

## THE GREAT APOSTASY—FAITH, WORKS AND LOVE

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Father, we come before you on this Sabbath day and thank you for another delightful day of rest and spiritual edification, strengthening and worship. Thank you for sending the gift of your Holy Spirit to endow us with spiritual strength, understanding, knowledge and wisdom. We pray that you will pour out your Spirit on your people this day, and ask that you will show us the signs of your salvation and intervention among the nations this coming year in a special and spectacular way. Bring us close to you under your wings and guide, guard, direct and protect us as you show us the way of your great salvation, truth and commandments. We commit our lives into your hands and ask according to your will in the name of our Savior and coming king, Yeshua the Messiah. Amen.

Brethren, we will be glad and rejoice on this first Sabbath in 2015. I wonder how much we appreciate that we have the knowledge that God has given us. The world wallows in ignorance. We ourselves were in ignorance for many years. Only in the past 15 years has God revealed to us the correct sequence of his calendar months and how to determine the months. We have to revisit these truths from time to time.

**Jude 1:1-3**—“Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called:<sup>2</sup> Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied.<sup>3</sup> Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” Why do we have to fight for the truth? Why must we contend earnestly for the word of God, when most people give it no thought and don’t see the need? Today we have unlimited access to the Bible in many different translations, yet Jude says we have to contend earnestly for the faith. This is the body of God’s true doctrines which were first given to the saints.

**Jude 1:4** gives us the reason. “For there are certain men who crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.” This is a general warning that we need to heed because there are mere men masquerading as servants of God. **Matthew 15:9**—“But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men”—Rabbis, scribes, Pharisees, and the Sadducees. Now in our generation, it is the ministers of the various “churches of God”, Catholics, Episcopalians, Methodists, Baptists, Lutherans, Pentecostals, churches *ad infinitum* who teach the doctrines of men and their own ideas—thousands of them. They throw out God’s laws to follow the traditions of men. **Verse 13**—Christ said, “Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.<sup>14</sup> Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.” Well, brethren, there are a lot of ditches out there and if we are not

careful we will stumble into one of those pitfalls. There are just as many false prophets, teachers and ministers today who are just as corrupted and wayward and profligate as lived in Jeremiah's time of Judah's fall (585 BC to 607 BC) during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar and the same time as Daniel.

God warns his people in **Jeremiah 2:4-7**—"Hear ye the word of the LORD, O house of Jacob, and all the families of the house of Israel.<sup>5</sup> Thus says the LORD, What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain?<sup>6</sup> Neither said they, Where is the LORD that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, that led us through the wilderness, through a land of deserts and of pits, through a land of drought, and of the shadow of death, through a land that no man passed through, and where no man dwelt?<sup>7</sup> And I brought you into a plentiful country, to eat the fruit thereof and the goodness thereof; but when you entered, you defiled my land, and made mine heritage an abomination."<sup>8</sup> The priests said not, 'Where is the LORD?' and they that handle the law knew me not: the pastors also transgressed against me, and the prophets prophesied by Baal, and walked after things that do not profit." These were priests of God who did not know Him. Yet they were allegedly teaching the laws of God, and saying "the Lord (Baal) says this and that." Bottom line, they were liars. "Wherefore I will yet plead with you, says the LORD, and with your children's children will I plead."

Look around the isles of Chittim and Kedar and consider diligently if there is such a thing as a nation that changed their gods which were not gods. "Yet my people have changed their glory for that which does not profit"—knowledge of the true God for false laws and doctrines—vanity and foolishness.<sup>13</sup> "For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and **hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns**, that can hold no water." Broken cisterns are utterly worthless. Water is a type of God's Holy Spirit. **Ephesians 5:26**—"Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it;<sup>26</sup> That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,<sup>27</sup> That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." The Apostle Paul speaks of the washing of water by the word. The word washes and cleanses us. It is compared to life-giving water. God's Holy Spirit is also compared to life-giving water. God's word and Spirit go together and are inseparable.

People have hewn themselves out false doctrines, false teachings that can hold no water. This is the state that the churches are in today. **Isaiah 30:1, 8-11**—"Woe to the rebellious children, says the LORD, that take counsel, but not of me; and that cover with a covering, but not of my spirit, that they may add sin to sin:"<sup>8</sup> "Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever:<sup>9</sup> That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the LORD:<sup>10</sup> Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, 'Prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits:<sup>11</sup> Get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us.' " The people want their own way which is vanity and futility. Solomon observed, "for all is vanity and vexation of spirit (Eccl. 2:17)."

