

## THE DUE ORDER OF RECOMPENSE

**Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the LORD. And the prayer offered in faith will raise him up, and if he has committed any sins, they will be forgiven him. Therefore, confess your sins one to another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. James 5:14-16.**

This paper is the result of several years of stirrings within me, and of the coming together of several separate events of tragedy, ruin, and robbery, as well as a general sense of impurity among God's people. Two weeks ago, in a late prayer meeting, I was stirred to ask that God would provoke us, appall us, and shock us out of our spiritual lethargy. The LORD honored that request, for the next week one of His innocents, a close friend and counselee, was ravaged (raped) by an *upstanding* man in a neighboring church. That only added to what I already knew about other travesties within the Bride of Christ and the actions of such *upstanding pillars* (from choir directors to preachers) within the body, committing adultery with weak women. Usually counseling failed to bring the violated women out of their pits of destruction. Not that these sexual atrocities were the only causes of my stirrings; listening to members tell of their brothers having their legs amputated one by one due to diabetes; deacon's wives spreading discord and ill will about the moving of the Holy Spirit; deacons refusing to discipline a man in the body for slandering another man's wife; the fear, if not outright resistance, to the Holy Spirit and His workings; lack of praise; fear within the clergy toward offending the people with large bank accounts; and on and on. All the while there was this undercurrent within me that everything was happening according to the ordinances and principles of God's Word. Still, I did not understand how or why. The following is my best effort at the reasons; as a result I am resolved and perfectly content that God is absolutely, absolutely, just and holy.

Be that as it may, my intent is to present this to the shepherds/elders, those having supposed maturity, who are influential within their assemblies, in hopes some will respond.

The great bulk of the Body is mesmerized by prosperity, an abundance of food, leisure and the resultant pride. (Sound familiar? -perhaps the same description is found in Ezekiel?) Even among the evangelicals there is a scarcity of individuals who are attuned to what God is, what He is doing, and what He is thinking. We have perverted His interests from the ridiculous to the sublime; in doing so, we have completely wrought chaos in the Body. Sickness, death and destruction permeate family after family at an increasing rate. Yet we ignore such signs.

*The Due Order of God's Interests is as follows:*

1. *His honor, name and glory, to be shared with no one, first and foremost.*
2. *The purity of the Bride for His Son.*
3. *The salvation of man.*

By virtue of man exalting himself, as Satan did, he has reversed this order to place himself at the top. Man's salvation has become paramount, his health, wealth and welfare are uppermost.

In doing so, the Purity of the Bride for His Son has deteriorated to such an extent there remains little incentive for God to move amongst us in any significant manner. Sure enough, that is the case. Even new converts are on a precipitous decline-why would God move on the unsaved only to turn them over to a dilapidated, lifeless, signless, powerless whore? Why would He pour out His Spirit to save scores of men and women only to have nowhere to send them for healing, disciplining or deliverance? That's like sending the wounded of an army to the garbage dump!

This paper deals only with one side of the three components of God's interests, The Purity of the Bride of Christ. In God's dealing with His Body there is a giving and a taking. For just as there is a Due Order of God's Interests, there is a Due Order of Recompense; there is reward and penalty, fruitfulness and chastisement, obedience and rebellion.

Someone said, "God loves you too much to leave you the way you are." However, loving someone means you are willing to tell them no; a father does not love his children if he is not willing to punish them for rebellion, or to chastise them for disobedience. True love is tough love. We somehow have fallen into a presumptuous acceptance of one side of God's nature and denied the other. The same love that initiates grace and mercy also initiates discipline and chastisement. God is absolutely just, absolutely holy and absolutely balanced.

## **SICKNESS AND JUDGMENT**

The issue of sickness, chastisement, and early death for the believer is like some kind of unexplainable mystery. We offer up honest but faithless prayers for the sick, and wait around for "whatever God wants to do." Somehow a blasphemous heresy has crept into the Body at large that says Jesus died for all our sins, and we will never have to be chastised nor disciplined in any way. Brethren, this is unbelievable arrogance. That atonement applies to eternal judgment, and to current cleansing, healing, etc, that has as its precedence a sincere repentance and confession. God is our Father; fathers discipline and chastise their sons in order to conform them to Divine truths and bear good fruit.

