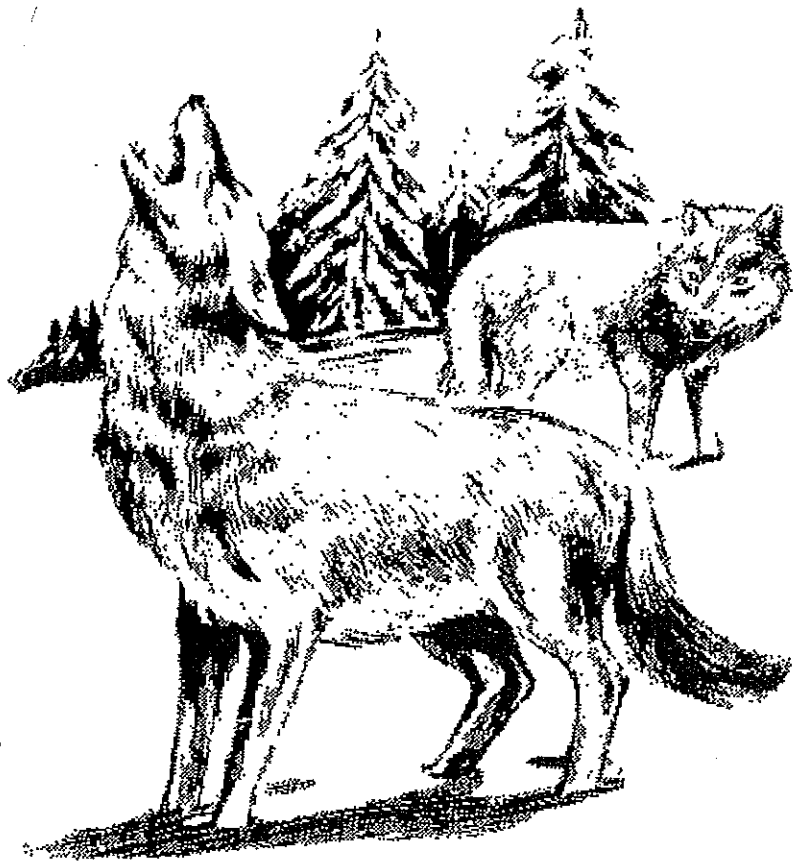


In the midst of wolves and and second thoughts on Church teachings . . .



I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

Acts 20:29,30,32

and thus it came to pass, to wit.....

Due to a misunderstanding of Biblical interpretation some churches have turned the Bible into a cafeteria of meanings and a smorgasbord of convenient concepts to suit their particular doctrines and agendas. Thus we have majored on the minors and forgotten the major and simple truths God has given us. God is not a God of confusion. He never suggested we needed theologians to reveal His will, purpose and record of revelation. Only the interpretations and traditions of men could cause any confusion.

The Bible is straight forward, logical and in order of it's progressive understanding. Looking from last to first we understand that when Jesus describes Himself in Revelation as the Alpha and Omega that, that is the whole of understanding of the authority for interpretation. It leaves out nothing. Backing up one section we can see how we are to understand our roles as servants and messengers of the Gospel. We become His recruiters and examples of His family and of our love by our conduct and obedience. We become His Church. In sections prior to that we understand in who and how we place our faith and trust in Him. In the Gospels we learn who He is thru the truth He revealed to His chosen Apostles and disciples. In the old Testament we learn thru divinely inspired Jewish history, Gods plan and dealings with His first chosen people, and the results of which foretell His final plan for establishing His spiritual Kingdom thru Christ Jesus. We also learn the wisdom needed to conduct and not conduct our life while on this planet.

While the Bible speaks to all people it specifically speaks to each of us thru and by His Holy Spirit, our divine Teacher.

ON SECOND THOUGHT.....

Maybe the Churches have begun to over emphasize all the illustrations. Examples, etc. which we love to relate from the Old Testament instead of relying on and following the exact instructions given us by the Head of the Church, Jesus Christ,

TO WIT.....

(God speaking) This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased, listen to Him. Matt. 17:5

(Jesus speaking) Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me for I am gentle and humble in heart and you shall find rest for your souls, for My yoke is easy and My load is light. Matt. 11:29,30

(Jesus speaking) Teaching them to observe all I commanded you.