**1 Timothy 4:1-7**—"Now the Spirit speaks expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;<sup>2</sup> Speaking

lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron.” “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears. And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch you in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of your ministry. For I am now ready to be offered and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.” **2 Timothy 3:15-17**—“from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.<sup>16</sup> All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: <sup>17</sup> That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” What equips us? Reading, learning and being taught the word of God equips us. Why does Paul tell Timothy to be careful about preaching the word of God? Paul knew that the people of Israel were going to depart from God and turn their backs on Him, just like this generation today has done.

**2 Timothy 4:2**—“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine.”

**Isaiah 66:1-2, 4-5**—“Thus says the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? And where is the place of my rest? <sup>2</sup> For all those things has my hand made and all those things have been says the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembles at my word. <sup>4</sup> I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spoke, they did not hear: but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not.” They refused to repent and return to God.

<sup>5</sup>“Hear the word of the LORD, ye that tremble at his word; your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, ‘Let the LORD be glorified: but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed.’ ” These are those who said that they were your brethren, and claimed to be Christians or believers in God, but despised you. Judgment is coming on the House of God. **1 Peter 4:17 (NKJ)** —“For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?” We are going to be judged by whether we obey God or not or follow our own ways and traditions and ideas—how we lived.

**Malachi 2:7-9**—“For the lips of a priest (minister) should keep knowledge and people should seek the law from his mouth, for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts. <sup>8</sup> But you have departed from the way; you have caused many to stumble at the law.” How do they do that?

“You have corrupted the covenant of Levi,” Says the LORD of hosts.<sup>9</sup> “Therefore I also have made you contemptible and base before all the people, because you have not kept my ways but have shown partiality in the law.” The end-time ministers/preachers who should keep the knowledge are messengers, but departed from the truth of God, and have corrupted the law of Levi (laws of God given in the Bible) and have caused many to stumble. <sup>9</sup>“Therefore I also have made you contemptible and base before all

the people, because you have not kept my ways—but have shown partiality in the law.” These ministers/teachers haven’t been fair or just and righteous, but choose what they want to believe and throw out the rest. But God says all of His law is still in effect today and is relevant to all generations. It is not done away with.

**Matthew 5:17**—“Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.<sup>18</sup> For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away; one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.

<sup>19</sup> Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. <sup>20</sup> For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.”

**Matthew 7:21-23**—“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father in heaven. <sup>22</sup> Many will say to me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name, cast out demons in your name, and done many wonders in your name?’ <sup>23</sup> And then I will declare to them, ‘*I never knew you; depart from me, you who practice lawlessness* (disobedience to God’s law)!’ ” Isn’t that clear? God’s will is that we observe his commandments.

The final message of the Old Testament contains the prophecy of John the Baptist’s ministry, the fulfillment of which begins the New Testament. **Malachi 4:1-6**—is about the coming *Day of the Lord* and the return of Christ. “For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, and all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble. And the day which is coming shall burn them up,” says the LORD of hosts, “That will leave them neither root nor branch. <sup>2</sup> But to you who fear my name the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings and you shall go out and grow fat like stall-fed calves. <sup>3</sup> You shall trample the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day that I do this,” says the LORD of hosts. <sup>4</sup> “**Remember the Law of Moses, my servant, which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments.**” That law is still in effect today. It has not been abolished or done away with.

**Matthew 19:16-26**—The rich young ruler said to Christ, “Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?” Christ did not say “just believe in me and that is all you need to do.” Christ said to him, <sup>17</sup> “Why do you call me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments (of God).” Live by the word of God. The young man said to Him, “Which ones?” Christ could have just said “all of them” because the law of God stands altogether as one law. Break one point of it and you break it all.

Jesus said, “‘You shall not murder,’ ‘You shall not commit adultery,’ ‘You shall not steal,’ ‘You shall not bear false witness,’ <sup>19</sup> ‘Honor your father and your mother,’ and, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ ” These are the principles of the 10 Commandments which deal with human interaction—relationship with other people. Summed up —Love your neighbor as yourself and keep the 10 Commandments. The first four commands deal with loving God with all your heart, do not worship anything or anyone but God, keep the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath holy, and do not take God’s name in vain.<sup>20</sup> The young man

said to Him, “All these things I have kept from my youth. *What do I still lack?*” [A lot of people today might say the same thing].

