



**REACHOUT TRUST**  
BUILDING A BRIDGE OF REASON

**CELEBRATING 27 YEARS OF MINISTRY**

**EQUIPPED FOR SERVICE**

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**Issue 95  
Spring 2009**

Our Convention at the end of October 2008 was hailed as one of the best ever by many of those who were there. Before the weekend, we were considering not having any further conventions but the demand was such that we have planned the next one for January 2010 at King's Park Centre, Northampton (see picture below).

Booking details can be found on page 2 but **PLEASE NOTE: It is VITAL that we know, as soon as possible, who is coming. We have registered for 35 places - we can increase to 150 if no one else books for the weekend before we let the Centre know. If you leave it until the last minute there may not be a place left. Please send the Deposit NOW!** Many have left it to the last minute to book their place but it might not be possible for this event and so do plan ahead to be with us.

If you haven't been before, you can get a flavour of the teaching of the weekend by turning to the back page of the Quarterly. All the seminars are available on CDs and can be ordered at special rates from our website or via Head Office.

The teaching is, of course, is only part of the benefit of attending such a weekend; fellowship, prayer and the opportunity to just relax and talk with folks who are like-minded adds greatly to the weekend.

**KINGS PARK**

Located on three floors these contemporary twin rooms come with en-suite bathrooms, towels, linen and tea/coffee making facilities. A new lift will also provide greater access to all of the bedrooms. For the high-tech among you, each new bedroom also comes equipped with a broadband internet connection.



The facilities are first class with spacious meeting rooms, superb catering and friendly staff that are promised to ensure that our stay will be both successful and trouble free.

The full teaching programme will be made available by June 1 2009 at the latest. However, we can say that it will include:

- 1) Teaching on some of the major groups we deal with.
- 2) The latest movements such as the Emerging Church, that are prevalent at the time.
- 3) Reaching out to those who have been affected by the occult.

All this plus:

- ... Inspirational and challenging Bible teaching
- ... Encouraging and practical advice on reaching those of other beliefs
- ... Seminars both for the 'beginner' and for those more 'advanced'
- ... Prayer, Fellowship and Worship.

You can afford to come and cannot afford to miss it. ∅

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Reachout Trust is an international Christian ministry that equips the church, upholds evangelical biblical truth and builds bridges to people in the cults, occult and new age.

*We aim to:*

Examine in the light of the evangelical Christian gospel the beliefs and spirituality of people within the cults, occult, new age and all not upholding evangelical biblical truth.

Train and equip Christians to explain the evangelical Christian gospel in a relevant way.

Provide a complete service of advice and help to all enquirers.

Present the evangelical Christian gospel.

Work with organisations who will help achieve these aims.

A detailed information pack that shows how you can be involved in this ministry is available from head office.

All unassigned articles are the responsibility of Doug Harris, Director of Reachout Trust.

Other articles may not necessarily represent the Trustees' belief in every small detail.

Requests to reprint articles, in any form, must be made in writing to the Richmond Office.

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## CONVENTION COSTS

Prices per person inc VAT *	Cost
Standard Charge	£97
Plus Single Room Supplement	£19
Day Visitor (no meals) ^	£13
Day Visitor Lunch	£12
Day Visitor Evening Meal	£15
Day Visitor Sandwich Lunch	£7

These prices are subject to VAT going back to 17.5% in January 2010 anything in excess of this will need to be passed on

^ Unfortunately the Centre does not allow people to bring their own food but they can prepare a Sandwich Lunch.

### BOOKING CONDITIONS:

**BOOK NOW** by sending a £25 deposit per person either via the website using the secure credit card facility or send a cheque to Head Office.

**Full amount will be payable by 1 December 2009.**

**Please note the following cancellation fees:**

**Before 23.09.2009 - 50% of total fees**

**Between 24.09.2009 and 23.11.2009 - 75% of total fees**

**After 23.11.2009 - 100% of total fees**

#### Doug's Diary

Doug Harris will be involved in training at the following seminars.

There are other dates that are under offer and updates can be obtained via the web site - <http://www.reachouttrust.org/indexlinks/meetings/arrangeddiary.htm> - or by contacting Head Office.

Those marked \* may have restricted attendance.

#### March 2009

9 Croydon  
14 London \*  
15 Arlesford  
18 LCM\*  
18 Twickenham  
28 Farnham

#### April 2009

25-26 Littleport Cambs  
30 Moorlands Bible College \*

#### May 2009

2 Bournemouth  
8 YWAM - London \*  
9 Lincoln  
12-15 CRE Sandown Park  
17 Arlesford

#### June 2009

6 Grimsby  
9 Battersea Bible School  
13 Cowplain, Hants

#### July 2009

7 Battersea Bible School

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# WATCH THE OWER



2009/1

*The Watchtower*, 15 February 2008, returned to a common theme in the Society's publications, that of the '*parousia*', the Greek word which they take to mean the invisible presence of Christ.

According to the Society, Christ 'came back' in 1914 but not in visible form, it was just His presence; in other words He was here but invisibly.

The way they describe it on p.21 of the above *Watchtower* is that this 'presence' started when Jesus was installed as King in the heavens in 1914 and it will continue through to the time of the 'great tribulation', thus it is an extended period.

They further explain on p.22 of the same article that the '*parousia*' runs parallel with another period of time described by the Greek word '*synteleia*' or as they translate this to mean – the conclusion – of this system (see Matthew 24:3).

The NASB renders this verse as:

"... what will be the sign of your coming (*parousia*) and of the end of the age (*synteleia*)?"

The claims that the Society make about these words and the periods they describe need to be investigated to see if what they say is true. Specifically, we need to answer three questions:

1. What do the words *parousia* and *synteleia* mean in the Greek and how are they used in the rest of the New Testament?

2. Can *parousia* be used to express an extended period of invisible presence?

3. Does the *Watchtower* article teach a Biblical view of these events?

## PAROUSIA

Strong's Concordance defines this word as:

"From the present participle of G3918; a being near, that is, advent (often, return; specifically of Christ to punish Jerusalem, or finally the wicked); (by implication) physical aspect: - coming, presence."

It occurs some 24 times in the New Testament and the way it is used is very significant. Many of the instances refer to the same event mentioned in Matthew, the return of the Lord. Others, however, refer to the coming of people to particular places in a particular time and these are very significant because they show how the word was used by New Testament writers.

Please take the time to look at 1 Corinthians 16:7, 2 Corinthians 7:6-7; 10:10, Philippians 1:26, 2; 12. Each one of these references shows clearly that the person came to a particular place and was physically present in that place. In other words they were clearly visible.

Indeed, as far as my investigations are concerned nowhere in the New Testament is the word *parousia* used of someone who is invisible, but their presence is always physical and clearly manifested. I cannot find one verse or even the context of any verse that supports the idea of an invisible presence.

There is therefore no Biblical justification for saying that the word *parousia* signifies an invisible presence. The very word itself comes from two Greek words, *para* which means 'with' and *ousa* which means 'being' and so literally, 'with being'. It denotes both an arrival and a consequent presence with.

## SYNTELEIA

Strong's Concordance defines this as:

"From G4931; entire completion, that is, consummation (of a dispensation): - end."

This word appears 5 other times in the New Testament. Each one of them refers to a period of time taking place and then a specific end (*synteleia*) coming. In other words, this is not an extended period but the point at the end of a particular period.

Look at these passages in Matthew 13:39-40, 49, Matthew 28:20 and Hebrews 9:26.

There is no evidence here at all

that this was an extended period of time; indeed all the evidence points to the '*synteleia*' being at one point in time.