But in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son. Heb. 1: 2

(Jesus speaking) The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John, since then the Gospel of the Kingdom of God is preached. Luke 16:16

(Jesus speaking) If you love Me you will keep My commandments. John 14:15

(Jesus speaking) I am the way and the truth and the life. John 14:6

Keep seeking the things above where Christ is seated, set your mind on the things above. Col. 3:1,2

Fixing our eyes on Jesus the Author and perfecter of our faith. Heb 12:2

(Jesus speaking) Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things, but only a few things are necessary, really only one, Mary has chosen the good part. (at His feet) Like 10: 41,42

The goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. I Tim 1:5

ON SECOND THOUGHT (2).....

Maybe it isn't Biblically correct to apprehend the promises God made to Israel under the Old Covenant as Believers in Christ under the New Covenant?

TO WIT.....

But the ministry Jesus received is as superior to theirs as the Covenant of which He is mediator is superior to the old one – And is founded on better promises. Heb 8:6 (Doesn't "better promises" indicate replacing the old promises?)

For as many as may be the promises of God in Him (Christ) they are yes wherefore also by Him is our Amen to the Glory of God through us. II Cor 1:20 (So aren't all promises already fulfilled in Him?)

Aren't these the "better promises"?

The Holy Spirit – Luke 24:49 , Salvation-Acts 2:29, The Kingdom- James 2:5, Life Eternal-Titus 1:2, Crown of Life-James 1:12, and a New Earth-2 Peter 3:13 and Forgiveness with Righteousness

Aren't these considered "privileges"?: Access to God, Rom 5:2; His intercession, Heb 7:25, 26; Growth, 1 Peter 2:2, Kinship, Heb 2:10-14; Name written in Lamb's Book of Life, Rev 20:15; The Divine Nature, 2 Peter 1:4; Reconciled, Rom 5:10; Suffering for Christ, Acts 5:41; Overcoming trials, 1 Peter 1: 6-8; Victory in life, Rom 8:37,39

Therefore having these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. 2 Cor 7:1

ON SECOND THOUGHT 3.....

Have the American Churches today undervalued the Believer's eternal life in Heaven by over emphasizing present life "prosperity", "abundance" and "blessings"? The Apostles and Disciples who penned the Bible as well as our Lord Jesus gave their lives for it and little valued their own lives and circumstances in light of it.

TO WIT.....

If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. 1 Cor. 15:19

Who gave Himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father. Gal. 1:4

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. John 3:16

Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life. Jude 1:21

In the hope of eternal life, which God who does not lie promised before the beginning of time. Titus 1:2

Friendship with the world is hostility toward God. Whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. James 4:4

Our citizenship is in Heaven from which also we eagerly wait for the Lord Jesus Christ. Phil. 3:20

Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed we have a building from God , an eternal house in heaven. 2 Cor. 5:1

In His great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade kept in heaven for you. 1 Peter 1:3

ON SECOND THOUGHT 4

(Jesus speaking) But an hour is coming, and now is when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers . God is spirit and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth. John 4:23, 24

(Paul speaking) Therefore I urge you Brothers in view of God's mercy to offer your bodies as living sacrifices holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship. Rom. 12:1

Worship is a very private and personal relational attitude with almighty God for each believer in Christ. No one can dictate the content or the procedure. However when Jesus made His pronouncement it signified a drastic change from what was transpiring at the time. Which was a detached religious exercise with a lot of fleshly exhibition, and ritual performance. He undoubtedly meant a change was in order. The change was meant to take place in our spiritual hearts performed there out of our love, appreciation, honor and obedience to God, and God alone continually. Paul in his statement underlines the importance of this comparing it at the level of a sacrifice which denotes the giving up of personal importance. At one point Jesus had said we should go into our closets to pray to the Father, indicating the personal and private nature of our communication with Him. Churches services attempt to offer times and places for this but that is not what Jesus meant. The churches often confuse "praise" with worship which is both collective and personal. There is no substitute for our own worship.

ON SECOND THOUGHT 5.....

With the rise of Denominationalism how can The Church protect against churches veering off into apostasy?

TO WIT.....

