Your ligaments connect all your bodily members together under the head (Col 2:19). That is what the word *religion* really means, although today it has a negative connotation because of Christianity.

So the first church, to which James was directing his letter (Jms 1:1), was already defunct or was on its last breath when the last true believer died or compromised his faith by accepting the Satanic system called the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which is hated by God (Rev 2:15). This system had already taken over in many churches, like a fungus or an incarnation of the subtle spirits of Satan's angels (2 Cor 11:4,13-15).

That is why we are not going to come to meetings where only one person speaks. We are going to bring back what we heard, and we are all going to speak for our Father,

because He will never speak to us if we come expecting to just hear from one person. We all learn from what everyone says; we bring it back. Sheep are ruminating animals.

Rev 2:15 says God hates the Nicolaitan system. When the book of Revelation was written, the church in Ephesus still hated the Nicolaitan system. They were still allowing people to speak. But the Nicolaitans crept in after they left their first love. That system had already overtaken Pergamum (Rev 2:15). If we lose our confidence to speak, it means we have stained our garment somehow, as most in Sardis had (Rev 3:4), so the Nicolaitans, who had stained garments themselves, took over. They were ministering an evil spirit that took over the church. It was like an incarnation. After the Holy Spirit left, Satan incarnated himself into them, and they kept on performing (2 Cor 11:13,15).

Defunct means finished, dead, and now only performing in rote the functions of the Nicolaitan system of religion, having finished the course of life and now dead — a dead system only left to perform. The “if” of outspokenness in Heb 3:6 is no longer satisfied as in 1 Cor 14:24-25.

The proof of the church’s defunct nature is the works or performances of the Nicolaitan system which God hates. It is like a fungus,¹ which grows on a plant that lacks chlorophyll and therefore attracts molds, rusts, mildews, smuts, mushrooms, and yeasts. Chlorophyll is the life of the plant; when a plant loses its greenness, you can tell it has no life, and therefore no way of resisting the molds that come in. So the Nicolaitan system became an incurable infection that spread throughout the Body of Messiah to bring it into a state of dysfunction. The church became as saprophytic² and parasitic³ plants, which lack what sustains their life as a functioning Body (Eph 4:16).

¹ Fungus — any of a large group of spore-producing organisms which feed on decomposing organic matter and include molds, yeast, mushrooms, and toadstools.

² Saprophyte — a plant, fungus, or micro-organism that lives on decaying matter.

³ Parasite — an organism which lives in or on another organism and benefits by deriving nutrients at the other’s expense.

The word *function* implies a definite purpose that each one serves in the particular kind of work that he is intended to do in the Body, as a member of Messiah's Body (1 Cor 12:12; Eph 2:10; 4:16). Christians have no idea what this is talking about, because they are all working independently in the world. They don't have a clue what Eph 2:10 is talking about, the works that were prepared for each disciple to do. "Oh, yes, I am a witness on my job, and I go to church on Sunday." That is all they know. I am not trying to make fun of them. We used to be in the same place.

Dysfunction is an impaired or abnormal functioning (Rev 2:15) due to the growth of fungus because of the lack of chlorophyll, which is the essential and necessary ingredient for life, and is the life of the plant. Without chlorophyll, it is becoming defunct, having no resistance to the growth of smut (Heb 3:6; 12:13-17; Mt 6:9-13). 1 Cor 14:24-25 shows the only way the church can properly function; otherwise it is dysfunctional.

Chlorophyll is the green photosynthetic⁴ coloring matter found in all lively, healthy, functioning plants, producing its fruit (Gal 5:22-23; Mt 21:43; Jn 13:35; 17:23; etc., etc.). Chlorophyll is the life of the plant that responds to sunlight, harnessing the sun's energy to cause the plant to grow and bear fruit. 1 Jn 2:10-11 — "He who loves his brother [*has chlorophyll*] abides in the light, and there is no cause of stumbling in him. He who hates his brother is in darkness [*where molds and fungi grow*]..." 1 Jn 5:12 — "Whoever has the Son has the chlorophyll" — if we are obeying Him (Jn 13:34; 1 Jn 3:14,16,23). As Eph 2:10 and 4:16 expresses, this chlorophyll is the sign of life, the

⁴ Photosynthesis — the process by which green plants use sunlight to synthesize nutrients from carbon dioxide and water; the formation of carbohydrates in the chlorophyll-containing tissues of plants exposed to light.