## **FAITHLESSNESS**

There is this notion in the body that the blood of Jesus not only erases our eternal judgment, but somehow covers pain, sickness and deprivation, and gives us forgiveness for any way we behave. The lack of ability to discern God's judgments, chastening, and conditions for all of His promises have caused much confusion. We don't know why certain things happen, but well, "Bad luck just happens..." We are confused as to discernment and the use of wisdom, to properly judge a certain situation, and then handle it according to scripture.

The church finds itself praying generic prayers of healing ("If it be thy will, O Lord...") in a blanket fashion upon any that are sick without cause. Because they have no idea what may be causing the sickness, their prayer is without faith. Faith comes from hearing and hearing comes from the word (*rhema* word) of God. Without faith it is impossible to please God. Moreover, by praying generically without faith, they oft-times pray against God; at best they displease Him.

## FRUITLESSNESS

Jesus said, “Truly, truly I say to you, he who believes in me will also do the works that I do, and greater works will he do, because I go to the Father.” “...And these signs will follow them that believe; in my name they will cast out demons, they will speak in new tongues. They will pick up serpents, and if they (should) drink any poisonous thing, it will not hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick and they will recover.....the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that attended it.”

Yet today’s church, particularly in the Bible belt, exhibits few if any confirmations to the above. Moreover, the conservative branches particularly are patently barren of these signs, let alone the “greater things” of which Jesus spoke. Stephen was only a deacon, not even an elder, yet tremendous signs and attending miracles followed him. Where are those same signs among the deacons today?

The closest analogue is found in the story of Joshua along with the children of Israel fighting for Canaan. They were healthy, successful and in favor with God until one man sinned (stepped outside his allotted boundary). Achan disobeyed God’s specific command that no one should take that which was to be destroyed. Immediately Israel was routed by only a few of the enemy, as if for no good reason; their hearts became as water with fear. A few people of Ai (*little*) routed three thousand Israelites, and slew 36 of them. These died because one man, **one man**, disobeyed. We now have millions of Achans within our camp, and we wonder at the level of disease, murder, rape, death and violence.

## THE NEW ISRAEL

Those of you who are thinking, “Well, that’s Old Testament, it does not apply to us, we’re in the New Testament Age,” need to remember that all that happened in the physical in the Old Testament is an example of things that also happen, but at a spiritual level in the New.

May we refer to the literal, physical Israel?

Jacob	Genesis 32:28
His descendants	Genesis 49:16, 28
The northern tribes	I Sam. 11:8
Restored Israel	Ezra 9:1

The spiritual Israel:

The Messiah	Isaiah 49:3
God’s redeemed ones	Romans 9:6-13
The True church	Galatians 6:16
By faith sons of Abraham	Galatians 3:7-9

Salvation originally to have come through physical Israel	Romans 11:11
Gentiles grafted into Israel	Romans 11:17-24

In Hebrews 10:26, 30, we read, “For if we sin deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful prospect of falling of judgment, and a fury of fire which will consume His enemies. For we know Him who said, ‘Vengeance is mine,’ saith the Lord, ‘I will repay.’ The Lord will judge *His* people.” Now the writer is not only quoting the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 32:36-36, Psalms 135:14), but is addressing *His* people, the *believers*.

First of all, this was written to believers; secondly, you cannot receive the knowledge of the truth without the Holy Spirit; thirdly, the words, “His people,” is the Greek word *laos*, meaning the society of Christians. In the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament), it is a title almost exclusively reserved for the elect people, the Israel of God. It is contrasted with ‘ethnos’, which means a nation also, but signifying the Gentiles, the heathen, all those who are not God’s people. In simple words, we the believers are the spiritual Israel.