Interestingly, the two Greek words we are interested in are clearly put together in Matthew 24:3 "sign of your coming (*parousia*) AND of the end of the age (*synteleia*)" and so to find that they both are used in a similar way is not surprising.

This being the case, does the Society give any Biblical evidence, in the article, for the point that they try to make? They do write several paragraphs but, as I seek to show below, I believe it is all circumstantial evidence that does not hold up to scrutiny and investigation.

## THE CASE MADE

On p.22 the Society claims that an extended period of time is indicated because in Matthew 24:37-39:

"Jesus did not liken his presence to the relatively short period of time during which the flood occurred... (rather) to the much longer period of time that led up to the Flood."

Can you really, with any degree of confidence, say that this is what these verses are actually meaning? They read:

"For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so will the coming of the Son of Man be."

The passage starts with the coming (*parousia*) and ends with the coming (*parousia*). At the beginning it is associated with the days of Noah, nothing specific, just a general phrase. But at the end the *parousia* is clearly linked to the day when the flood came and the people did not understand.

This is clearly the one day because until it came they would still be ignorant but it came and took

them away on a specific day, and this is likened to the coming (*parousia*) of the Son of Man – suddenly without warning when people are involved in other things. There is therefore no actual evidence here for an invisible presence over a long period of time but rather one final act of coming.

The Society then seek to bolster the case they are making by using Revelation 6:1-8 where Jesus is riding on a white horse and being given a crown. They then make a statement that has no foundation in Scripture:

“After being crowned as King in 1914...”

This is circular reasoning; the Society say He was crowned in 1914 therefore it shows that this refers to a period of time.

However, it shows an extended period of time because He was crowned in 1914. Unless the Society are prepared to provide clear Biblical evidence to prove that Jesus was crowned in 1914 these verses show nothing.

It seems to me that just by looking at another Scripture we can see why the Society cannot prove that Jesus was crowned in 1914; and indeed why it is impossible to do so.

“Which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.” – Ephesians 1:20-23

First, we notice that the rising from the dead and the seating in kingship are connected with no time gap in between the two statements. A Jehovah's Witness might argue that it doesn't say that there is *not* a gap of some 1,880 years!

True, but read on what else happened. All things were put in subjection under His feet; when did this happen? Surely when Jesus said it is finished! Even if the Witness wants to argue over that statement having a greater fulfilment at the end of the age, I believe the next phrase makes it absolutely clear –

‘head over all things to the church.’ Jesus must have been installed as king by the time the day of Pentecost came, just a few weeks after He rose from the dead. There can be no gap until 1914!

In the next paragraphs of the article the Society seek to use Revelation 12 as proof of an extended period of time but again these can only be used because they are coloured by the assumed truth that Michael is Jesus!

I will not go through the reasoning of why that is not true here, as we have dealt with this many times before; simply to say that when you take all Scripture it is impossible for Jesus and Michael to be the same person.

What is interesting is the obvious fact that the Scriptures they have used must be interpreted according to assumed Watchtower doctrine and also that not one of them mention *parousia*. The only conclusion we can come to is that the comments on these particular verses are a smokescreen and not one of them has any direct relevance to the subject in hand.

Please check carefully for yourself but, to me, there is no question that any honest Bible scholar could not come to the same conclusion as the Watchtower Society. There is no proof in Scripture that from 1914 onwards the *parousia* and *synteleia* have been in progress.

## RECOGNISING THE SIGN

This *Watchtower* article then continues with the same passage in Matthew and seeks to answer the question, “Who will recognise the sign of Christ's presence and understand its significance?” During this explanation an interesting ‘about-turn’ takes place from a previously held belief of the Watchtower Society.

First, they say that obviously unbelievers would not recognise the sign but that the disciples would see and recognise the sign, which leads to the change.

Previously, the authorised writer (s) of this article state on p.23, this journal (*The Watchtower* - which surely was light from Jehovah?) explained that the generation was the generation of unbelieving Jews in Jesus' day. They add a footnote referring the reader to *The Watch-*

*tower* 1 November 1995; but what they do not tell you is that this article was also a change of belief from a previously held position.

In that 1995 *Watchtower* they abandoned their long held belief that ‘this generation’ referred to the people living in 1914 and that they would not die before the end of all things. This, the article tells us, was a “more precise viewpoint”. 1914 still was held as the start of the “last generation,” but now rather than a reference to people who were living in 1914; the term generation meant an unspecified length of time.

Of interest to this matter is *The Watchtower*, 1 February 1938, p. 35 which claimed that,

“The Lord revealed to his people the meaning of the parable of the sheep and the goats, showing how the ‘sheep’ only would be spared by Jehovah when his wrath is expressed at Armageddon. All this information came not from or by man, but by the Lord God. . .”

Very interesting! God obviously made a mistake because now the old meaning of the parable is wrong. But in February 2008, yet again, they have changed things. Why? Because Jehovah revealed it? No, because it makes more sense to what is happening to them. As ever the Watchtower Society does not live their life according to the Scriptures but they fit the Scriptures to the life they are living.

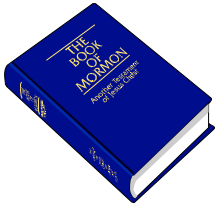
Anyway, what is the new understanding? The generation is not the one of 1914 nor the unbelieving Jews of Jesus' day but,

“...these anointed ones make up the modern-day “generation” of contemporaries that will not pass away ‘until all these things occur”

Here we have the clear suggestion that some of the ‘anointed’ will be on the earth when the tribulation begins – no wonder they now teach that the number was not up in 1935 but that Jehovah kept some of the anointed, the 144,000, for today!

I must once again ask the question, as I have so many times over the years, “How can an organisation that so readily stretches, changes and ignores God's Word be His mouthpiece on earth today?”

Incidentally I have never had an understandable answer to this. ∅



# TRUTH RESTORED - 58



BY MIKE & ANN THOMAS

## THE MORMON WORLD-VIEW – CREEDS, CORRUPTION AND CORRECTIONS

Mormonism is founded on the premise that, after the apostles' death, the Christian Church became corrupt and apostate. The Mormon version of Christian history goes something like this:

- ... Jesus established His church
- ... The apostles died and with them went authority
- ... Constantine established the Catholic Church
- ... The world was plunged into the Dark Ages
- ... The Reformers made a brave effort
- ... Joseph Smith restored the church

The defining event of Mormonism is the so-called first vision. Smith claimed that, confused by the "strife among the different denominations", he retired to the woods near his home "to inquire of the Lord which of all the sects was right, that I may know which one to join." He goes on:

"I was told that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong; and the Personage [God] who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight; that those professors were all corrupt; that: 'they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me, they teach for doctrine the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power therefore. He again forbade me to join with any of them'" (Joseph Smith – History 1:19/20)

Note the four key elements in the answer:

- ... All the churches are wrong
- ... All their creeds are an abomination
- ... All those who profess those creeds are corrupt

... All offer only lip service, teaching men's doctrines

The Book of Mormon presents an almost exactly parallel picture of apostasy:

"And it came to pass that when two hundred and ten years had passed away there were many churches in the land; yea, there were many churches which professed to know the Christ, and yet they did deny the more parts of his gospel, insomuch that they did receive all manner of wickedness, and did administer that which was sacred unto him to whom it had been forbidden because of unworthiness."

"Nevertheless, the people did harden their hearts, for they were led by many priests and false prophets to build up many churches, and to do all manner of iniquity. And they did smite upon the people of Jesus; but the people of Jesus did not smite again. And thus they did dwindle in unbelief and wickedness, from year to year, even until two hundred and thirty years had passed away."

