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SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT TO GROW THE VISION GOD HAS PLACED ON YOUR HEART

His Way Newsletter

Are you a Wheat or a Tare? Part 2

By Doug Cook

In the previous newsletter we discussed the wheat and the tares (sewn among the wheat) from Matthew 13. We established the tares to be children of the wicked one, masquerading as Christians among us in our churches. There is no middle ground in the distinctions between wheat and a tare. We can't be a wheat-tare crossbreed -- we are either on one side of the fence or another. The days of trying to be a middle of the road Christian, with one foot in the church and one foot in the world, are drawing to a close. Jesus called these fence-straddling Christians "lukewarm" and said He will spew them out of His mouth (send to the lake of fire). Brothers and sisters, the end of the age is at hand and the process of separating the wheat from the tares has begun.

In the last article, 2 Thesalonians 2 revealed that one of the ways God Himself will thrust wavering Christians off the fence is He will send them a strong delusion, by using satan's lying signs and wonders. One of the biblical truths where most believers lack a complete revelation is the fact that God is in control of

everything (omnipotent), even the devil, and uses him for His purposes. In Isaiah 45 God said "*I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things.*" God created evil so He could use it for His purpose and His glory. For those of you that need New Testament support, go to Colossians 1 "*For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him.*" Revelation 4 also states, "*for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.*" God uses the devil and all the evil He created "for His pleasure."

The biblically established fact that God uses the devil for His pleasure may not sit well with some of the "God is a good God and never does any evil" theology, but this truth is reinforced throughout the bible. So why did God create evil, including the devil, if He knew before hand (omniscience) he would be evil? Looking at how God uses evil in the bible should provide the answer.

New Book— A Christian and Separated

An unsettling truth about marriage confronts a chagrined Christian community today, while secular observers are seriously underwhelmed. The truth is that divorce is now as common in the church as it is in the secular world. Doug Cook takes you through his personal testimony of "first-hand" encounters with attitudes and misconceived philosophies in the church that bordered on condemnation rather than support in restoration. A Must Read for all Christians, especially those with marital issues.

Direct link: www.achristianseparated.com

Are you a Wheat or a Tare? (cont'd.)

A very good example of God utilizing evil spirits can be found in 2 Chronicles 18. God's preordained lifetime for King Ahab was coming to a close and God needed Ahab to go to battle in Ramothgilead where He had an enemy prepared to slay him. Before going to war, Ahab checked with his 400 prophets to see if he should go, and all those prophets told him to go up to battle because the Lord had given Him the victory. Ahab then sought the council of the prophet Micaiah who revealed that God put a lying spirit in the mouth of the 400 prophets, and the Lord intended Ahab to fall at Ramothgilead. In spite of this warning from the true prophet of God, Ahab went to the battlefield, and even with all his efforts to disguise himself on the battlefield, he was killed by a "stray" arrow. In order to accomplish His will, God made sure 400 prophets lied to Ahab so he would go to the battle where God prepared to have him killed, and He used a lying spirit to accomplish this.

The story of Job is another instance where God used the devil specifically to work on one of His own children. In chapter 1 of Job, it was God that asked satan where he was going, and then asked if he considered His servant Job. The devil did not inquire about Job first, it was God that planted the seed in satan's mind. Satan had not even considered Job because of the "*Hedge about him and about all that he hath on every side.*" Of course satan jumped at the chance to bring evil on one of God's own protected people, and God already knew how the devil would react before He queried him – that's why He asked. So why

did God use the devil on His own children? Because Job was operating in fear and was full of self-righteousness and pride. God was trying to purge him of these strongholds. Job 3 reinforces the fear issue with Job's statement, "*For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me.*" In Job chapters 30 and 31, we find Job boasting of his own integrity. In Job's case, God used the evil one to purge and purify one of His own kids because Job had not previously been able to let go of his idols of fear and pride.



A New Testament illustration of using the devil for God's purpose would be with the apostle Paul in his letter to the church at Corinth. In 1 Corinthians 5 Paul was rebuking the church for not judging a believer that was committing adultery with his father's wife. Paul insisted they "*deliver such an one unto satan for the destruction of the flesh.*" This believer was given over to the devil for tormenting so he could overcome his fleshly desires. Why did Paul do this? So that the adulterers spirit "*may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.*" Paul's (God's) ultimate goal was to

make the sinner so miserable in his sin that he would turn back to God. God, working through Paul, used the devil to purge and purify another one of His own kids because He could not let go of his idol of adultery.

If we search throughout the bible we find that God created and uses evil for one purpose, and that is for testing, tempting, and purifying His saints. There have been many kingdoms in the Old Testament that God used to bring destruction upon the people of Israel, because they turned their back on Him. Egypt, Nineveh, and the Romans are just a few. After He used these kingdoms for His purposes in disciplining Israel, He would later destroy those nations. God is sovereign and His will is going to work all things after the counsel of his own will. (Eph 1:11)

As brought forth in the last edition quoting Ecc. 1, "*The thing that has been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun.*" Believe it or not, God is still using evil today for testing, tempting, and purifying His saints. We as the church today try to cast the devil off of just about every Christian that is having some kind of struggle in their lives without even thinking of the possibility it may have been God that put it there to purge that person of a struggle with sin in their lives. Then we wonder why we don't see answers to some of our prayers sometimes. Please don't misunderstand me. I'm not against praying for deliverance. I'm just saying we need to use more discernment lest we be guilty of trying to pray against God's will.

Allow me to close this with an interesting question. Is it God's will to cast the devil out of a tare?

“Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Spirit”

Romans 15:13

Heart-Cry for Revival—Part Three “Are You Really Saved?”