Synthesis — 1) the combination of components to form a connected whole; 2) the production of chemical compounds by reaction from simpler materials.

green color found in chloroplasts,⁵ and produces esters, which release the fragrance of the fruits (2 Cor 2:14-16).

The fruits of the spirit are the evidence of life. When love leaves, chlorophyll leaves, and the green leaves fall off the plant, and there is no longer any fruit, so the tree is cut down (Mt 3:10; 21:43). So there has to be a restoration of all things, 2,000 years later. That insignificant mustard seed has to go into the ground and die (Mt 13:31-32; Jn 12:24), and bear much fruit (Jn 15:8).

So Heb 3:6 is the condition of His own house, which is a house of prayer. Yahshua is the Son over that house, whose house we are IF we hold fast the confidence (outspokenness) and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end. Prayer doesn't mean just praying; it means earnestly desiring our Father's will, wanting it to happen, and asking for it. That is chlorophyll — the active desire to do our Father's will. It is not going to come if we don't ask for it.

Chlorophyll is the essential matter for life and prosperity. Unless we are as that house must be, His house turns into smut, infected with all kinds of fungi. When the house that Heb 3:6 describes loses its chlorophyll (life or love, as in Eph 6:24), no longer having an undying love of our Master and one another that ensures 1 Jn 3:22-23, then it is cursed as 1 Cor 16:22 with that fungus infection of smut, which took the place of the chlorophyll of the plant/house which He is no longer the Son over. It turns into a house of smut instead of a house of prayer. That is what gradually happened to the church in Ephesus in the forty years between Eph 6:24 and Rev 2:4-5.

Rev 3:4 — Most of those in Sardis had become stained with smut, which is a matter that soils or blackens (as the black robes of the Nicolaitans). Smut is any of various destructive diseases caused by parasitic fungi marked by a transformation of

⁵ Chloroplast — a structure in green plant cells which contains chlorophyll and in which photosynthesis takes place.

plant organs into dark masses of spores. So eventually, the whole crop was affected by smut.

A *spore* is a primitive unicellular reproductive body produced by plants and some invertebrates and capable of development into new nature unlike the parent, either directly or after fusion with another spore. Rev 18:2 — *Became* indicates a transition from how the church was in the first century (Heb 3:6) to how it is now (Rev 2:15).

The Kingdom of God, as we are becoming in every place (1 Cor 1:2; 1 Tim 2:8; Mal 1:11), will be expressed in an entirely different way from all the worldly kingdoms, and operates by a whole new set of rules unlike those of earthly kingdoms. The Kingdom of God in Mk 1:14-15 has no capital city and no royal trappings that you can see. All who are in this kingdom live right in the midst of or among the people of the world, not separated from them by a border fence or a wall. They are in the midst of this wicked and perverse world order — in the world, but not of it (1 Jn 5:19; Rev 12:9; 20:3; Jn 17:16-19). Each house of prayer prays every morning and evening as Mt 6:9-13, not *isolated* but *insulated* from the world.

Even though we possess a dual citizenship to give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's, our loyalty to the Kingdom of God will mean a clash with Caesar's kingdom when what they command goes against the word of our King (Acts 5:29; Jn 19:15). But the second and third centuries brought the ultimate and final downfall of the church which became too cozy with the worldly kingdom, making itself a defunct kingdom, being assimilated into the kingdom of the world, culminating in Christianity today.

But today, as Mk 9:11-12 and Isa 49:6 requires, every morning and evening we pray for the leaders of the worldly kingdom, while maintaining a careful independence from their subtle flattery to assimilate us into them, lest we trade in our spiritual birthright for a mess of earthly (worldly) pottage. It is not our goal to make the world

into a better place or government in this age. That will all take place as Dan 2:44 says (Dan 2:34-35,45).

So can we pledge our allegiance to both our flag and the flag of the United States, or France, or Germany, etc.? The Religious Right uses the prayer in 2 Chr 7:14, “*If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray, and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.*” But who and what land is this talking about? Do they assume God has a covenant with America?

Jn 18:36 — “My kingdom is not of this world...” So the Kingdom of God will never be “within you” (speaking of the Pharisees in Lk 17:20-21), but as long as His kingdom stands on Earth in this age, it will be *among them*, but not *within them*. The kingdom is not within anyone, not even us, for we are corporately that kingdom to be a light to them as we live among them, and as we pray as Mt 6:9-13, just as our Master prayed.

The Kingdom of God will co-exist along with the worldly kingdoms. But Jn 17:15-20 was His prayer and still is, through us, His Body on earth. Throughout eternity the Kingdom of God, His dwelling place, will be *with* men of the nations (Rev 21:3) — not “in them,” but “with them” as Rev 21:3. He will make all things new (verses 4-5), which is inherited by those who overcome to drink the water of life now in this age (verses 6-8).

