

Trapped by the Image of Jealousy

Recently, during the Feast of Tabernacles, I visited one of the largest splinters of the Worldwide Church of God, a church which at one time understood and taught the Truth, reaching people around the whole world with the gospel of the Kingdom of God.

Of course that church no longer exists – I believe it changed its name to Grace International or something like that – rejected all the truth it had once taught and lost most of its members. How that could occur I saw once again as I visited with this large congregation of mainly ex-Worldwide members, and what I saw stands as a warning to us all, to be watchful that we are not found worshipping the image of jealousy, which we read of in Ezekiel 8:1-6, *In the sixth year, in the sixth month, on the fifth day of the month, as I sat in my house, with the elders of Judah sitting before me, the hand of the Lord GOD fell upon me there. Then I looked, and behold, a form that had the appearance of a man. Below what appeared to be his waist was fire, and above his waist was something like the appearance of brightness, like gleaming metal. He put out the form of a hand and took me by a lock of my head, and the Spirit lifted me up between earth and heaven and brought me in visions of God to Jerusalem, to the entrance of the gateway of the inner court that faces north, where was the seat of the image of jealousy, which provokes to jealousy. And behold, the glory of the God of Israel was there, like the vision that I saw in the valley. Then he said to me, “Son of man, lift up your eyes now toward the north.” So I lifted up my eyes toward the north, and behold, north of the altar gate, in the entrance, was this image of jealousy. And he said to me, “Son of man, do you see what they are doing, the great abominations that the house of Israel are committing here, to drive me far from my sanctuary? But you will see still greater abominations.”*

Here are pictured end time spiritual Israelites within God’s Temple, the Church, 1 Corinthians 3:16, *‘Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you?’* We know this prophecy is End Time because Ezekiel was given the message to Israel, but wrote it down because he was held captive in Babylon (see Ezekiel 1:1) and never able to deliver it. We know it is a message for God’s people at the End Time because the message continues in the very next chapter 9, which depicts events yet to occur, verses 4,6, *‘And the Lord said unto Him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereofSlay utterly old and young, both maids and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at my sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which were before the house.’*

These scriptures depict God’s sanctuary, the Church of God (its name throughout the New Testament) and the court of the priests – the ministry, within which has been erected an idol - this ‘image of jealousy’, which causes God to depart, *“that I should go far off from my sanctuary?”*

This prophecy has had a previous occurrence, is still occurring now and in its total fulfillment, will occur in the near future. The first occurrence was with the arrival of the Roman Catholic Church, which soon spread to dominate the early Christian Church throughout Europe until the faith once delivered barely survived, only in the far West and North of Britain. Jude 1:3 *‘Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.’*

The leader of the WCG in his early days preached strongly against this idol, calling it the ‘image of the beast’, but was in his later years persuaded to introduce it into the church he had built, by young ministers who felt they needed more authority to control their rapidly growing congregations.

What was that idol? It was the hierarchical system of **control** with a man at the top, over various ranks of the ministry, with the laity below, and it was introduced as “the government of God”. A variation which still exists, is the very similar ‘oligarchy’ - dominion by a small group of people at the top, over other ranks.

Jesus Christ Himself warned against this dominion in Matthew 20:25-28, ‘ *But Jesus called them to him and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. **It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.**”*’

We are to learn to serve now, and if we faithfully serve God and our brothers and sisters it may be that we will be qualified to rule later in God’s Kingdom, when we will be able, as could Christ, to read the true motivations of men. Revelation 5:10, ‘*...and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and **they shall reign on the earth.***’

However, none of us is yet qualified to wield that kind of power, and to attempt to gain it now is not the government of God at all, but the idolatrous government of men, in defiance of Jesus Christ’s instructions, and results only in the oppression and deception of God’s people wherever it is found.

Sadly, despite my hopes, that is what I found still in that large congregation, though one visiting minister from abroad obviously understood, preaching a sermon about the two kinds of restraint. In some fragments, the oppression is very visible through regular disfellowshipping with many rules that must not be broken, and even claims that they are the one and only ‘true church’, without which membership they ‘will never enter God’s Kingdom.’

Others, such as the one I visited, hide the idol, until anyone questions their doctrine. Only then does the dominion appear, as diligent bible students are told not to mention their doubts and questions to anyone else, or are removed from the speaking rota, if they will not accept *all* church doctrine. Younger Christians, keen to become speakers themselves, learn not to question official doctrine if they wish to climb up the hierarchy. The pressure is insidious, but it subtly diverts attention from God’s words and Jesus Christ’s example to the doctrines published by “headquarters”.

It did not take long for these facts to emerge but most people learn to remain quiet because under such dominion it is quite common for ‘loyal’ members to feel that it is their duty to report any ‘doubters’ to the ‘minister’. This deception is just one more symptom of the image, and it is sad that the majority are prepared to accept these symptoms as normal, such is the effective **control** of the image of jealousy, when any *due* fear should be to the authority of God, rather than man.

The final net effect of this toleration of the ‘image of jealousy’ is, as we read in Ezekiel, the departure of God. While God is angry especially at the ministers for they should know better, we see from His comments about the churches mentioned in Revelation 2 & 3, that He gives them time to repent, eg Revelation 2:21, ‘ *And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.*’ But even the laity are clearly warned that though He still considers them His people, unless they recognise the idol and speak out against it, just as did Jesus Christ when faced with the Priests and Pharisees who made an idol out of their traditions, they will not have overcome, and so will fail to share rule with Christ in His Kingdom, Revelation 3:21, ‘***The one who overcomes, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne.***’

It is noteworthy that while God’s departure may be gradual as He gives time for repentance, He also

gradually withdraws His Holy Spirit. This will firstly be apparent in the dominion of the ministry but also in the stagnation of what should be continued revelation as we approach the coming dangerous Tribulation and the return of Jesus Christ.