"And they did still continue to build up churches unto themselves, and adorn them with all manner of precious things. And thus did two hundred and fifty years pass away, and also two hundred and sixty years" (4 Nephi 1:27, 34, 41)

Footnotes make clear that what is being described here occurs between AD 211 and AD 321, the period that led up to Constantine in the Old World. It is clear what is in view here and the end of the book declares:

"28 Yea, it shall come in a day when the power of God shall be denied, and churches become defiled and be lifted up in the pride of their hearts; yea, even in a day when leaders of churches and teachers shall rise in the pride of their hearts, even to the envying of them who belong to their churches." (Mormon 8:28)

The First Nephi gives an account that mirrors the Mormon view of Christian history (1 Nephi 11-14)

The life and ministry of Jesus

(ch.11)

The Twelve Apostles (11:29; 12:7-11)

A "dwindling in unbelief" (12:23)

An apostate church (13:4-6)

Nephi describes a Christian Church that is "most abominable above all churches" whose founder is the devil; that persecutes, tortures and kills the saints; that corrupts and perverts the Bible and "blinds the eyes and hardens the hearts of the children of men", putting them in Satan's power. He then describes the publication of the Book of Mormon by Joseph Smith (1 Nephi 13:35-40). Then we read:

"Behold there are save two churches only; the one is the church of the Lamb of God, and the other is the church of the devil; wherefore, whoso belongeth not to the church of the Lamb of God belongeth to that great church, which is the mother of abominations; and she is the whore of all the earth." (1 Nephi 14:10)

This idea has always coloured the Mormon view of Christianity as Mormon leaders confirm:

*"If the Catholic Church is bad, how can any good come out of it? The character of the old churches has always been slandered by all apostates since the world began"* (Joseph Smith)

*"Both Catholics and Protestants are nothing less than the whore of Babylon whom the Lord denounces by the mouth of John the Revelator as having corrupted all the earth by their fornications and wickedness"* (Orson Pratt)

*"We have seen Christianity, but it is a perfect pack of nonsense...and the Devil could not invent a better engine to spread his work"* (John Taylor)

Originally, then, Mormons saw no redeeming features in the traditional churches, the creeds or Christians. Of Mormonism, however, Charles W Penrose said, *"Our organisation is a glorious one. It is a perfect organisation –*

*perfect – because it is divine. It was not made by man...It came down from above, direct from eternal worlds”*

### HOW WIDE THE DIVIDE?

Stephen E Robinson, a Mormon scholar and apologist at Brigham Young University (BYU), published in 1991 a book entitled *Are Mormons Christians?* He wrote to show that arguments used to exclude Mormons from the “Christian world” are invalid and that Mormons should be seen as very much a part of that world. In 1998 Richard G Grant, another Mormon scholar, published *Understanding These Other Christians* with more or less the same purpose and the additional aim of building bridges between Mormons and Evangelicals in particular.

In 1997 a curious collaboration between Craig Blomberg, an Evangelical believer, and the same Stephen Robinson mentioned above, issued in a book entitled *How Wide the Divide?* The declared aim of this dialogue was to “ferret out the genuine agreements and disagreements between them.”

Given the founding claims of Mormonism with regard to an apostate Christendom the answer to the question “How Wide the Divide?” might seem straight-forward enough. A great chasm divides us. The attitude of Mormons to “These Other Christians”, one might expect, would be one of urgent concern that we should leave behind an altogether corrupt and corrupting system and join the Mormons. The answer to the question “Are Mormons Christians?” must surely be that they are the only Christians since, according to The Book of Mormon, all the rest are of the church of Satan. As Paul wrote:

“Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols?...Therefore come out of them and be separate, says the Lord” (2 Cor.6:14-17)

Yet it is the spirit of Robinson, Grant and other unofficial Mormon scholars and their initiatives that we often meet and it can cause considerable confusion. When informed Christians point out the alarming

and, frankly, insulting statements of early leaders, especially Joseph Smith, Mormons can be found furiously backpedalling, insisting that Smith only found fault with the creeds of the churches, not the churches or Christians as such. They will often play the popular “that-was-then-this-is-now” card, insisting that it was the nineteenth century church that Smith had in view and things are clearly so very different today.

However, things are no different because, notwithstanding the sometimes peculiar innovations of the twentieth century, the same creeds and confessions, the same practices, the same understanding of the central tenets of Christianity prevail today as then. A study of the creeds, councils and confessions of Christian history will show a striking continuity on essential issues regarding the nature of God (triune); His purpose in creation; the origin and influence of sin; the person of Jesus (God with us); the means of salvation (by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone); the final hope of the saints and the destiny of the lost. All these, as we understand them, are roundly condemned and rejected in Mormonism.

As to what Smith actually said, he condemned these same creeds as abominable! He charged all who believe in them with being corrupt; he said that we followed doctrines of men. His Book of Mormon charged us with “all manner of corruption”, greed and violence, with seriously corrupting the Bible, removing from it many key teachings which only Smith was to restore. Catholics and Protestants alike have nothing to commend them and Mormonism alone stands as “the only true church on the earth”, “a perfect organisation”.

Every generation of believers of every stamp likes to think that believers have always viewed the world as they do today. It is likely that when a Mormon explains earnestly that he does not condemn you or your church he is being honest, even if he is not telling the truth, i.e. they mean it even though it isn't true. They mean it because they fail to understand how the Mormon message, so striking and uncompromising at its inception, has been diluted in its presentation in order to make it more acceptable. They fail to see the disconnect

between what they are still taught in official classes, courses and manuals inside the church and how Mormonism is presented to the world outside. It was Adolf Hitler who famously declared that if you repeat a lie often enough it becomes the truth.

Christians can easily be wrong-footed by Mormons who present this spirit of conciliation, can be made to feel guilty for being so crass as to raise the issue of what Joseph Smith and others have said, their implications and the profound differences between Mormonism and Christianity. “We don't criticise your church to build up ours” is the common refrain from Mormons. We can be made to feel foolish when they “explain” that Mormonism has been misunderstood and misrepresented, convincing us that we have fallen for a lie put about by those dreadful ‘anti-Mormons’.

But we should know that whatever we might say about these eternally fatal differences Joseph Smith and the Mormon Church said it first. It was he who first insisted that Mormons cannot possibly be a part of the “Christian world”; he who described the divide as unbridgeable; he who said he was commanded by God to join none of the corrupt churches around him. It is the Book of Mormon that characterises Christendom as “the church of Satan”; that portrays us as corrupt and corrupting; that accuses us of robbing the Bible of many precious truths. By all means, let's not be belligerent in our witnessing, but let's be robust enough to tell the truth. Perhaps we can do a service to Mormons by applauding their charitable attitude but pointing out how very out of step it is with what their prophet has actually taught. Indeed that, without Joseph's view of Christianity, Mormonism doesn't work and simple reformation seems more than enough to return us to the truth.

If the way Joseph Smith saw the Christian/Mormon divide through Mormon eyes is accurate then we should feel no compunction at seeing that same picture from the other, Christian side of the divide. We build bridges of reason to reach those on the wrong side and lead them to Christ and make no pretence to any other motive. It is nothing to be ashamed of and it is just a pity that Mormons cannot deal with this truth as well. ∅

## HEAVEN AND HELL

First we need to ask if there is a future after we leave this life and if so how this existence is described. Thus here we will seek to answer three specific questions:

1. Do the Scriptures show that man is alive after he leaves the earth?
2. What names and descriptions are given to the places where they are alive?
3. Is everybody in one place?