<sup>21</sup> “Jesus said to him, ‘If you want to be perfect, go, **sell what you have and give to the poor** and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.’ <sup>22</sup> But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.” He did not want to give his possessions up. It was very tragic that he did heed the final words of Christ. **Matthew 5:48**—“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” Christ was proclaiming the gospel—walk as I walk, and do as I do—take up your cross and follow me. To be a Christian, this is what we have to do—follow Christ. It is not just the commandments *per se*, but we also have to follow Christ and do our part in proclaiming the gospel. What is it that we may be neglecting? Examine yourself as to how much you are committed to following Christ, giving to the poor and proclaiming the gospel.

<sup>23</sup> “Then said Jesus unto his disciples, ‘Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.’ <sup>24</sup> And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.’ <sup>25</sup> When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, ‘*Who then can be saved?*’ <sup>26</sup> But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, ‘With men this is impossible; but **with God all things are possible.**”

We have to be willing to pay the price and count the cost. **Luke 14:28**—“For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it— <sup>29</sup> lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, <sup>30</sup> saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish?’ <sup>31</sup> Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? <sup>32</sup> Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace. <sup>33</sup> So likewise, **whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be my disciple.** <sup>34</sup> Salt is good; but if the salt has lost its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? <sup>35</sup> It is neither fit for the land nor for the dunghill, but men throw it out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!” We must be willing to forsake everything for Christ. Putting Jesus Christ first is the message of the gospel. That is the way to gain God’s promise of eternal life in glory in His kingdom.

**Colossians 3:1-11**—“If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup> Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. <sup>3</sup> For you died, and *your life is hidden with Christ in God.* <sup>4</sup> When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. <sup>5</sup> Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. <sup>6</sup> Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, <sup>7</sup> in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. <sup>8</sup> But, now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. <sup>9</sup> Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, <sup>10</sup> and have **put on the new man** who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, <sup>11</sup> where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.”

It is so easy to think about our physical, earthly life and what we can do to improve it here on earth. Paul says set your mind and attention on heavenly things, not earthly things. Put away these human lusts and idolatry.

Verses 12 -17—“Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; <sup>13</sup> bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. <sup>14</sup> But above all these things **put on love**, which is **the bond of perfection**. <sup>15</sup> And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and *be thankful*. <sup>16</sup> Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. <sup>17</sup> And **whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.**” Be thankful for God’s law—the way of life and prosperity— and the promises of eternal life. Be thankful for God’s love and mercy. Give thanks to God through Jesus Christ.

The teachers of this world try to tell us the law of God is abolished and done away. Read my article on *Law vs. Grace*. **James 2:8**—“If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself,’ you do well; <sup>9</sup> but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors. <sup>10</sup> For whoever shall keep the whole law and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.”

For example, a chain is no stronger than each of its links. If a tow truck pulling a car out of a ditch has a link break while pulling that car out of the ditch, the car falls back into the ditch. The book of Malachi says that the corrupt priests and ministers who are partial (pick and choose) in the law who do not preach the whole law of God are guilty of breaking all of the law, just as one who murders a person is a transgressor. All have broken the law and the penalty is death. The LAW defines what sin is and what sin is not.

**James 2:14-26**—“What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? <sup>15</sup> If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, <sup>16</sup> and one of you says to them, ‘Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,’ but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? <sup>17</sup> Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

<sup>18</sup> “But someone will say, ‘You have faith, and I have works.’ *Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.* <sup>19</sup> You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble! <sup>20</sup> But do you not know, O foolish man, that **faith without works is dead**? <sup>21</sup> Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? <sup>22</sup> Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? <sup>23</sup> And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, ‘Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness, and he was called the friend of God.’ <sup>24</sup> You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.”

**Genesis 26:4-5** — God said to Isaac, “And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all

the nations of the earth shall be blessed; <sup>5</sup> because Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.” God gave those promises to Abraham’s son Isaac on the same terms and conditions he gave to Abraham. God gives those promises to you and me on those same conditions.

If you can’t back up your faith by works, then it is just your own opinion. We have to learn to exercise faith. That is why God gives us trials and tests—things to overcome and things to endure. We learn to be forgiving of others. We learn to endure hard times, painful sufferings, and death of loved ones. We commit all of these things into God’s hands. We endure through faithful good works which is a testament of our faith.

**James 2:19-20**—“You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe —and tremble!” **Revelation 20:10**—“The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are.” **Matthew 25:41**—“Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.’ ” **1 John 2:3** —“*This is how we know we love God, if we keep His commandments.*” Keeping the commandments is accompanied by the works of love. When we love others, we know that we belong to the truth, and we feel at ease in the presence of God. He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us (spirit of truth). **1 John 5:3** —“For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.” Love is the expression of our faith in action—loving God, loving Christ and loving our neighbor.