So we still pray as Mt 6:9-10, and as Lk 17:20-21 we see that the restoration of all things during this evil time in history, in this enemy-occupied world (1 Jn 5:19; 3:8), depends on us being that tiny seed in Mt 13:31-32 and also as the leaven in verse 33. We are sort of in disguise now, starting a secret movement and society (vanguard), a new social order, to undermine the works of the evil one, since our Master came for that purpose (1 Jn 3:8).

So then why is He not invading in full force with all the armies of heaven? Is He not strong enough? Yes, He is, but those He has to work with are not! Mk 9:11-12 — He first must set up a resistible kingdom to bring about the day when His irresistible kingdom can come. First is Jn 13:35 and 17:23 by Heb 10:13. Then the promise to Abraham can happen (Acts 3:21), if we are as Acts 26:7-8 (Gen 18:19). Then and only then can Mt 19:28 come about, which they asked about in Acts 1:6, and our Master answered according to Dan 2:44; 7:24 and 12:4.

But against all odds this tiny seed will become all God ever intended it to be, and as Mt 13:33 and Dan 2:34-35, the mustard tree will come forth to grow and spread throughout the world, and in the next age the whole world will be His (Rev 20:4; Heb 10:13).

God would lose His own righteousness if He invaded the earth with all His power and might before He could bring about what His Son came to do (1 Jn 3:8; Lk 19:10; Jn 18:37) by us fulfilling Heb 10:13. He wants all who are willing to do His will to join His Son and become one spirit with Him first (1 Cor 6:17). Before He can establish an enemy-free world (1 Jn 5:19) and an enemy-free land in Israel (Gen 15:18; 18:19; Acts 26:6-8; Isa 49:6,8), He wants to give all a chance to drink the water of life without a cause not to, as the merchant in Mt 13:44-46 (Rev 21:6-8; 22:17). He wants to know who the cowards are and who the overcomers are (Mal 3:18, *make the distinction between*), so that Rev 22:5 and Dan 7:27 (RSV) and Rev 19 will come.

But it will not happen until Jn 13:35 and 17:23 and all the rest of the words of life recorded for us to fulfill are fulfilled. Only then will the playwright walk out on the stage, when the play is over. So our Master's apostles in Acts 1:6 had a hard time grasping the double view of the kingdom. They knew Acts 1:9-11 after they asked verse 6, but it still was not settled in them. They thought of the kingdom in terms of political power, but His reply corrected this misconception and adjusted their perspective of the Kingdom of God.

We, just as He did, must grow in understanding (Lk 2:52) and in favor with God and men. Of course, we know why He could not answer them directly. Dan 2:44 and 12:4,9 and 7:24 and Rev 17:12 and Mt 24:14 were two thousand years away. So as He answered, Acts 1:8 is still in motion, which requires the restoration of all things in Mk 9:11-12 (Mt 28:18-20; Isa 49:6). The Acts 1:9-11 kind of kingdom they yearned for would surely come, but not yet. Mal 1:5,11 and a whole list of prophetic verses must first be fulfilled by Mk 9:11-12, such as Isa 49:6,8; Mt 21:43; 24:14, etc.

So Christianity basks in their pews and fancy houses, RVs, sports arenas, and rock & roll concerts, waiting for the rapture, hoping that they won't be caught in a theater or sports arena. Maybe if there is anything left of reality, even though their sins have supposedly been forgiven anyway (regardless of Jms 4:17), it might be a little embarrassing. But they justify themselves as to their big problems unsolvable by this "other Jesus."

But Mk 9:11-12 will not be a people who are content with the comforts of the world. They will be an advance guard of the kingdom which is not of this world, the harbingers or heralds of the kingdom in advance of His coming, to bring it on. But obviously, every tongue has yet to confess, and every knee has yet to bow, and the seed is only now taking root to produce the fruit of this coming kingdom in advance. Our Father has put His reputation on the line (Gen 15:17-18), looking for a people who will produce its fruit (Gen 18:19; Mt 21:43; Acts 26:7).

Yahshua's first coming did not (yet) do 1 Jn 3:8 or Isa 49:6, as Mt 5:17 says it will do, but He was looking forward to *US* (Mk 9:11-12; Isa 49:6,8; Gen 18:19). The problem of the Fall has not yet been eradicated, but the vision of the Kingdom of God gives us the fuel we need to not lose heart and go unrestrained as Christianity.