### BLESSINGS AND CURSES

We read in Leviticus 26:3-13 how God says He will bless Israel if she walks in His commandments. We somehow avoid continuing to read in verses 14-39 where He emphatically explains what will happen to them if they will not hearken to His words, and not do all His commandments. God says, “I will do all these things to you.”

sudden terror	break the pride of her power (armed forces)
consumption (TB)	make the heavens as iron, earth as brass
fever	strength spent in vain
pine away	plagues sevenfold
sow seed in vain	enemies will eat it
flee when none pursue	robbed of her children (suicide, divorce, AIDS)
discipline them	cattle destroyed
pestilence (mortal diseases)	bring sword upon them
He will walk contrary to them	break their staff of bread
scatter them	destroy their high places (altars, idols, sports, etc)
make their land a waste	lay waste to the cities (ghettoes, drug trafficking)
make their sanctuaries desolate (lifeless, Spiritless)	have no power over their enemies (Korea, Vietnam) chastize sevenfold

In Exodus 34:7, God says He will visit these things upon the third and fourth generation; (does anyone fit into these descriptions?)

He calls all these things chastisement and discipline, which means educational correction, in order to bring them back to a right place, a right standing with Him.

The same Due Order of Recompense is found in detail in Deuteronomy 28, and is confirmed in the New Testament in Hebrews 12. Here the words discipline (mentioned three times), chastisement, scourging, punish, painful, our good, holiness, and the peaceful fruit of righteousness, are used. This does not sound very warm and fuzzy to me, as a lot of pastors and congregations promote.

Psalms 94:12 says, “Blessed is the man whom thou dost chasten, O Lord, and whom thou dost teach out of thy Law to give him a respite from days of trouble until a pit is dug for the wicked.” Does not this absolutely match I Corinthians 11:32 where it says, “When we are judged by the Lord, we are chastened so that we may not be condemned along with the world?”

In Revelation 3:19 Jesus says, “Those whom I love I reprove; so be zealous and repent.”

There is a serious intertwining of fruitlessness, faithlessness, sickness and judgment that requires a reckoning. When Jesus cursed the fig tree in Mark 11:21-26, He was providing an illustration which will tie all these elements together. What does a fruitless fig tree have to do with faith? –no faith, no fruit. When He says, “When you stand praying, forgive, so your heavenly Father will forgive you.” What does forgiving have to do with faith? –sin precludes and prevents faith.

Below are the four types of sickness, the four types of judgment and the mutual relationships of fruitlessness, faithlessness, sicknesses and judgments.

## **THE FOUR KINDS OF SICKNESS**

### **1. Sickness unto the Glory of God**

John 11:4; “Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, in the village of Mary and her sister Martha...So the sisters sent to Jesus saying, ‘Lord, him whom you love is ill.’ But when Jesus heard of it, He said, ‘This illness is not unto death, but unto the Glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified by means of it.’”

John 9:3, “As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth, and his disciples asked him, ‘Lord, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?’ Jesus answered, ‘It was not that this man sinned, nor his parents, but that the works of God might be made manifest in him.’”

### **2. Sickness unto Chastisement**

I Corinthians 11:28-33; “But let a man examine himself (discern, distinguish, discover what is good/evil) and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup.

For he that eats and drinks unworthily (irreverently, carelessly) eats and drinks damnation (curses, loss, judgment, ruin) unto himself, not discerning the Lord’s Body. For this cause many are weak and sick, and some have died.

For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.

But when we are judged we are chastened (corrective education towards Divine truths; inflicted by evils and calamities) of the Lord so that we should not be condemned along with the world.”

Hebrew 12:5-11 “And have you forgotten the exhortation which addresses you as sons? ‘My son, do not regard lightly the chastening of the Lord, nor lose courage when you are punished (checked, restrained, pruned) by Him. For the Lord chastens whom He loves, and scourges (mentally) him whom He receives.’ It is for chastening that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons...For our fathers chastened us at their pleasure, but He chastens us for our good, that we may share in His holiness. For the moment, all chastening seems painful rather than pleasant; but afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness by those who have been trained by it.”

The word *chasten*, in both passages above, means the same; discipline by God’s perfect father hand by any means available to Him. This includes discipline upon our physical bodies, emotions, thoughts, property, lack of peace, etc. Essentially it encompasses all we hold dear. David said in Psalms 39:11, “When thou dost rebuke a man for sin, thou dost consume like a moth that which is dear to him.”

### **3. Sickness unto death**

John 11:4 Lazarus’s sickness was not a sickness unto death, meaning there was such.

I John 5:16 “If any man see his brother committing what is not a mortal sin,(unto physical death) he will ask and God will give him life for those whose sin is not unto death. There is a sin unto death. I do not say that one is to pray for that. All unrighteousness is sin; but there is a sin not unto death.”