**1 John 3:19**—“By this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him.” **1 John 3:24**—“He who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him.” **1 John 4:6**—“He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us.”

**Romans 13:8**—“Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. <sup>9</sup> For the commandments, ‘You shall not commit adultery,’ ‘You shall not murder,’ ‘You shall not steal,’ ‘You shall not bear false witness,’ ‘You shall not covet,’ and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ <sup>10</sup> Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.” The love of God is the works of the law put into action and living by every word of God. It is an attitude of giving and service to others. That is the essence of the gospel, and it is the word of God that we are to preach. When God says that we are to express our love in our lives and share his love with the world, we need to remember that is why we are called.

**Romans 10:8-17**—“The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith which we preach): <sup>9</sup> that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. <sup>10</sup> For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. <sup>11</sup> For the Scripture says, ‘Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.’ <sup>12</sup> For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. <sup>13</sup> For ‘whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.’ How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall

they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? <sup>15</sup> And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: 'How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!' "

The gospel of the good news is of Christ as the Savior, the coming kingdom of God, and of the laws of God which are the laws of that kingdom. **Verse 16-18**—"But they have not all obeyed the gospel. Isaiah says, 'LORD, who has believed our report?' So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Therefore, faith comes through the word of God. Unless we study the word of God our faith is empty, futile and vain. Faith must be based on the word of God and the commandments of God joined with the works of love. "But I say, have they not heard? Yes indeed: 'Their sound has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world.' "

The gospel has gone out around the world. Right now many people are blinded, both in the world and the nation of Israel. **Romans 11:25**—"For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. <sup>26</sup> And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: 'The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and he will turn away ungodliness from Jacob.'<sup>27</sup> For this is my covenant with them, when I take away their sins." God has called the church out to bear witness of His message, to preach the gospel of the good news of the forgiveness of sin through the sacrifice of Christ and the good news of the coming kingdom of God.

**Acts 1:7**—"And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. <sup>8</sup> But you shall receive power **when the Holy Spirit has come upon you**; and you shall be witnesses to me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." That gospel message has been going out since that time – 30 AD to our age 2015 AD – almost over 2000 years to the world that Christ is the Messiah and the kingdom of God is coming. Now we are on the threshold of that kingdom and the final generation. About seven or eight days after that on the day of Pentecost that year, the apostles were all in one place with the disciples praying and studying at the temple.

**Acts 2:1**—"When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. <sup>2</sup> And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. <sup>3</sup> Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. <sup>4</sup> And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. <sup>5</sup> And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. <sup>6</sup> And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together and were confused; because everyone heard them speak in his own language. <sup>7</sup> Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, 'Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? <sup>8</sup> And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born?' "

Paul is writing to the Corinthians. **1 Corinthians 16:8**—"But I will tarry in Ephesus until Pentecost. <sup>9</sup> For a great and an effective door has opened to me and there are many adversaries." A door for what? A door opened for preaching the gospel. **Acts 14:25-**

27—“From there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work which they had completed.<sup>27</sup> Now when they had come and gathered the church together, they reported all that God had done with them, and that He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.<sup>28</sup> So they stayed there a long time with the disciples.” **Acts 19:9** —“But when some were hardened and did not believe, but spoke evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them and withdrew the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus.<sup>10</sup> And this continued for two years, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks. Now God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul to confirm the word.”

**Ephesians 6:10-20**—“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.<sup>11</sup> Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.<sup>12</sup> For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age,<sup>[a]</sup> against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.<sup>13</sup> Therefore take up the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.”

“<sup>14</sup> Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness,<sup>15</sup> and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace;<sup>16</sup> above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.<sup>17</sup> And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;<sup>18</sup> praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints —<sup>19</sup> and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel,<sup>20</sup> for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.” **Colossians 4:2-4**—“Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving;<sup>3</sup> meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains,<sup>4</sup> that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.”

Brethren, continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving; meanwhile, pray also, for us that God would open to us a door for the word to speak the mystery of Christ to the world. Pray that God will continue opening the doors for the furtherance of the gospel. The world is in desperate need of the gospel message. God is able to open doors for the shouting forth of the gospel of the good news of his kingdom. He says to the Philadelphia church in **Revelation 3:8**—“I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept my word, and have not denied my name.”

We covet earnestly, your earnest prayers for that open door! Praise be to the name of our God who gives us the victory through Jesus Christ, Yeshua, our Savior. Amen!