### **Do Scriptures show that man is alive after he leaves the earth?**

To the human mind, and because of the way we look at things, death seems to be the end but it is only the end of this life as we know it. Do Scriptures give any indication that life continues, in another dimension, after leaving this life?

Luke 20:37, 38 present Jesus' clear and unambiguous argument that as God is not the God of the dead but the living, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob must have been raised from the dead and be conscious. As Jesus said this before He died and was raised so there must have been life after 'this life' for some, even before His coming.

Does Scripture show this conscious life after death spoken of by Jesus? The following verses among many give the answer.

"Then he stretched himself upon the child three times, and called to the LORD and said, "O LORD my God, I pray You, let this child's life return to him. The LORD heard the voice of Elijah, and the life of the child returned to him and he revived." 1 Kings 17:21, 22.

Where had the life gone after it had left the body so that it could return?

"And behold, two men were talking with Him; and they were Moses and Elijah," - Luke 9:30

Moses and Elijah were actually speaking with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration; they obviously had some form of continuation of

life.

"When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained; and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?'" - Revelation 6:9, 10

Souls that had been slain on the earth, and so died from a human perspective, were alive and talking in heaven.

"But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect." - Hebrews 12:22, 23

Spirits of righteous men continue in a form of life in heaven.

"So that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE SHALL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." - Philippians 2:10, 11.

Those under earth could not worship the Lord if they did not continue in some form of life.

### **Resurrection**

Resurrection in Scripture is shown to be the means by which the complete transfer of our life from this world to the next takes place. The only point of resurrection in Scripture is to bring us into this complete new life and the fact that it is mentioned at all shows there must be life after the life we live now.

1 Corinthians 15:35-53 especially shows that our physical bodies will put on incorruption and immortality. Paul taught that in the resurrection our bodies would be raised in a whole new state that would continue forever.

Indeed, without the hope of resurrection after death, we live a miserable existence.

"If we have only hoped in Christ in this life, we are of all men most to be pitied." - 1 Corinthians 15:19.

The Bible clearly shows that man is alive.

### **Something Eternal**

Hebrews 4:12 and 1 Thessalonians 5:23 both show that man has three distinct parts. It is true that sometimes the words are used interchangeably and it is not always easy to put this doctrine into a nice watertight container. However, it is clear from Scripture that man has both a spirit and a soul and there is that which is eternal that goes beyond death.

Genesis 2:7. The Bible does sometimes use the word 'soul' to talk of the whole man. However, it also talks about the 'soul' as a special part that was created by the breath of the eternal God breathing into Adam?

Adam was complete as a person but was not called a *nephesh*, the Hebrew word translated soul. Only when 'life' was placed in him by means of God's breath was he called a soul. That life was not *nephesh* but it made him a *nephesh*.

Ecclesiastes 12:7 shows the spirit returns to God who made it but the body will return to dust from whence it came; a clear example of there being an eternal part to man.

Matthew 10:28, 29 shows that even though a person's body can be killed. No man and not even Satan can destroy the soul, only God who created it could do this. There has to be part of man that survives the death of the body.

The Greek word for destroy found in Matthew 10:28 is *apollumi* and can never mean annihilate. Therefore this verse cannot be used to teach that there is nothing after death. It is more centred on the person of God than the attribute of the soul. Indeed Matthew 10:28 could be read as follows:

"And do not fear those who kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul; **but rather fear Him** who is able to cause your body and soul to be 'lost' and 'ruined' in hell."

## What names & descriptions are given to the places where they are alive?

There are 3 words in the original languages that we must be especially aware of and know what they mean. In some English versions of the Bible these words are given different translations and so it is important we check the original meaning. The Hebrew word *sheol* appears 66 times in the Old Testament. The Greek word *hades* appears 10 times in the New Testament and the Greek word *gehenna* appears 12 times in the New Testament.

There is also the Greek word *tartarus* that only appears once, in 2 Peter 2:4. This last word need not concern this current investigation because we are told that this is a special abode for disobedient angels, not men.

Greek scholar W. E. Vine sums up the use of *sheol*, *hades* and *gehenna*, in the Scriptures, as follows:

"Hades ...the region of departed spirits and the lost (but including the blessed dead in periods preceding the Ascension of Christ) ...It corresponds to 'Sheol' in the O[ld] T[estament]. In the A[uthorised] V[ersion] of the O[ld] T[estament] and N[ew] T[estament], it has been unhappily rendered 'Hell,' ...or 'the grave,' ...or 'the pit' ... It never denotes the grave, nor is it the permanent region of the lost; in point of time it is for such, intermediate between decease and the doom of Gehenna." - Vine's Dictionary of New Testament Words, Vol.2, pp.187/8.

"Hell ...Geenna represents the Hebrew Ge-Hinnom (the valley of Tophet) ...'the eternal fire' is mentioned as the doom, the character of the region standing for the region itself." - Vine's Dictionary of New Testament Words, Vol.2, p.212.

The Bible shows that the Hebrew word *sheol* and the Greek word *hades* refer to the same place but the Greek word *gehenna* refers to a different place.

*Gehenna* represents the valley of the Son of Hinnom south-east of Jerusalem. Here during Old Testament times children were offered to the false god Moloch and later Jews used the valley to dispose of their rubbish, dead animals and

unburied criminals. To consume all this, a fire burned continuously and gnawing worms abounded. It was a vile place.

## Is there consciousness in Sheol and Hades?

"Sheol from beneath is excited over you to meet you when you come; it arouses for you the spirits of the dead, all the leaders of the earth; it raises all the kings of the nations from their thrones. They will all respond and say to you, 'Even you have been made weak as we, you have become like us, your pomp and the music of your harps have been brought down to Sheol; maggots are spread out as your bed beneath you and worms are your covering.' - Isaiah 14:9-11

There is excitement and discussion in *sheol*.

"The strong among the mighty ones shall speak of him and his helpers from the midst of Sheol, They have gone down, they lie still, the uncircumcised, slain by the sword." - Ezekiel 32:21

There is speech in *sheol*.

"And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire." - Revelation 20:13, 14

First Hades gives up those in it for judgement and then with death is thrown into the lake of fire.

"...This Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death. But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power... and so, because he (David) was a prophet and knew that GOD HAD SWORN TO HIM WITH AN OATH TO SEAT ONE OF HIS DECEDENTS ON HIS THRONE, HE looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that HE WAS NEITHER ABANDONED TO HADES, NOR DID His flesh SUFFER DECAY. This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses." - Acts 2:23-32

Jesus went to and through Hades, indicating that it was a

place to pass through and not a permanent abode. There is also a distinction in these verses between the soul 'abandoned' in Hades but the flesh 'suffering decay'. The body is in the grave decaying but the soul is either in Hades or with the Lord [see Luke 23:43].

Bible references to *Sheol* and *Hades* do not mention a terrifying 'hell' full of torment for those within. On the other hand the references to *Gehenna* reveal such a place and condition not to be recommended. The Jews of Jesus' day certainly had a vivid picture of what being thrown alive into *Gehenna* would be like for them. They knew all about the valley of the Son of Hinnom. [See Mark 9:42-48.]

Matthew 5:29, 30 - It is better to lose part of one's body than end up in hell. If hell is only the common grave of the non-existent then this Scripture doesn't make sense.

Matthew 23:33 - Why try and escape from the common grave?

Matthew 26:24 - It is better not to have been born. This is nonsense if hell is non-existence because his end would have been the same as his beginning.