I Corinthians 3:17 “If any one destroys God’s temple (our bodies), God will destroy him.” *Destroy* here means to corrupt, to destroy by means of bringing it into a worse state; the implication here is by God employing the same manner of corruption as used by the offender.

Galations 6:8 “For the one who sows to his flesh shall by the flesh reap corruption.” This means to be destroyed, killed by the same means of corruption.

I Corinthians 6:9-20 Immorality (sexual) is a sin committed against a person’s own body.

II Corinthians 12:21 Paul here is mourning (as if over a friend who has died) over those believers who have not repented of immorality.

I Corinthians 5:5 Paul is going to deliver a man who has been in adultery to Satan for the destruction of the flesh (killed) so that his spirit may be saved.

I Timothy 1:20 Paul delivers those of the faith, Hermanaeus and Alexander, to Satan so that they may learn not to blaspheme. *Blaspheme* here means to speak contemptuously of God, or about any sacred thing, such as one’s form of worship, workings of the Holy Spirit, etc. Hermanaeus had said that the resurrection was already past, upsetting the faith of some, rejecting conscience, and putting their faith in confusion or worse.

Acts 5:1-11 Ananias and Sapphira died on the spot for tempting the Holy Spirit. The word *tempt* there means to slur or slander the reputation, to prove in a bad sense one is evil or trying to make Him evil; the penalty was/is death.

I Corinthians 11:28-33 The believers, without having discerned their own sinfulness during communion, had become sick, weak, and some had died.

Hebrews 10:23-31 “For if we (continue to) sin deliberately after receiving the truth, there remains no longer a sacrifice for sin, but a fearful looking for judgment and fiery indignation that will consume the adversaries, those violently opposed to God. A man who has violated the Law of God dies at the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much worse do you think will be deserved by the man who has spurned the Son of God and profaned the blood of the Covenant by which he was sanctified, and outraged the Spirit of grace?”

Now keep in mind all the above scriptures, from the New Testament are addressed to believers.

As I have reviewed this paper, it strikes me to list again those acts of sin that, according to the New Testament, result in physical death.

1. Destroying our bodies, God’s temple.
2. Sowing to our flesh.
3. Sexual sin.
4. Being unrepentant.
5. Adultery.
6. Speaking contemptuously of sacred things, one’s form of worship, and the workings of the Holy Spirit.
7. Slurring and slandering the reputation of the Holy Spirit.
8. Not examining ourselves during communion, participating unworthily.
9. Continuing to sin deliberately after knowing better.

Centuries ago there used to be much talk about the Seven Mortal Sins. For me, there is a reminder of these, and a call to stop some of them, namely speaking against other’s forms of worship-that is none of my business. Moreover, I once was wherever I now condemn. Serious stuff.

Now; through the words of Paul, God has given the authority to “turn unrepentant believers over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh” to certain authority figures within the local church body. When those figures are absent, inoperative or abdicating, God Himself steps in and sees to it that one of His children will not suffer eternal condemnation along with the heathen, and will summarily take that child home early by premature death. This to me reinforces the scriptures that indicate our souls and spirits are what are truly important to God. Our physical bodies are so much expendable hydrocarbons, destined to dust anyway.

The corruptible fleshly body, though in a place of eminence in man's mind, is of no consequence to our Father when it comes to holiness, none whatsoever. We need to understand that and have our minds renewed. Review the entire Bible and see for yourselves how many times God slew thousands because of His people's rebellion. Look up: Ecclesiastes 7:17; Jeremiah 14:11, 12:34, 18:20; Acts 5:1-11; I Corinthians 11:30; Leviticus 10:1-2; Numbers 14:20-45, 16:30-33, 41-49.

Just because we do not believe something does not render it false. Conversely, just because we believe something does not render it true. Throughout history men have repeatedly denied the presence of evil until it was too late; the same is true especially among the Bride concerning Her sicknesses, Her deaths, and Her curses.

It has always struck me as contradictory that we should brag about our Christian heritage in terms of passing down the blessings of the faith, while in the same breath denying any evil transferred the same way. It is equally inconsistent that with one side of our mouths we fervently defend the Holy Spirit and the good angels, while with the other side we deny the presence of evil spirits!