When I first purchased my home in the 1970's, I did not have any trees in my yard. I love oaks, so for several years I would add a small oak tree at various places around the property, usually one every year or two. Over the years, they have grown to be some beautiful trees. The first one I planted in the middle of the front yard is now over 60 feet tall, about 60 feet in diameter and about 6 feet around the circumference of the trunk. Some of the limbs now reach half way over the top of the house. I now have to mow leaves in the winter rather than grass, but the effort is well worth the shade during the hot summers and the tree is beautiful.

The second oak tree I planted did not turn out so well. It was a year younger than the first tree (second oldest in the yard) and it received the same amount of care; fertilizer every spring and plenty of water. As the first tree began to rapidly expand its growth, the second tree seemed to take many years before it even reached 15 feet tall. I wasn't that concerned as it looked healthy on the outside and figured it would catch on eventually. As the years went on, it continued to be underdeveloped. 25 years later with all of the other much younger trees on the property easily surpassing its size, it became quite evident this was not a healthy tree, even though it looked normal on the outside.

One day last year my wife arrived home with a small olive tree she wanted to plant. After a survey of the yard, I determined there was not enough room for another tree. So I made a decision to cut the second oldest tree down to make room for the new olive tree. I based the conclusion

on the passage in Mark 11 where Jesus cursed the fig tree because it was not bearing fruit, and this oak tree was definitely un-fruitful.

When I sawed the trunk of the tree in sections to haul it off, I discovered an amazing phenomenon and the reason for the stunted growth. The very center heart of the tree, about 3" in diameter, was completely dead. It was not rotten, but it was very hard and dried out. Not only that, there were two cracks about 6 inches long going through the center of the heart that were in the shape of an X. These black cracks traveled from the root most of the way up through the mid-

"Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?"

Psalm 85:6

dle of the trunk crisscrossing directly in the center of the hardened core. It was like this tree's heart had been dead so long it was marked for destruction.

When I saw the dead heart of the tree, I instantly realized the correlation to people within the body of believers. We have many "Christians" that have been among us in our churches for years that look, smell, act, walk, talk, sit, and sound like Christians. They use all the right words and phrases, but we never see much growth in their lives. Like the tree, some of them have been in that position for 25 years or more putting

on new leaves every year, but never really maturing in their walk with the Lord. And when you really dive into the depth of the problem, it is an issue with their hardened heart.

I am reminded of a passage here in Luke 13 that states "*A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung (fertilize) it: And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.*"

Brothers and sisters, like my oak tree, there is a point where these non-fruit bearers with hardened hearts will be marked for destruction. God is longsuffering and merciful, but He will eventually expect fruit, or He will cut the non-fruit bearers down for destruction. We, as fruit bearing believers, need to intercede as the man did in the passage for his fig tree. Let's reach out to these pew sitters and encourage (fertilize) them to make sure their heart is pure and their salvation is intact. Revival is every bit as much about reaching the hardened in heart "members" as it is evangelizing the lost.

Saints, perilous times are upon us, and it is risky to be steadfast and immovable in our religious ways. Bring revival quickly, Lord Jesus.

Please visit our salvation page on our website if there is the slightest question concerning your salvation.

www.emeraldministries.com/salvation.htm

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Forty Years in the Wilderness

By Stephen Edelstein

You ever wonder how long forty years is. I can remember it like it was yesterday. Forty years ago I was bar mitzvahed (a right of passage to adulthood at the age of thirteen) with my identical twin brother David at Beth Israel of Astor Gardens in the borough of the Bronx in New York City.

My brother and I went to "Hebrew School" to learn to read, write and speak Hebrew, in preparation for our bar mitzvah. The day we had our bar mitzvah I received a prayer shawl and prayer book. I have never returned to the synagogue. From that time until Passover of last year I never touched the prayer shawl or the prayer book. I possessed two sets of the prayer shawl and the prayer book, one set was mine, one was my brothers. I guess he didn't want his, neither did I. This was due to the fact that my parents didn't raise us up spiritually, never went to the Synagogue, never talked about God, we lived a secular life. I was afraid to admit I was a Jew, lest be proud of it.

Even though I moved many times in the last three decades, I could never throw out the prayer shawl or the prayer book. I would have these items in my hand and close to a garbage can and think I should throw them out but I couldn't, especially at times when I had no clue who God was. But God knew what role the tallit would play in my life at a later date.

In the Spring of April, 2006 I, along with Doug and Susan Cook planned our Seder Dinner for our Home Church Bible Study on Friday nights. There was much planning, extreme attention to detail to insure that the Passover Seder for Christians would be conducted the way Jesus would want it.

One of the things that I did was to bring my prayer

shawl to Doug Cook. I had given him my twin brother's tallit at an earlier time. Doug meticulously hand washed my tallit, after thirty nine years in a box it needed a cleaning. At the Seder I was the Leader and I put my tallit on for the first time. I said the prayer in Hebrew, still remembering from Hebrew School. However the tallit went back into the box for another year.

During this last year, Doug wore his tallit at church, mine was back in the box. As we came closer to Passover this year I was impressed to wear my tallit at church. When I put my tallit on, I said the prayer in Hebrew and was quite uncomfortable at first. This was due to the enemy telling me I did not need to wear it. However I overcame that thought and I now wear my tallit at church. The greatest "snapshot" occurred at church last week as I put my arm around a Muslim born, follower and lover of Jesus Christ. He also had a tallit on. Since that moment I have felt a boldness and no fear of what man thinks. I know God has me wearing it for a purpose. We are all spiritual Jews!

I have learned more about being a Jew from Christians than I knew growing up. Most recently I visited another church and was introduced to Gary Zimmerman, who has spent the last thirty years working in missions work with Jews. Gary has had the privilege to teach Jewish Evangelism in thirty Seminaries, Bible Schools and Christian Schools.

I pray that all of us will understand Gal3:28-29,"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."