## Is everybody in one place?

What we have in Scripture is first a picture of the place of the dead where they wait for final judgment and final destination. They are not dead but alive even if in a different realm and different way as we understand 'alive'.

However, this is not a permanent place as we have seen from Acts 2; with Jesus passing through and Revelation 20, when the dead are given up for judgment.

From here, however, we get a distinct difference; Revelation 20:14 & 15 contrasts those whose names are written in the book life with those who are cast into the lake of fire. Two groups of people, for one the end is eternal life and for the other the second death.

The places where the two groups reside are often called heaven and hell, but as these names conjure up all sorts of dif-

ferent pictures, depending on ones upbringing, they are probably better described as those who are in the presence of the Lord where He is, and those outside of His presence. Thus we see that there are two distinct groups of people and they are in two different places.

### **Torment - hell**

At this point, as with think about the place called 'hell', we need to understand the meaning of another Greek word translated 'torment', *basanizo*. Vine says of this word:

"...primarily, to rub on the touchstone, to put to the test, then, to examine by torture ...hence denotes to torture, torment, distress." - Vine's Dictionary of New Testament Words, Vol.4, p.141.

This root Greek word is used in Scripture to describe a number of different uncomfortable situations, as the following demonstrates:

Matthew 8:6 - A paralysed man-servant, suffering great pain."

Matthew 14:24 - Battered by the waves."

Mark 6:48 - Straining at the oars, literally harassed in rowing.

Revelation 14:10 - tormented with fire and brimstone.

Revelation 20:10 - The torment goes on day and night forever.

This is the way that conditions are described in the place called 'hell', where those who are not found in the book of life consign themselves to.

This last statement is important to understand; the Lord wishes no one to perish and has shown the way to life. If I refuse to accept the way open to me, the cure for all the wrong in my life and the healing of my spirit, I am choosing my own destiny.

"Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." - Matthew 10:28

God created the soul and He is the only one who can destroy it. Here we see not so much a detailed teaching on hell but an understanding that we should fear God more than men and go His way rather than man's way.

He is able to destroy in hell which is why we are to fear Him but as the next verses point out - He does not want to. There of course will be judgement for those who have done wrong that is a secure place to live in, but Jesus already took the judgment and there is no need for me to be consigned in this way.

"Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows. Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven" - Matthew 10:29-32

Revelation 19:20 - The Watchtower Society rightly say that only dead bodies were thrown into the valley of Hinnom. However into this fire persons were cast alive.

### **Does Satan control this Eternal realm?**

Knowing that we are in God's will brings an awareness of hell but not a dread of it. We are to fear God and trust Him because He does not want to cast us into hell; rather He wants to save us from it.

There are three other things we should consider; first:

"Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world... Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels... These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.'" - Matthew 25:34-36.

Again here Jesus clearly shows there are two groups of people going to two different places but please note that both are described as 'eternal'. The Greek word is *aionios* and literally means perpetual. Both are described as lasting the same 'length of time' and both are described as perpetual or always in being.

Second, this is not, despite popular depiction, a place where Satan is in control, he is in prison there - see Revelation 20:10.

Third, from man's point of view,

on earth in time - it is different from God's eternal perspective - hell is not in existence yet because the final judgment has not taken place. Still people go to *Hades*, the place of the dead to await the final judgment.

### **Lord's Presence - heaven**

Finally we will just look at a few Scriptures that talk about the realm of being with the Lord in His presence for eternity.

"But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better; yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake." Philippians 1:23, 24

"We are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord." - 2 Corinthians 5:8

When those that are saved die they go straight to be with the Lord

"Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also." - John 14:1-4

Not described here as heaven but says where I am, there you will be.

"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away." - Rev 21:1-4

This is why it is not described as just heaven because it will all be back to one Kingdom, just as it was before sin entered the world. All of God's people will be in place with the Lord in the midst, new heavens and new earth, all together. ∅

# Kundalini Yoga

## What is Kundalini Yoga?

According to the Kundalini Teachers Association, Kundalini Yoga "is a metaphor, a poetic way of describing the flow of energy and consciousness that exists within each one of us. These practises enable you to merge with, or 'yoke' with, the Universal Self. This merging of consciousness with individual consciousness creates a 'divine union' called 'yoga' of the beloved." (K.Y.T.A.)

Bks Iyengar in his book 'The Illustrated Light on Yoga' adds "Kundalini is the Divine Cosmic Energy in bodies. It is symbolised by a coiled and sleeping serpent in the lowest bodily centre at the base of the spinal column." (Iyengar p.66)

Khalsa helpfully summarises the ideas above as "The easiest way to understand kundalini is to acknowledge that there is a universal spirit, sometimes referred to as God. God uncoils him/her/itself. This uncoiling process is known as kundalini." (Khalsa p184)

### Kundalini Yoga in its wider context

Kundalini yoga is a particular discipline or path of yoga, though its practise is inseparably linked with all other forms of yoga. In its generic form though, the underlying philosophy of yoga is an attachment or union with God, albeit in whatever form God exists, appears or manifests. Hence "Kundalini is sometimes called the 'mother yoga'. A unique and distinctive form, it encompasses elements that are found in all other forms of yoga." (Khalsa p184)

Individuals will likely adopt a branch of yoga for various reasons. The perceived benefits may include an improvement in health, better general sense of wellbeing and clarity of purpose, the chance to unwind and relax and in addition to the social and recreational dimension, participants might embark on a spiritual quest or simply

attend classes out of curiosity. Proclaimed benefits include "improved functioning of all bodily systems, a consistent sense of well being, emotional balance, enhanced intuition, right relationship and a heightened spiritual sense." (Singh)

Considering the practise of kundalini yoga in her 'Yoga Bible', Christina Brown writes that "Kundalini Yoga is a spiritual school of yoga suited towards those who are inclined towards meditation and who seek a higher state of consciousness." (Brown p288)

Arguably Kundalini Yoga has been the best kept yoga secret for several millennia, known only to the Hindu sages and mystics. Concerning the power of yoga and giving credence to the above paragraphs Vimla Lalvani writes "All types of yoga have the same goal. The main purpose is to unite the Self with the Cosmic Universe. Different paths were documented in the Vedas and they reasoned that because we are unique and different our personalities would determine which path to follow." (Lalvani p16)

**Kundalini** is a form of classic or **raj (royal) yoga** and, more specifically, a variant of **hatha yoga**. Hatha yoga emphasises health benefits that involve cleansing the body by means of practises referred to as 'kriyas' and include candle gazing, saline nasal irrigation and abdominal churning. The derivative of 'hatha' comprises 'ha' meaning 'sun' and 'tha' referring to the moon. The aim of hatha yoga is to balance the sun and the moon forces to awaken the kundalini energy which then rises through the shakras (wheels or discs of which seven are aligned at equidistant gaps along the spinal column).

If clarification is required as to whether kundalini yoga is essentially a spiritual activity with spiritual aims and motives Sri Swama Sivananda, on behalf of the 'Divine Life Society', speaks plainly. "In Kundalini yoga the creating and sustaining Sakti of the whole body is actually and truly united with

Lord Siva. The Yogi goads Her to introduce him to Her Lord. The rousing of kundalini sakti and Her union with Lord Siva affects the state of *Samadhi* (Ecstatic union) and spiritual *Anubhava* (experience)."

### Origins of Kundalini in the West and the rise to prominence of Yogi Bhajan

It is worthy of mention that the Yogi who introduced Kundalini Yoga to the West was not a Hindu but a Sikh, Harbajan Singh Khalsa, more commonly known as Yogi Bhajan, who passed away at his home in Espanola, New Mexico, in 2004 aged seventy five.