While we're at it, how can we legitimately hold true the Ten Commandments (Old Testament), while ignoring and/or openly denying selected other parts of the Old Testament? This is the spirit of the Sadducees! They and their current apostate offspring hold that there were and are no supernatural beings nor manifestations, and by implication, no supernatural healings of the Spirit. Seems to me that is exactly what the enemy would have us to believe. It also seems to me that that posture is an indirect blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. Oh, wasn't that one of the things that brought on premature death and lasting sicknesses? Surely not!

The basic mental flaw in such apostate beliefs is the lack of understanding that the Old Testament represents the physical and the New Testament the spiritual. There are no inconsistencies between the two. The physical always precedes the spiritual. Just as there was a physical Israel and there was a physical circumcision, there is a spiritual; as there was a physical temple, there is a spiritual. On and on the comparisons go.

If we are to ever get even close to the behavior of the first century church, there must first come a renewing of our minds, a transformation of what we think we believe versus what the Word says. Ere that come to pass, somebody has to read, chew and gnaw the Word. Should that ever come to pass, perhaps I Corinthians 10:6 will be real; "These things (Old Testament writings) are warnings for us, not to desire evil as they did." These were actual physical events God uses today for our spiritual warnings.

#### **4. Sicknesses Due to Curses**

In I Corinthians 11:29 we read again, "For he that eats and drinks the communion unworthily, eats and drinks damnation unto himself." The KJV translates this noun as *damnation*, the NAS, *judgment*, and the RSV, *condemnation*. The basic meaning is the result of the execution of a judgment against someone. From the context, this pertains to believers. It does not mean eternal separation from God, nor eternal damnation nor eternal death. Indeed, all that would conflict with other scriptures as the subject relates to believers.



Being damned or being cursed in an eternal sense does mean all those things to non-believers. Here, however, the restricted meaning of the word wrongly translated *damnation* is that of a worldly curse, of a temporal judgment, of loss, ruin, punishment, lack of success, or to make fail.

So here comes the ubiquitous reply about the so-called *persecutions* of the believers due to whatever we think we have done to deserve such. Folks, Satan is not the least bit concerned about 99% of the church today messing up any of his schemes. When you start coming against the gates of Hell and breaking the bonds he has put on people, then you might begin to claim persecution. But please, don't claim to be that fervent. Those who are truly under persecution, **true** persecution, are the unrecognized, the *slime* of the world, the unreceived. Unfortunately, America isn't blessed with very many of those. Let us not desecrate the truly persecuted by claiming that our sicknesses and curses are due to *persecution*. Our judgments, sicknesses and diseases are due to our own disobedience and the disobedience of our fathers, grandfathers and great-grandfathers. Period.

“Like a flitting sparrow, like a flying swallow, so a curse without a cause will not alight.”

Persecutions are patently different from judgments, sicknesses and curses. In II Corinthians 11:23-27 we read of Paul's true persecutions. Clearly persecutions are distinctly different from sicknesses etc, in that they are extremely intense but short-lived. These include fire, the sword, torture, mockings, scourgings, chains, imprisonment, stoning, being sawn in two, put to death by the sword, destitute, afflicted, ill-treated, men of whom the world was not worthy; thirty-nine lashes, beaten with rods, shipwrecked, treading water in the deep ocean, dangers from rivers, countrymen, Gentiles, the city, on the sea and among false brethren; cold, exposed, without food or water.

**Notice the above afflictions are all from *without* the body.**

By disgusting contrast, curses are ignominious and degrading, dishonorable and manifestations of shame and disobedience.

Cursed can mean:

to be made small	lightly esteemed
reviled, held in contempt	made light of
shaken	to be rendered powerless
be called a trifle	to be banned
to be bound as with a spell	to be in an endless struggle
belittled	to be hemmed in
be called worthless	to always be estranged from others
to suffer loss all the time	to be sick continuously, never well
to be ignored	insignificant
lessened	despised
small self-worth	to be “easy”
<b><i>to be infertile...</i></b>	anything familiar here?