(Paul speaking) I urge you, brothers to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teachings you have learned. Keep away from them, for such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. Rom. 16:17 I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. Acts 20:28 In the first place, I hear that when you come together as a church there are divisions among you. 1 Cor. 11:18 I appeal to you brothers in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought 1 Cor.1:10 and so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants tossed back and forth by the waves and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead speaking the truth in love we will in all things grow up into Him who is the Head, that is Christ Eph. 4:12-15

(Editor speaking) Therefore all denominations that adhere to these instructions can be trusted, otherwise test all things that are taught carefully against the Word of God as revealed in Christ Jesus and proclaimed by Him taught by the Apostles and practiced by the early churches.

ON SECOND THOUGHT 6

Sometimes being a Christian can seem lonely with no one to talk with about Jesus. We often think just being with other people should constitute "fellowship". Wrong

TO WIT

(Jesus speaking) For where two or three have gathered together in My Name, there I Am in their midst. Matt. 18:20

(Luke speaking) And they were continually devoting themselves to the Apostles teaching, and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Acts 2:42 (editor speaking) "Fellowship", koinonia in the Greek , means sharing common experiences with other Christians.

(John speaking) But if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. 1 John 1:7 (editor speaking) Fellowship here means, sharing in the Resurrection life possessed in Christ, and so of the fellowship with the Father and the Son.

(editor speaking) Whether with saved members of our own family, or just one saved friend, Jesus provides us with true fellowship and that which constitutes a true gathering no matter where in time or space we are.

ON SECOND THOUGHT 7

This fallen world that we live in is constantly beckoning Christians to get involved and commit themselves to repairing, restoring and rehabilitating it's long lost glory. And satan has a sure fire way of tempting us to expend energy, time and expense on it's behalf since that appears to be such a worthwhile good work for humanity's sake. Some churches have fallen into this logic under the guise of human wisdom. But did God say.....? Nope.

TO WIT

(Paul speaking) Grace to you and peace from God, our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ who gave Himself for our sins that He might deliver us out of this present evil age according to the will of our God and Father. Gal 1:4

(John speaking) And the world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God abides forever. 1 John 2:17; For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world our faith. 1 John 5:4

(James speaking) You adulteresses do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. James 4:4

(Paul speaking) And do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Rom 12: 2a

(Jesus speaking) Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler (satan) of this world shall be cast out. John 12:31

(Peter speaking) But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God. 2 Peter 3: 10, 11, 12

(Editor speaking) Well then, since our citizenship is in heaven we better stay busy spreading the Gospel and living to glorify God.

ON SECOND THOUGHT. 8

The churches often overlook the fact that God is not finished with Israel, He fully intends to complete them by the Day of the Lord. That which is the physical Israel that exists today is still the, "apple of His eye" and they will be saved during and after the Great Tribulation. The churches thru false teachings have thought to replace them, even adapting much of their Covenant as Church doctrine. Tithing for example is strictly under the law. The New Covenant is based on sharing and giving freely as the Lord provides, usually exceeding the meager 10% of a tithe. The principle is the same, but New Covenant giving proceeds out of God's love in us.

TO WIT.....

(Paul speaking) Do not be arrogant toward the branches (Israel); but if you are arrogant remember that it is not you who supports the root, but the root supports you.

And they also if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again, how much more shall these who are the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree? Rom. 11:18, 23, 24

(Malachi speaking for God) Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing Me, the whole nation (Israel) of you! How have we robbed Thee? In tithes and offerings.

(Duet 26: 9-14, Leviticus 27:30, Heb. 18:12 all clearly indicate that Tithing as codified under the Law was written by Moses. As was the statement that Israel is "the apple of Gods eye" Duet. 32:30)

(Editor speaking) When Jesus spoke of tithing in the Gospels He was addressing those still under the Law before Pentecost and the crucifixion. The Apostles never instructed new believers in Christ to tithe, even though many converted Jews did so to keep their traditions. A believer must always be the steward of everything the Lord gives him and be willing to share as a cheerful giver not under compulsion to those in need and to the expenses of teaching, preaching and caring for the Church.

ON SECOND THOUGHT 9

Have some Churches today inadvertently moved from “Christ minded” to “double minded”, and ended up “absent minded”?

TO WIT.....