So yes, the Kingdom of God will increase as the tiny seed sprouts, and the tree grows into its intended purpose, but it is only able to do this in restoration of Acts 4:32. Acts 2:44-45 is for true believers only to do; only they can be the Edah, the witness to all

the world, the alternative society demonstrating what the world has never seen in 2000 years, and what the world will be like in the next age. This sign must be flaunted as radically different from the church which Christians misrepresent, and their false Christ, holding our Master up to public shame, indoctrinating all who want a free ride to heaven when they die.

This new, radical, alternative⁶ society will put to shame the Harlot, contradicting her in every way she has represented the truth falsely (Jn 18:37). This new, radical, alternative social order will all live together as Gal 3:26-29, with all races and social classes welcomed into the brand new culture, forgetting the past (Phil 3:10-15), living by His love and not the world's polarization, caring for the widows and orphans, careful of the words they speak from their mouth (Jms 1:26-27; 1 Pet 4:11; Mt 12:37). They demonstrate truth in action, justice and righteousness (Gen 18:19), commanding their children and households in order to bring about what God promised Abraham (Gen 15:17-18) in a world enamored with selfish desires and decadence, a world in disorder from Gen 3:22. They give witness to the truth by outdoing one another in love and good deeds.

This is what Mt 21:43 means, and what brings about the sudden return of the Kingdom of God (Mt 24:14), the end of this wicked age (Rev 19). We were left as His successors with the task at hand of displaying the signs of the kingdom of love and care, by which the watching world will judge the merits of this kingdom. The task will be accomplished by none other than those who love Him with an undying love. The Kingdom is coming, but only when the King comes from the right hand of God, and that can't be until Rev 19:7-8, and Eph 2:10,22 and 4:16 are those deeds of love that build up the Father's eternal abode (Rev 21:3,10; 21:3,9,12; 22:5)

⁶ Alternative — outside the camp of organized religion and of the culture of this fallen world (trends, fashions, designs, and systems) as Heb 13:13, "bearing His reproach."

Political power? The Messianic kingdom? Run by whom? These fishermen and tax collectors? Isa 53 — He did not measure up to what their long-awaited Messiah should look like, act like, or be like to them, and the Jews who looked to Him as their political savior were befuddled by His choice of companions. He became known as a friend to the worst sort. Though He renounced the religious system of His day, He treated Nicodemus with respect. He spoke against the love of money, and spoke of the rich having their comfort in full, yet He showed compassion toward the rich young ruler and a Roman centurion. He honored the dignity of people whether He agreed with them or not. He would not found His kingdom on the basis of race or other such divisions. The person was more important than any category or label. Even to prostitutes He showed respect, as Paul spoke in 1 Cor 9:19-23.

We do not join the politics of polarization to find ourselves shouting across picket lines at the enemy on the other side. A political movement by nature draws lines, makes distinctions, and pronounces judgments. In contrast, love cuts across lines, transcends distinctions, and dispenses grace.

Political movements separate us from people who could receive our gospel — pro-life on the right, peace-and-justice lobby on the left. Political movements would pull a wall of demarcation between us and the world and smother love. Our Master never did lift up His voice in the streets in political action or political demonstrations or protests, and neither will we. But it never ceases to amaze us that the hope of the message of the Kingdom of God rests upon a Man whose message was rejected and whose love was spurned and who was condemned as a criminal and a heretic and given the sentence of capital punishment.

Wheat among the tares, sheep among wolves, a tiny seed in the garden, yeast in the bread, salt in the meat — His own metaphors of the Kingdom of God describe a kind of secret force that works from the innermost being of one's heart and soul. Never did He speak of church and state, of sharing power with the authorities, but rather of Heb 13:13

in opposition to the kingdoms of this world. When it goes beyond this boundary, a transformation takes place in spiritual structure: Rev 2:4-5; 3:4-5,14-18. Once Jn 15:18 was the identification with the True One. They were ignored and scorned, but now they are courted by even savvy politicians, and presidents win elections from the Christian popularity (1 Jn 2:15; Jn 18:36).

There must be an advance guard of the kingdom (vanguard), troops moving at the head of an army, the forefront of an action or movement to make our Father's name hallowed. Who will be that vanguard of the kingdom, praying every morning and evening for it to come on earth, and His will to be done, and to be delivered from the evil one? Mt 11:12 — The Kingdom now is resistible, but the violent take it by force.

ha-êmeq — I have learned something really interesting about seeds. I started making sprouts, and there is one point that I just love. You start out with little clover seeds, and you put water on them and just get them damp, and then you turn the jar over and let them sit there. Then my favorite part is when at one point, you go and pick the jar up and you can hardly see anything, but the weight in the jar has increased so much. It must weigh at least three times what it weighed the morning before. Then I know that all of a sudden, I'm going to start seeing all these green things growing up.