Traditionally many yoga masters originate from an ancient lineage of Brahmans, the highest caste in Hinduism, and who themselves only teach other Brahmans. Typically, Sikhs reject the caste system, though Yogi Bhajan commenced yogic instruction at eight years of age and mastered kundalini yoga when he was sixteen. Whilst he was a teenager Yogi Bhajan was involved in leading one thousand people from what is now Pakistan to New Delhi in India. His aim in coming to the West "was not to gather disciples but simply to spread the teachings of yoga and he has had some success, since there are now centres worldwide." (Brown p.288)

Yogi Bhajan was the son of a medical doctor and received privileged education in private schools and noticeably attended a Catholic convent school. "Teaching first at the East West Cultural Centre and then in a student's furniture store in West Hollywood, 'The Yogi' was literally a magnet. Students flocked to his classes. Soon he was teaching at colleges and universities, including Claremont and UCLA, and accepting individuals to teach in other cities." (K.Y.T.A.)

In 1969 Yogi Bhajan founded 3HO (Healthy, Happy, Holy Organisation) in Espanola, New Mexico. The organisation stresses that yoga is more than a practise, as it is a way of life. Consequently the

community offers classes, yet not solely on Kundalini yoga and meditation but also "incorporates teachings for all aspects of life, for example vegetarian diet, serving others, living inspirational communities and yogic life skills, such as conscious parenting or partnering." (Khalsa p188) Today 3HO is a member of the United Nations as a Non Governmental Organisation, has three hundred centres in thirty-nine countries and advises on women's issues, human rights and education regarding alternative medicine.

The Kundalini Teachers Association recalls that "in 1973 Yogi Bhanjan founded 3HO Superhealth, a remarkably successful drugless drug rehabilitation programme, blending the proven ancient yogic wisdom of the East with the modern technology of the West...In 1989 Yogi Bhanjan met with President Mikhail Gorbachev and established addiction treatment programs in Russia based on the 3HO Superhealth model. Currently a pilot project of Superhealth is being formed by the Punjab State Government in India." (K.Y.T.A.)

Yogi Bhanjan was also extensively committed to furthering ecumenism and world peace on an international scale. Noticeably, Yogi Bhanjan met with world leaders from various faiths including Pope John Paul II, the Dalai Lama and the then Archbishop of Canterbury. Not surprisingly Yogi Bhanjan became the Co-President of the World Fellowship of Religions in 1974 and in 1985 established the First International Peace Prayer Day Celebration in New Mexico.

### Kundalini Classes Theory and Practise

Kundalini classes are based on four themes comprising physical, breathing, relaxation and meditation exercises. Therefore a typical session may include forty minutes of breathing exercises, about a quarter of an hour of relaxation and five minutes of meditation. 'Kundalini Yoga, as taught by Yogi Bhanjan, is a comprehensive system and some classes include discussions about life and spiritual philosophy.' (Yoga Holidays). Having said that, Christina Brown writes that Kundalini Yoga features many

series of targeted practises. While a kundalini class will vary from week to week, if you have a particular goal in mind, your teacher may recommend a series of practises to follow consistently at home for forty days, ninety days or even longer (Brown p.288).

"While one series (called a kriya) may be aimed at stimulating the immune system, another set awakens the heart chakra, and a third prepares the practitioner for deep meditation... Meditation is very much a goal of kundalini yoga, which often features mudras, mantras or chanting. Chants may be short, chakra-related big mantras (seed sounds) or longer devotional chants." (Brown p.288)

Specific mantras are prescribed in an effort to uncoil the kundalini serpent at the base of the spine. A common one is 'Sat-Nam' meaning 'Truth is my identity' Shakta Kaur Khalsa observes that mantras in English are equally effective. "You can hear the words 'I am' on the inhalation and 'I am' on the exhalation. The double sound of 'I am' will give you the understanding that I am what I know myself to be, and I am greater than I know myself to be." (Khalsa p.191)

The releasing of kundalini energy is the goal of kundalini yoga and is purported to be attainable instantly or may even take numerous lifetimes. "According to yoga theory, our physical body is accompanied and surrounded by an electromagnetic field called the energetic body, and with this energetic body there are seven energy centres called **Chakras**. The chakras start off the floor of the pelvis and run all the way up to the **Sahasra**, the crown shakra." (Bender Birch p.50)

Chakras are depicted as wheels of light bearing occultic symbols and their function is to regulate **prana** (life force or energy) for one's mind body and soul. The idea, then, is to link up the **prana** (the chakra where one breathes) with the **apana** (the chakra at the base of the spine) This union of the **prana** and **apana** is easier said than done! 'Assuming the lotus position, this is achieved by 'frequently contracting the anus and raise the apana up; by similar contraction of the throat force the

prana down.' (Iyengar p66) As soon as the apana and prana link up at the third chakra the electromagnetic circuit is completed, the serpent (kundalini) is uncoiled or released and the united prana travel up toward the sixth chakra where it is joined by the pranic energy of the sun and the moon and the three currents rise towards the seventh chakra.

### A Biblical view on Kundalini Yoga

Ankerberg & Weldon rightly assert that "no discussion of yoga is complete without an evaluation of 'kundalini yoga'. By name, this is now practised by tens of thousands of Americans, including many professing Christians in mainline churches."

This begs the question; Can a Christian practise kundalini yoga, or any form of yoga for that matter, without it having a detrimental affect on their walk with the Lord Jesus Christ? One must ask whether any branch of yoga is Biblically compatible, as it has been demonstrated by Kundalini yoga advocates themselves that kundalini is the "mother of all yoga" and cannot easily be separated from the other branches of yoga?

Moreover, yoga authorities have explained that all yoga is ultimately kundalini yoga and that yoga is in fact meaningless without it. This is why no less an authority than Hans Reiker, author of 'Yoga of light: The classic Handbook of Esoteric Yoga', concludes "Kundalini is the mainstay of all yoga practises." (Ankerberg & Weldon cited in Reiker)

Here, then, are some specific issues relating to kundalini yoga that a born-again Bible believing Christian should seriously consider, and seek the guidance of the Lord Jesus Christ if they are deliberating over whether to attend classes.

**Firstly, Yogis and their practitioners can attain a spiritual state when the kundalini has been uncoiled, resulting in the experience of being happily mindless.** Yogis such as Gopi Krishna warn that yoga practise can endanger one's sanity. "It was variable for many

years, painfully obsessive... I have passed through all the stages of ... mediumistic, psychotic, and other types of mind; for some time I was hovering between sanity and insanity." (Cleghorn cited in Gopi Krishna)

This is in direct contrast to what the Bible teaches concerning the mind of the Christian. The Scriptures below state explicitly how believers should use their minds for the glory of God.

**Rom 12:2** "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

**1 Cor 2:16** "for who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ."

**Eph 4:23-24** "and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you may put on the new man that was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness."

**Phil 2:5** "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus."

Secondly, the age-old question, "Can a Christian participate in kundalini yoga/other yoga forms purely for the health benefits?" deserves a clear response. The reader may well have spoken to a Christian attending yoga classes stating that with the best intentions they just focus on the physical exercises and leave out the mantras, or even mediate on God? After all, what could possibly go wrong when someone has such earnest and sincere motives? Why not witness in yoga classes?