(Paul speaking) For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct Him? BUT WE HAVE THE MIND OF CHRIST. 1 Cor. 2:16 (Editor speaking) Mind is “nous” in the Greek meaning thoughts and counsels. (Paul speaking) This I say therefore, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk in the futility of their mind, being darkened in their understanding excluded from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality, for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness. But you did not learn Christ in this way, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, that in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth. Eph. 4: 17-24 (Editor speaking) This should be curriculum for all Churches.

Or as (James speaking) Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. CLEANSE YOUR HANDS, YOU SINNERS, AND PURIFY YOUR HEARTS, YOU DOUBLE MONDED, James 4:8

(Editor speaking) Unfortunately many Churches are governed by a congregation with “itching ears” who would rather hear about self help programs and instructions for getting the most out of their lives of what the world thinks is most desirable and necessary for self esteem and self improvement. The emphasis is always on how to receive more from God instead of how to understand His Will, and how best to serve and obey Him. They major on temporal things instead of the spiritual. So they become “absent minded” in the matters of Godliness and Holiness, which are the very things we are to practice as we see the End Times approaching, as the Bible says in 2 Peter 3:11, Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in Holy conduct and Godliness, looking for and hastening the coming day of God, on account of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!

THINK ABOUT IT.

ON SECOND THOUGHT 10

There have been a least 16 major schisms that have split the Body of Christ since the 2nd Century, during which “theology” overtook “Christology” and sectarianism and denominationalism have thrived.

TO WIT

Predestination vs Free will

Water immersion vs sprinkling

Once saved always saved vs Salvation is conditional

Episcopal government vs Elder or congregational rule

The Bible is the only authority for truth vs Interpretations or traditions of men

Church rule by men only vs either men or women

The Sabbath is Sunday vs the Sabbath is Saturday

God causes everything to happen to us vs man's own responsibility for choices

The Church goes thru the Tribulation vs It is Raptured before the Tribulation

All the Spiritual gifts exist now vs they died with the Apostles

The Bible is the absolute rule of faith vs Ongoing revelation and knowledge

All men will be saved vs only those born again

All sin is forgiven for believers vs Non confessed sin is not

You must be born again vs Assent only to the Gospel truth and knowledge

God appoints some people to Hell vs All men can be saved

Works vs Grace

And the list can go on as long as men continue making divisions about God.

BUT THE GOAL OF OUR INSTRUCTION IS LOVE FROM A PURE HEART AND A GOOD CONSCIENCE AND A SINCERE FAITH, FOR SOME MEN, STRAYING FROM THESE THINGS HAVE TURNED ASIDE TO FRUITLESS DISCUSSIONS WANTING TO BE TEACHERS OF THE LAW; 1 Timothy 1:5,6

ON SECOND THOUGHT 11

My Father always said "it's no sin to be poor", and given the area in which he was raised, I can understand. Some American Churches have started to teach a "prosperity doctrine" which taken for its true meaning, that the Lord wants His Believers to succeed at the endeavors they undertake for His sake; but many have misunderstood and have believed that if we have enough Faith the Lord wants us to be blessed with riches, stuff and good things. That's not what the New Testament teaches.

TO WIT

(Jesus speaking) "But woe to you who are rich, for you are receiving your comfort in full". Luke 6:24

(James Speaking) Listen, my Brethren; did not God choose the poor of this world to be rich in Faith and heirs of the Kingdom which he promised to those who love Him? BUT YOU HAVE DISHONORED THE POOR MAN. James 2:5,6a

(Jesus speaking) "For the poor you always have with you." John 12:8a

(Paul speaking) But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. 1 Tim. 6:9

(Paul speaking) Let your character be free from the love of money, being content with what you have, for He Himself has said, "I will never desert you, nor will I forsake you". Heb. 13:5

(Paul speaking) I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. Phil. 4:12b

(Paul speaking) To this present hour we are both hungry and thirsty, and are poorly clothed and roughly treated and homeless. 1 Cor. 4:11

(Paul speaking) They only asked us to remember the poor - the very thing I was eager to do. Gal. 2:10

(Paul speaking) Now brethren, we wish to make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia, that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality. For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability they gave of their own accord. 2 Cor. 8:1-3

ON SECOND THOUGHT 12

“Why is this happening to me” is the question most asked even among church members. Explanations vary according to denominational doctrines. Some will say a sovereign God causes all events in ones life, another will say it's the devil that's after you, another, or well it's just “fate” (what ever that is). The truth is that things happen to us for any of three reasons. First we live in a fallen world of chaos where cataclysmic events, sickness, accidents and violence are continuing to occur without reference to purpose or reason until Jesus returns. Secondly, and most often' things happen to us as a result of our own choices good, or bad if based on our sins. Lastly Father God arranges these things on occasion for our own good and His purposes.