There is a point when glory or something comes into them. You can feel it, and I don't know where it comes from...

It is the inner worth in the seed.

ha-êmeq — Where did that weight come from? It seemed to come from nowhere, the power to make them grow. Mk 4:26-27 — Man plants the seed and waters it, and it grows, but he doesn't know how.

It is like that part of our life that is impossible to figure out. There is strength for us to do what we never had the strength to do before. I am thankful for the wisdom that we are gaining now, that we have decided to become farmers and shepherds.

David Zerubbabel — It is just amazing what ha-êmeq said about the little seeds that become sprouts. Right before they turn green, they gain weight. In the process of dying...

That is a miracle, it has to be.

David Zerubbabel — It is a physical thing for us to understand, and a spiritual reality. That glory comes to the seed, and it is expressed in that green sprout that comes up, full of chlorophyll, full of life, yet it seemed so insignificant, you hardly knew it was happening.

I was looking in Dan 2:35. The statue was made of things you think of as having weight — gold, iron, bronze, and silver. But it says right there, “then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together and became like chaff from the summer threshing floor, and the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone, what had gone into the ground and died, filled the whole earth.”

In that kingdom that filled the whole earth there was no trace of those things that in the world’s eyes have weight. What is detestable in our Father’s eyes has weight in the eyes of the world (Lk 16:15). And if those things have weight to us, then we won’t be a part of that Stone, because we want to have part of the Statue in us. We want to cling to those things that the world considers weighty. But our Master said He is going to put in His winnowing fork, and He is going to see who has glory.

Mt 13:33 goes with Dan 2:35. There is precious little good yeast right now that is going into that dough. But it (i.e., the kingdom) will fill the whole earth in the next age.

Baruch — Hearing what we heard tonight was just like sitting with our Master when He talked about these natural phenomena, like seeds and yeast. The thing that is so amazing is that chlorophyll is the stuff that responds. It is this green juice that flows through the cellular structure of a plant, and it doesn’t really do much of anything by itself. But then there’s that other word you talked about — photosynthesis. That is when things come together and produce a desired effect. It is synergy — the interaction or cooperation of two or more organizations, substances, or other agents to produce a combined effect greater than the sum of their separate effects. That is what happens when chlorophyll responds to light.

There is just this little seed, but then there is an unseen force that causes it to grow up into this huge thing that produces thousands of other little seeds. It was just a little seed, but a response happened in this little seed. That is what is amazing.

Chlorophyll is a compound that responds. As soon as it sees sunlight, it says, “I can do something with this. I can respond to this.” It’s the same as us responding to the Word. The chlorophyll doesn’t know what is going to happen, but somehow growth starts happening. And in the same way we don’t know what is going to happen. We just hear our

Master's Word, and we want to be obedient. "What do I do, and how do I do it?" And all of a sudden, growth starts happening that will build us into a nation.

That is what the life of chlorophyll does. It is all about response. Response and life become inseparable; if you have life, you respond. And if you don't respond, you are dead. The two are inseparable.

So hearing this tonight, I can imagine how our Master spoke to fishermen about fishing, and farmers about seeds, and they responded. And all of a sudden, there was a life that sprung up on the earth.

(Ben Nabi applied a dictionary's explanation of photosynthesis to our life in this way:)

As a molecule of chlorophyll absorbs a photon of light, its electrons become excited and move to higher energy levels (see Photochemistry). This initiates a complex series of chemical reactions in the chlorophyll that enables the energy to be stored in chemical bonds.

As a disciple of our Master receives the light of the truth, his brothers become encouraged and press on with increased zeal (see Heb 3:13; 10:24; 12:15). This stimulates an awesome series of spiritual responses in the Community, causing ever-increasing growth and glory to be stored up in the inseparable bonds of redeemed human relationships.

The energy that is stored in chemical bonds in the process of photosynthesis is the glory of the plant, causing the plant to grow, to be efficacious. So it is with us, His Body. The glory that He has given us (Jn 17:21-23) is ruling power/energy to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. The unity of the Father and His Son will be found in a people who are able to store that glory/energy/ruling power in the tight bonds of their redeemed human relationships.