Hypothetically speaking, if the above assertions were true, at the very least merely attending kundalini yoga classes would no doubt create a stumbling block for other Christians opening up the doorway into a variety of ungodly practises and occult activity. "The first danger of awakening the kundalini powers is that they can be easily misused. If we open our third eye it is possible to read others thoughts and have a glimpse into the future." (Pettinger)

Also, can we honestly reason that someone like Daniel or his

three friends, who refused to indulge in the Babylonian practises whenever their faith in God was even slightly compromised, and who were willing to die if necessary, rather than give glory to anyone other than God, would never think of defiling themselves by even considering turning up for yoga classes? If Kundalini yoga classes were available then, would they have participated in an activity birthed out of false religions for recreational value?

Additionally why would any believer want to be associated with, or approve of, any activity whereby the objective is union with a life force in direct violation of the Scriptures? Few Christians would go to a mosque or a Hindu or Sikh temple and simply block out thoughts towards the deities being revered there and instead meditate on the Bible.

Why is there a need to attend a health class compatible with various religions, occult activities and new age practises? Surely, instead of pushing the boundaries by questioning what we can get away with, without sinning, should we not make every effort to flee from sin? On a positive note, why not attend and enjoy a fitness class in good conscience before God and be in the world but not of the world and take every opportunity to be an effective witness for Christ in that setting.

**Thirdly, Kundalini yoga has an overriding emphasis on self.**

Remember "the main purpose is to unite the self with the cosmic universe." (Lalvani 16) Worryingly, the self is elevated in place of God. The emphasis is on self esteem whereas Christians should be esteeming God greatly and exalting Him (Isa 42:8) and also preferring others' needs above their own (Phil 2:3-4). Jesus taught the exact opposite of exalting and esteeming oneself. Jesus said to the disciples. "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me." (Luke 9:23)

**Fourthly, kundalini yoga involves meditation and mantras.**

While kundalini yoga involves

emptying the mind, Christian meditation consists of filling the mind with the things of God. (Psalm 1:2, 63:6; Phil 4:8; 1 Tim 4:15)

**Fifthly, Yehudi Menuhin writes in the forward of BKS Iyengar's 'The Illustrated Light on Yoga' regarding the power of yoga:** "the tree of knowledge has indeed yielded much fruit of great variety, sweet, poisonous, bitter, wholesome, according to our use of it. But is it not more imperative than ever that we cultivate the tree, that we nourish its roots?" (Iyengar xi)

When we examine clearly the roots of how kundalini yoga emerged in the West via Yogi Bhajan it is evident that he perceived kundalini yoga as a whole lifestyle, involving yogic life skills blending yogic wisdom of the East with modern Western technology.

Yogi Bhajan was highly influential in promoting religious ecumenism on an international level, which is the antithesis of Jesus claiming to be the way, the truth and the life (John 14:6).

**Lastly, meditating on the mantra "I am" and knowing oneself to be greater than one knows themselves to be, again is the exact opposite to Jesus famous seven I AM statements in John's gospel (6:35,8:12,10:9,11,11:25,14:6,15:1).** Did Jesus not also say, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, says the Lord, who is and who was and is to come, the Almighty." (Rev 1:8)?

## Conclusion

At best, participating in kundalini yoga will inevitably encourage others into activities that will be harmful to their walk with the lord. Paul wrote to Timothy "Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine." Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you." (1 Tim 4:16) At worst, gateways to the occult may be accessed and have a disturbing effect on the mind.

Even yogic authorities are unanimous in confirming the inextricable link between kundalini yoga and all other forms of yoga. Churches permitting yoga on their premises should seriously consider

the ramifications of tolerating these disciplines and should be encouraged to cease allowing yogic activity in their residence with immediate effect.

If our Christian brothers and sisters are involved we should firstly bear in mind the same: they are our brothers and sisters in Christ! Nonetheless, we must warn them in the correct manner, boldly and not in a half-hearted ambiguous fashion (faithful are the wounds of a friend (Prov 27:6), but with a spirit of meekness and fear, remembering what Paul said; "But by the grace of God I am what I am and His grace towards me was not in vain." (1 Cor 15:10).

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# The World of Rick Joyner - 2

By John Taylor

*Continuing the article from Quarterly 94.*

## The Call

In his introduction to 'The Call' Joyner writes:

"I have searched the Bible to verify that the teachings given in my experiences are Biblical and I am confident that they are. I do admit that some of them caused me to view certain Scriptures in a way that I had not previously seen them. Even so I believe that this is consistent with the purpose of such prophetic revelations." – p.18.

'The Call' follows on from 'The Quest' and so does much of the subject matter. On page 24 Joyner explains that "The Lord almost always appears to me in these experiences personified as Wisdom." Joyner converses with him on page 38 saying "You are Wisdom, and I know that it is wisdom to ask." However, on pages 104-105 Joyner has a conversation with a young apostle named Stephen.

"Wisdom, what did He look like?" I questioned. 'He was a young black athlete. He could see better than anyone and seemed to know everyone here. It is strange, though. I have met others here who said that they have also met Wisdom, but they have all described Him differently. Some said that He was white and others said that He was a

woman. Unless there are many "Wisdoms", He is a master of disguise."

Worryingly, just who or what Wisdom is, or is supposed to represent, has been further confused here.

Joyner claims that he converses with Jonah, Lot, Abel and Adam. Adam supposedly explained to Joyner that:

"I lived long on the earth because sin did not have a deep root in me. Even though I sinned, I was created to walk with God, and my desire was still for Him. I did not know the depths of sin that the following generations knew. As sin grew, life was shortened, but in every generation, those who walk with God touch the life that is in God." - p.77.

Was life expectancy dependent on the degree to which sin was rooted in the individual? In the Bible a sin is a sin! "For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." (Rom 3v23) Furthermore, in Genesis 8v21 God promised "I will never again curse the ground for man's sake, although the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth."

Joyner also discovers a few revelations with respect of Jonah's preaching. Apparently:

"The power of Jonah's preaching is a sign. When he awakened and was

vomited out of the beast, he had this power. This is the power of preaching that will be given to the church in the last days. This is the power of conviction that the Lord is waiting to give to the church. When she is vomited out of the beast that has swallowed her, even the most evil will listen to her words. This is the sign of Jonah that will be given to the church." – pp.52-53.

The scribes and Pharisees asked Jesus for a sign to which He answered. "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." (Matt 12v39-40) I will leave it to the reader to decide whether Scripture is being taken out of context here!

Some statements in 'The Call' are so open to interpretation that they border on the esoteric. For example, "True peace will only come when we respect the distinctions we have. When we really know who we are, we will never be threatened by those who are different." Really? Or maybe true peace will come when the Lord Jesus Christ returns? These types of quotes only pave the way for an ecumenical

system that allows tolerance at any cost, ultimately embracing an Anti-christ system! Again, I will leave statements such as "You can always go as far as you can see" (p.110) and "Yes. Faith comes from knowing who Wisdom really is" to the reader to compare with what the Bible teaches!

Toward the end of his narrative Joyner visits a breathtaking, beautiful and symmetrical city. There were several streets, paths and highways and each highway was a path to the truth. He recollects that as he looked at the streets connecting the highways, "I felt an impartation of a fruit of the Spirit, such as love, joy, peace or patience. These came as feelings instead of the understanding that came when I looked at the highways." (pp.154-155) Wisdom then informs Joyner:

"I am coming to earth in My people as Wisdom to build My city. The knowledge of truth will fill My city, but wisdom will build it. The wisdom that is coming upon My builders will cause the world to marvel at the city that Solomon built." – p.158.

And:

"I am building My city in the hearts of men, with the hearts of men. Those who keep the great wisdom - the knowledge of the eternal treasures - will be used to build My city." – p.159.