TO WIT

(James speaking) Consider it all joy my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect (mature-finished) and complete, lacking nothing. James 1:2-4

(Paul speaking) No temptation (trial) has overtaken you that is not common to all men. 1 Cor. 10;14

(Paul speaking) For the Lord disciplines the one He loves and chastises every son whom He receives. Endure hardship as discipline, God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined (trained) by his father. Heb. 12:6,7

(Paul speaking) But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world. 1 cor. 11:32

(Paul speaking) But as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way, by great endurance, in afflictions, hardships and calamities. 2 Cor. 6:4

(Editor speaking) These verses in no way can imply that God is not a good God, quite the contrary, He is interested in our witness for Him our holiness, our faith and our preparation to spend eternity with Him in Jesus for ever and ever. We often just can't foresee His priorities and spend too much invested in the right now.

ON SECOND THOUGHT 13

There is a tendency for some churches to forget that salvation has both a beginning and a finish, and the in between is the task of the Church, that after being born again comes the importance of proper feeding. Nothing is more stunting than repetitive messages and instruction about evangelism. We should be encouraged to “press on to the upward calling of Jesus Christ”, as Paul taught, salvation is not a static existence.

TO WIT

(Peter speaking) Like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation. 1 pet. 2:

(Paul speaking) For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil. . . .let us press on to maturity. Heb. 5:13,14; 6:1b

(Paul speaking) And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end. Heb. 6:11

(Paul speaking) which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combing spiritual thoughts with spiritual words. 1 Cor. 2:13

(Paul speaking) until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fulness of Christ. Eph. 4:13

(Paul speaking) Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth. But avoid worldly and empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness. 2 Tim. 2:15,16

(Paul speaking) When I was a child, I used to speak as a child. Think as a child, reason as a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things. Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; yet in evil be babes, but in your thinking be mature. 1 Cor. 13:11; 14:20

ON THE OTHER HAND 14

Over time the teachings of Paul to the Gentiles have been diverted by some churches into two directions concerning our behavior and conduct as the children of God on Earth. On the one hand we have those who promote a Pharisaical type of holiness requiring exact adherence to the letter of his instruction and on the other a preoccupation with grace requiring no regard to conduct and behavior. The first is a kind of bondage and the later leaves Christians without any distinguishing behavior from the unsaved.

TO WIT

(James speaking) Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable. Full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. James 3:13,17

(Paul speaking) Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you: and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith. Heb. 13;7

(Peter speaking) Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles. So that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may on account of your good deeds, as they observe them glorify God in the day of visitation. 1 Pet. 2:12

(Paul speaking) Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned as it were, with salt, so that you may know how you should respond to each person. Col. 4:5,6

(Paul speaking) Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ; so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel. Phil. 1:27

(Paul speaking) But you followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance, persecutions and sufferings. 2 Tim. 3:10,11a

(Peter speaking) Since all these things (in the day of the Lord) are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness. 2 Pet. 3:11

ALMIGHTY GOD is

My Father, Friend and Creator.

JESUS CHRIST is

My Savior, Lord, Master, Brother, and my healer, baptizer, soon coming King and keeper.

THE HOLY SPIRIT is

My teacher, counselor, companion, revelator, gift giver and comforter.

THE BIBLE is

The only recorded absolutely fully inspired revelation of Gods perfect Will and Word.

THE APOSTLES are

My instructors, Elders and New Covenant truth bearers. Paul among whom, as the Apostle to the Gentiles is my primary source of specific direction for those never under the Law.

THE CHURCH is

The Body of Christ on this Earth, made up of only Saved Believers in Christ each as a member under His direction as the Head working together to spread the Gospel and perpetuate His teachings and Principles by example, practice and preaching.

THE PURPOSE is

To Glorify GOD and enjoy Him forever and ever.

Watchman