**Notice the above are mostly from *within*, affecting the mental realm.**

Judgments, chastisements and curses are by their very nature long-lived, lingering, draining, sapping, and ruinous by degrees until there is nothing left; all is barren, lifeless, or desolate. Are jail sentences for a crime ever for a day or two? They, like the above, linger and linger until their desired effect takes place. Deuteronomy 28:59, “Then the Lord will make your plagues extraordinary, and the plagues of your offspring, even great plagues, and of long continuance, and sore sicknesses, and of long continuance.’ The NAS translates these words as “chronic and lasting.”

One recent book<sup>1</sup> on the subject notes certain key words describing the conditions when curses are operative:

lingering  
incurable  
extraordinary  
fearful  
prolonged  
life-threatening  
hereditary                      hereditary?    Did I read **hereditary**?

The list of offenses initiating curses are listed in Deuteronomy 27:11-26 and 28:15-68. Some sixty-seven verses are dedicated to curses as opposed to only fourteen for the blessings.

## **THE FOUR KINDS OF JUDGMENTS AFFECTING THE BELIEVER**

### **1. Self-examination**

I Corinthians 11:31 “But let a man examine himself and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup.”

This is the type of judgment that is available to the believer to exercise upon himself. It means to prove, discern, distinguish, appraise; it has the notion of proving a thing to see if it is true, or worthy to be received.

I Corinthians 11:31 “For if we judge ourselves, we should not be judged.”

This type of judging is in the same realm as the above, but strengthened somewhat. It too means to distinguish, discern, but additionally to denote separation from the ordinary, as it were, to make a definitive distinction.

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<sup>1</sup> Derek Prince, Blessing or Curse, You Can Choose (Chosen Books, F.H. Revell Company, Tarrytown New York, 1990). Mr. Prince elaborates and gives many actual testimonies.

Also, Geri McGee, Clearing the Land: Preparing for Deliverance (Abiding Life Ministries, P.O. Box 850222, Richardson, Texas 75085, 1985).

## **2. God's Judgment in the Absence of Self-Examination.**

I Corinthians 11:29 "For he that drinks and eats unworthily eats and drinks damnation unto himself, not discerning the body."

I Corinthians 11:32 "But when we are judged (obviously by someone else), we are chastened of the LORD."

This type of judgment is that which, in the absence of correct self-examination is administered by God Himself, as we read earlier in this paper. The consequences of such a judgment are so designed as to bring us back to a proper perspective of God's holiness. That holiness, as seen in the story of David and Uzziah (which see), establishes the correct way of doing things. Incorporated within the correct way of doing things is the Divine Order and Divine truths. This judgment directly by God's hand is applicable only to the wayward believer, though the same physical and/mental pain can be experienced by both the believer and unbeliever.

## **3. Judging Accompanied with Sentencing-Believers**

### A. Individual to Individual

Matthew 7:1 "Do not judge lest you be judged."

Basically this continues strengthening the scriptural judging process to a level of passing sentence on the offender, who now has refused the easier first and second options above. Jesus is saying here not to judge one another with the heart-motive of wishing on the offender a dire sentence. In other words, we are not to assume the position of a judge (or executioner), nor to give this "judgment" or opinion of what he deserves, even in private, to a third party. Only the Lord has that right.

Luke 17:3 "Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him."

The word "sins" here is *hamartano*, or one who misses the mark, has stepped outside the limits of his habitation. The tense (tenses are important) is the aorist subjunctive, which means that there is some doubt as to how it happened, or what motive the offender had. The act is restricted to a simple, undefined action, not one that is continuous and repeated. The word *rebuke* means to adjudge, or decide upon the offense then and there.

The key element here is the context in which Jesus was speaking, which was that of a brother being a stumbling block in front of a babe in Christ. The offense was causing the babe to sin; in other words, the offense was infectious, and disturbing.

That offending brother was to be rebuked then and there, but not in a private conversation later ("I have something I need to *share* with you...), as in Matthew 7:1 above. There is nothing said about doing it in front of others, but the honor element would suggest to rebuke him alone. The word *rebuke* here means literally "to put honor upon." To judge the offender in a mindset of honor is proper, as opposed to a mind-set of dishonor as in *sharing* the offense with a third party in a private conversation.