Just exactly what this city is and what form it will take is not clear and could be understood in a number of ways. The Bible is consistently clear that Jesus will reign in His Millennial Kingdom in Jerusalem, the city of peace! The Bible does not exhort us to eagerly desire the second coming of an angel named Wisdom, who on occasions refuses worship!

At the end of Joyner's account Wisdom tells him:

"Remember the potential for even the least of My little ones to touch the heart of the Father. That alone makes their value greater than any price. I would have gone to the cross again for a single one of these." – p.210.

Hebrews 10:4 confirms that, "For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified." Surely, that verse nullifies the reasoning behind the above statement.

On a final note, understandably

Joyner voiced his concern to Wisdom regarding the accuracy of his account relative to Scripture. He was reassured that:

"Because you are not writing Scripture, the words you will write will have you in them. Even so, your books will be as I desire them to be because I prepared you for this task. They will not be perfect because perfection will not come to the earth until I come." – pp.83-84.

In other words Joyner's account may contain mistakes which we are open to evaluate and compare with Scripture. Considering that what Joyner writes will be what he thinks Wisdom wanted him to write, it somewhat removes the accountability he has with respect of his writings!

## There were Two Trees In the garden

Throughout this book the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil is taken to represent the Law. Joyner writes,

"What could be such a deadly fruit? The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil metaphorically represented the law, which includes the Law given to Moses through God, as well as what we call 'legalism'." – p.8.

Also:

"Why did God give the law if its fruit was poison? It is for the same reason that He put the Tree of Knowledge in the Garden. As we will see, this was actually to free man so that he could have a special relationship to God." – pp.8-9.

And finally:

"Used as a rule book, the Bible becomes the letter that kills, the Tree of Knowledge, and can even become an idol. Used properly, it turns us to Him and helps us walk with Him, abide in Him, and know Him - not just about Him." – p.198.

Admittedly, if we love the Bible more than Jesus we have a serious problem and we do not comprehend the truths contained. We must ask the question, "Is the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil actually representative of the law?" I would argue that this is an unfortunate example of a subjective allegory stretched too far! Adam and Eve sinned by eating from the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Is it a sin to feast on the Law, as after all the Psalmist wrote,

"Oh how I love your Law! It is my meditation all the day. You, through Your commandments, make me wiser than my enemies." (Ps.119:97-98) Does the tree of the knowledge of good and evil correspond with what Jesus said about the law in Matthew 5:17-18? "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfil. 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 until all is fulfilled."

Some of Joyner's writings are confusing and at times it is difficult to ascertain the intended meaning, as the meaning itself is open to interpretation. Joyner's explanation on the identity of the Antichrist is a good example:

"Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast for the number is that of a man; and his number is six hundred and sixty-six' (Revelation 13:18). The number 666 is not used arbitrarily. Because man was created on the sixth day, the number six is often used symbolically in the scriptures as the number of man. This number is further identification of the spirit of the beast, which is the spirit of fallen man. In verse 11, we see that this beast comes 'up out of the earth'. He is the culmination of the seed of Cain - the one who was 'a tiller of the ground,' or earthly minded. The beast is the embodiment of religion that originates in the mind of man. He comes up out of the earth in contrast to Christ who comes down out of heaven." – p.23.

Commenting on the above passage Joseph Chambers observes:

"Jesus made it absolutely clear that the Antichrist is a man that will establish his power in the world and set up his image called 'The Abomination of Desolation' in Jerusalem. (Matthew 24:15) Mr Joyner says that this Antichrist is rather a religious spirit that completes or as he states 'is the mature fruit of the tree of knowledge.' Again, we have a complete confusion of the truth. If the tree of knowledge of good and evil is the laws of God, then the mature fruit are fundamental Bible-believing Christians that obey the Word of God. It appears that the Bible believers are Mr Joyner's Antichrist."

Joyner makes further ambivalent statements in this book, such as:

"Our calling is not primarily to be imitators of Christ, but to have Christ formed within us. When we begin to truly see His glory, we are too con-

sumed with the wonder of Him to be aware of or even interested in ourselves and what we may have attained." – p.53.

However Ephesians 5:1 states "Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling aroma."

Likewise Joyner contends "If doctrine becomes our emphasis, we are being led astray." But we are not changed by doctrine; we are changed by seeing Jesus (2 Corinthians 3:18). Paul placed an important emphasis on doctrine in his letter to Timothy and instructed him to "Take heed to *yourself* and to the *doctrine*. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you." (1 Tim 4v16) Notice how this verse also contradicts Joyner's statement about being too consumed in Him to be interested in ourselves. We must turn our eyes toward Him but also take heed to ourselves and to the doctrine.

## The Surpassing Greatness of His Power and The World Aflame

These two writings are far more Biblically based than the former three I have reviewed. I must stress, too, that I certainly do not have a problem with all of Joyner's teachings. As mentioned in the introduction, the content of *The Call* and *The Final Quest* is somewhat surprising when compared with many of Joyner's teachings that otherwise teach clear, sound doctrine.

To provide a balanced and panoramic view on Joyner's doctrine I am of the opinion that the majority of the content in these two books are sound. Having said that, there are some statements scattered here and there that are highly questionable.

According to Joyner, "Because love is the foundation of spiritual authority, as we begin to love our enemies we will gain spiritual authority in their lives." (p 95) Is there any scriptural justification for loving your enemies in an effort to gain spiritual authority over them?

Also, "We have come to the time when Satan and his hosts are being cast out of heaven and are coming to the earth with great wrath." (p114) Is this casting out a process or a metaphorical observation, and just exactly where is Satan? In Job 1:7 and 2:2 Satan was going to and fro on the earth!

Further cause for concern is found on page 220 of *The Surpassing Greatness of His Power*:

"Those who are under the delusion that something must be totally God before they will become a part of it are almost totally sure to miss God."

However Scripture implores us to:

"Test all things; hold fast what is good" (1 Thess.5:21)

And again,

"Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world." (1 John 4:1)

In *The World Aflame* Joyner rightly contends that:

"The church does not need heresy hunters - she needs God-appointed elders with discernment who will sit in the gates of spiritual authority." – p.110.

However on the same page he writes:

"In almost every book and teaching that permeates the church there are some bones mixed in with the meat, and we just need to learn to pick out the bones." – p.110.

Whilst that is a gracious statement, the reader should exercise discernment and use Holy Scripture as the plumb line of truth.

Joyner stresses that, "Spiritual unity is not based on like doctrines; it is based on love - first for God and then for each other." (p131) Whilst we would all do well to exercise more love towards both God and each other, the above philosophy opens the gate for tolerating ecumenism, whereby fundamental doctrines are compromised for the sake of unity!

On the subject of Biblical interpretation Joyner says "That men would presume that they could devalue a system, or principles, by

which they can interpret the Scriptures, is in itself an act of profound arrogance." True enough, we 'see in a mirror dimly' and have finite minds. There is a grave danger with the above method of thinking, as passages can be easily isolated, drawn out of context without due consideration as to how Scripture fits together within a harmonised framework. It can also be utilised for personal motives or out of selfish, unholy motives, as sadly has been the case throughout Church history.

On a final note I again reiterate that I do not consider either *The Call*, *The Final Quest* or *There were two Trees in the Garden* to be typically representative of Rick Joyner's teachings and I sincerely hope and pray that he will recognise the same also. Some of his teachings have valuable insight and to coin his own phrase to the reader I would humbly suggest that they 'pick out the bones from the meat' and yet more importantly test everything alongside Scripture which is of no private interpretation but is God-breathed and inspired by the Holy Spirit!

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