This, above all times, is when we need to be growing in grace and knowledge, to prepare ourselves for the dangerous years ahead - 2 Peter 3:18, *'But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen'*

Tragically, virtually the whole of the Church of God has been conditioned to accept the time line and End Time agenda they have held for almost a century, failing to recognise the scriptures which clearly show that Christ comes back first for His Bride, which He marries before His Father's throne in Heaven, actually at the Feast of Pentecost, and finally returns with His Bride at the Feast of Trumpets. Worse still, the clear scriptures which tell of the responsibility of God's people to carry out His instructions for a witness to the world from Jerusalem for 3½ years prior to Christ's return for His Bride, remain totally ignored by the ministry who are so deeply embedded in their idolatrous traditions, and the brethren are unwilling to believe that the scriptures mean what they say, unless that ministry sanctions them, which fulfills another prophecy. (Jeremiah 6:17-19)

The result will be that both will be totally unprepared when Jesus Christ returns, as is made clear in Christ's parable of the ten virgins, Matthew 25 : 1-10, *'Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. As the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and slept. But at midnight there was a cry, 'Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' But the wise answered, saying, 'Since there will not be enough for us and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.' And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut.'*

The Oil represents the Holy Spirit. The ten virgins do not represent the *whole* church, but only those who remain virginal, looking only to God's word. Revelation 14:4 reveals that they are the ones who in the church do their best to follow the example, pattern and teaching of Jesus, rather than their ministers. *'They have kept themselves as pure as virgins, following the Lamb wherever he goes. They have been purchased from among the people [From men-Greek] on the earth as a special offering to God and to the Lamb'* NLT. Christ's standards **for His Bride** are just *so high*, for the reward is just *so great*, that as we see from Rev 14:4 actually *far less* than 50% of the church will make it into the first resurrection. Those who do qualify to be in the first resurrection must have the courage to stand alone, if need be, for God's words, even in the face of those who would put them out of the church, John 16:2, *'They will put you out of the synagogues. Indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God.'*

The chances are then, that God's faithful brethren will be sparsely scattered and feeling isolated as the End Time approaches. They will know that they still have a work to do and will be planning for that. This web site can provide a means of communication between those who are coming to understand that End Time responsibility, or are just beginning to realise that they have been trapped by the image of jealousy and take courage from finding that they will not be alone if they make their stand for Jesus Christ.

Only by finding other faithful brethren who have escaped from that image, will God's End Time instructions be fulfilled, by those who are prepared to work together. We are here to help those who

remain faithful, find others in their nation if they exist, maybe by initially acting as intermediaries. If you are in that position, use the Contact Us tab and we will reply. Now please check out this comparative list of the character of the Image of Jealousy and the 'Faith Once Delivered' to the early Church.

The Image of Jealousy

The Faith Once Delivered

A man or men set doctrine for the church.

*Philippians 2:12, 'Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, **work out your own salvation with fear and trembling,**' based upon the 'faith once delivered', Jude verse 3, 'Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.'*

The authority of the minister.

The authority of God's word, Matthew 5:18, *'For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.'*

Ministers of a named church.

Ministers of Christ, 2 Corinthians 4:5, *'For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as **your servants** for Jesus' sake.'*

Members of a named church.

Members of the vine (Christ) 1 Corinthians 12:27, *'Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.'*

A hierarchy or oligarchy throughout the church with members beneath.

Priesthood of believers, 1 Peter 2:5, *'you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be **a holy priesthood**, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.'*

Management of the church through **exterior constraint**, the control of the ministry.

Leadership through **interior constraint** and the teaching, pattern and example of Christ, John 14:24, '*Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me.* 1 Peter 2:21, '*For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps.*'

Preservation of Church doctrine a major priority of ministry.

Biblical truth the priority of all, Acts 17:11, '*Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.*'

Ministers point their flock to headquarters.

Ministers point their flock to Jesus Christ, Matthew 28:18, '*And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me."*

Members who dispute a doctrine ignored by hierarchy and ministry, who simply fail to answer submissions, told to keep quiet, accept the church authority, or face disfellowship.

Jesus Christ did not allow the position of the priests to prevent Him from teaching truth in the temple, despite their wrath. Mark 11:15-18, '*On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple courts and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves, and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts. And as he taught them, he said, "Is it not written: 'My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations'? But you have made it 'a den of robbers.'"*

The Apostles did not allow the tradition of the elders to prevent their teaching the truth **in the synagogues** despite the elders. Acts 13:45-46, '*When the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy. They began to contradict what Paul was saying and heaped abuse on him. Then Paul and Barnabas answered them boldly: "We had to speak the word of God to you first. Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of*

The Result of Idolatry

Ephesians 5:5, *'For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or **greedy person--such a person is an idolater--has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.'*** NIV.. *'For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is **covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.'*** ESV

eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles.'
The brethren were cast out of the church for searching for truth, 3 John:10-11, *'So if I come, I will bring up what he is doing, talking wicked nonsense against us. And not content with that, he refuses to welcome the brothers, and also stops those who want to and **puts them out of the church.** Beloved, do not imitate evil but imitate good. Whoever does good is from God; whoever does evil has not seen God.'*