Implicit here is honor being the motive behind the rebuke, otherwise the whole thing would be legalism, which is dishonorable. If the mind-set is to put him down (to elevate yourself), then it is dishonorable. If the rebuke is to raise the offender up to the high calling of Christ, and founded upon genuine love for the offender, then it is honorable.

If your motive is without genuine care for the offender, a rebuke from you is as a clanging cymbal and a noisy gong. It would have been better to have kept your mouth shut, for then you have transgressed the scriptures even more than he has.

In the New Testament, Paul tells Timothy and other called men to appoint a plurality of elders to administer discipline and shepherd the flock there. The thought here is to act as church fathers, in place of Jesus Himself, and under His authority and leadership. Certainly Peter executed his God-given authority as an apostle when he pronounced death upon Annanias and Sapphira.

The points here are one, love, without which you are as a noisy gong, and two, the objective is to prevent one bad apple from spoiling the whole group. The holiness of God is paramount and as His people we are to reflect His character (remember the Due Order of God's Interests). After the discipline, things should come back to their original order, which is the Purity of the Bride of Christ.

#### **4. Judging with Sentencing-Unbelievers**

I Corinthians 11:32b “...we are chastened of the LORD so that we should not be condemned along with the world.”

This type of judgment is applied, or will be applied to the unbeliever at the Great White Throne of Judgment. It does not apply to the believer in the sense of eternal separation. It is eternal sentencing to be administered by God alone.

### **FINAL THOUGHTS AND ISSUES**

Most of the problems of the local body dealing with discernment, judging, sickness, curses, and healing arise from what is called *benign flesh*, meaning people want to do right, but self gets in the way. They are bound by tradition and ignorant of the Word. Few people are intentionally malicious, disobedient, or without compassion for others.

I have suspected for a while now there is a hidden, nearly undetectable force affecting people whom I know. For lack of a better word, it reminds me of a stupor, almost a drugged effect. I sense this stupor in the grandest of individuals, with high standards and reputation. “Good ol’ boys,” illustrate the point. This stupor, if you will, is what I encounter when initiating a subject such as any of the above. The responses vary from person to person, from polite silence to a humpf to an out-and-out “I don’t want to know!” Now this troubles me, especially when major life-threatening issues are at stake. *When they go to sleep on me at 10:00 A.M. in the midst of a warning, I know they have major trouble.*

In some whom I know closely, there is a restlessness at night, even a groaning of torment during sleep. During the day in the light, this same stupor surrounds them, as if there is something going on inside their heads. This “something” pre-empted the activity at hand, whether it be driving a car, or anything else in a normal day’s activities. There is a mental slowness, a noticeable lag-time in their reasoning. This “something” affects their wanting to know about serious issues, or for that matter, anything beyond the very ordinary.

Comprised of individuals, a good percentage of whom are the *stupored* above, the typical local Body knows only a few phrases here and there. They often deal with difficult and/or contradictory passages by ignoring them. Denominational literature for the most part is so insipid and shallow they resemble spiritual sit-coms. There are so few institutions that deal with these problems such as curses, spiritual chains and bonds, it is pathetic. People simply would rather sweep things under the proverbial carpet than raise a fuss. Deliverance? What are you talking about?

The gates of Hell have not been challenged by the Bride except by an occasional youth group or a rare oasis of Pentecostals here and there. Our discernment of the root of people’s pain, suffering and self-love will come if we will only ask the Holy Spirit. Most (?) of us are willing to be obedient if we only knew which way to go; most also are compassionate enough to help our brothers and sisters, but we are scared of the unknown.

For the sake of the Bride, please let go of vain traditions that have resulted in fruitlessness. For without fruit and obedience, there is no faith. Whatever does not proceed from faith is sin. Troubled waters are ahead when that happens.

April 7, 1992

One of the Tribe of Issachar

Definitions were taken in whole or in part from the following sources;

W. E. Vine, An Epository Dictionary of New Testament Words (Fleming H. Revell Company: Old Tappan, New Jersey, 1966).

Spiros Zodhiates, 1985, The Hebrew-Greek Study Bible (AMG Publishers: Chattanooga, TN, 1985) Strong’s Concordance is included in this volume. The Lexicon is especially insightful.

\_\_\_\_\_, The Zondervan Parallel New Testament in Greek and English (Zondervan Bible Publishers: Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1976).