

## UNSPOTTED GARMENTS

*And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel. And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, **Take away the filthy garments from him.** And unto him he said, **Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.** And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the LORD stood by.*

*Zechariah 3:1-5*

Tonight I would like to look at the concept of spiritual garments in Scripture. In the passage we just read, what's happening is taking place in the *spirit* realm. God gives Zechariah a *vision* to show him the spiritual condition of Joshua, the High Priest of Israel. In the vision, Joshua's "garments" are "filthy". Having filthy garments is clearly associated with walking in iniquity. The Angel of the Lord—which I believe is a pre-incarnation of Jesus—says to the angels who are with Him: "*Take away the **filthy garments** from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused **thine iniquity** to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment*".

Here we have the concept of *spiritual* garments being taught. A filthy spiritual garment represents walking in iniquity. So naturally, the reverse would be true of a clean spiritual garment. A clean spiritual garment represents walking in righteousness. In the New Testament, this concept of clean and dirty spiritual garments, and what they represent, is continued.

*And of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even **the garment spotted by the flesh.***

*Jude 1:22-23*

Here the apostle Jude talks about saving people with fear. The term "save" here is not to be viewed in terms of bringing a pagan to initial salvation in Christ. It's used in the sense of *rescuing* a fellow believer from the destruction (ie: the fire) that results from living in the flesh. It's important to understand that this person is a genuine believer and not a pagan because there's a tendency among some people—particularly those who believe in Eternal Security and those who believe in Package Deal salvation—to just assume that anyone who professes to be a Christian, but who walks in the flesh, is not *really* a Christian. However, the fact that this person *is* a believe is revealed by the fact that he has a "garment". Even though his garment has been spotted, as was Joshua's garment, he still has one; and the only people who get a clean garment are genuine believers. What this verse is teaching is that a true Christian *can* walk in the flesh; and if a true Christian walks in the flesh, he is walking *towards* eternal destruction. Spiritually, he is being consumed by *the fire* that has power over all flesh.

*And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, **and art dead**. . .Thou hast a few names even in Sardis **which have not defiled their garments**; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.*

*Revelation 3:1 & 4*

In this passage, having a defiled spiritual garment is associated with being spiritually dead. The only thing Jesus said about the condition of this church was that even though their religious works had gained them a reputation of being spiritually alive, in reality they were spiritually dead. Then the Lord says there are a few people in that church who are not spiritually dead. That is, there are a few people in that church who have not “defiled” their garments, which resulted in spiritual death.

Most of the people in that church had been completely burned up and consumed by *the fire* that has power over the flesh. They were dead, spiritually. What you have here is a picture of Jesus trying to do what Jude talked about. He is trying to pull the “few names” who had not been consumed by the fire, out of it. The concept of *not* allowing ourselves to be “defiled” is very important because the *first* characteristic of the 144,000 who stand with the Lamb on Mt. Zion is that they were not “defiled” with women.

*These are they **which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins**.  
These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.*

*Revelation 14:4*

John says these people are the “first fruits unto God. The concept of the term first fruits comes from the harvest of Old Testament Israel. The first fruits, or a very small portion of a particular crop, was always culled before the general harvest and offered up to God as a thank offering. The first fruits was always the choicest and the most mature portion of the crop. It was not the whole crop, just a small portion of it. That’s the idea John intends for us to get when he says the 144,000 are God’s first fruits. They are the cream of the Christian crop. They represent a very small portion of the *true* church. They represent the choicest and the most spiritually mature portion of the church. They represent the ones who are radically obedient to the Lamb, who are fanatically dedicated to the Lamb, who have paid the greatest price to be faithful to the Lamb and to follow Him wherever He goes.

When John says they are virgins who were not defiled with women, he’s *not* speaking carnally. He’s not saying these people will be men who have never touched a woman. The term “women” is being used metaphorically. It may represent Babylon (the great Harlot and all her harlot daughters)—which includes not only the big denominational systems, but the small ones people set up *out here* as well; or it could be a reference to “the flesh”; or it could represent something else.

Whatever the term women represents, the idea that’s being conveyed is clear: these people were utterly faithful to the Lamb. They refused to have *spiritual union* with anything or anyone that would defile them and make them unfit to walk with the Lamb on Mt. Zion (ie: the high places in the Spirit).

You see, there is a great price to pay in order to be one of those 144,000. Walking with the Lamb in the high places isn't part of package deal Christianity. It doesn't come by reading and studying your Bible. It doesn't come from reading books and hearing messages and going to fellowships and Bible studies. It's a *reward* for those who are *fanatical* about remaining spiritually pure. It's a reward for those who ignore the voices that say if you refuse to have fellowship with other believers, you are a religious Pharisee and a "holier-than-thou" type.

*Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.*

*James 1:27*

The apostle James said that "pure" religion, that is religion that's "undefiled" in God's eyes, is to keep ourselves "unspotted from the world". Christians make a mockery of this passage every day because they are not only *not* spotted by the world, they are *in bed* with the world night and day. Far from remaining separate from the world, they are deliberately mixing the world with their religion and in the process, they are completely defiling themselves. So far we have seen that our garments can be spotted by: (1) the flesh; (2) by sin or iniquity; (3) by the "women" in Revelation 14:4; (4) by the world; and (5) by whatever killed the church at Sardis.

*Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.*

*Ephesians 5:25-27*

*For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit **offered himself without spot** to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*

*Hebrews 9:13-14*

It's God's desire that we be without "spot" when the Lord returns. When Paul talks about God's people "not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing", he is not talking about our *invisible* legal position as a result of being justified, forgiven, and receiving the imputed righteousness of Jesus. He's talking about the same thing the writer of Hebrews is talking about when he refers to the *spiritual condition* of God's ultimate sacrificial Lamb—the Lord Jesus. Jesus offered Himself "*without spot*" unto God. He offered Himself without sin, without iniquity. Throughout the Scripture, the term "spot" represents sin or iniquity. It represents the sin of the flesh. The *same kind* of spotlessness Jesus possessed is the kind of spotlessness we are to possess when He returns. We are talking about moral perfection—having no guile.

The writer of Hebrews talks about not having spots in the context of the Passover lamb. In Old Testament Israel, on the Feast of Passover, every house was to offer a lamb without blemish (spot). They would separate the selected lamb from the rest of the flock and examine it for several days to make sure no blemishes were even beginning to appear. After the lamb was judged to be completely pure, they would then sacrifice it for the Passover meal. Jesus fulfilled all the types and shadows of this Old Testament ceremony in every single detail.

Paul talks about not having spots in the context of keeping our *garments* clean. That this is the case is clear from the term “wrinkle”, which is joined to the term “spot”. Paul is talking about keeping our garments free of spots and wrinkles or any thing else that would blemish them. But in both cases, the idea is identical. Both writers are talking about walking in absolute spiritual purity. They are not talking about possessing *positional* purity, which every true Christians enjoys. They are talking about spiritually pure speech; spiritually pure thoughts; spiritually pure deeds; and spiritually pure motives. They are talking about living a *holy* life. This is what Paul meant by what he said to Timothy:

*Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses. I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; **That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.***

*I. Timothy 6:12-14*

Paul told Timothy to “keep this commandment without spot”. Exactly what commandment was he telling Timothy to keep without spot? The command to fight the good fight of faith and lay hold on eternal life. Fighting the good fight of faith and laying hold on eternal life would naturally include all the other things Paul taught, and all the other orders Paul had given him throughout the epistle, relating both to the doctrine and discipline of the house of God, and his office of preaching the Gospel. Paul is telling Timothy to live his life and carry out his ministry “without spot”—to do these things free from sin and free from iniquity.

*Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, **be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.***

*II. Peter 3:13-14*

This is a very interesting passage because Peter is telling us it’s *our responsibility* to “be found” in Christ without spot and blameless when He returns. He says we must “be diligent” that we are found spotless and blameless. In other words, it’s up to us to make every effort to be found spotless. So the general concept of the Scripture is that when we come to Christ, we are given a clean spiritual garment. As we go through life and grow in Christ, we are to keep those garments clean. But many times we allow our garments to get spotted through the five things we just looked at. When we do, we need to wash them in the blood of the Lamb to make them clean again. This is what John is talking about in the book of Revelation.

*And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are **arrayed in white robes**? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have **washed their robes**, and **made them white** in the blood of the Lamb.*

*Revelation 7:13-14*

The people John sees in this vision had washed *their* robes in the blood of the Lamb and made the white AGAIN. The robes were white originally, but somewhere along the way they allowed them to become spotted or stained through the things we mentioned. However, when they went through great tribulation, that suffering made them get down to business with the Lord and *overcome* the things that were spotting their robes. Through true repentance and getting dead serious about these things they gained the victory over them and washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb.

*And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and **his wife hath made herself ready**. And to her was granted that **she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints**.*

*Revelation 19:6-8*

I've touched on the idea that's relayed in this passage before, but I want to look at it again and add a little something for you to think about. It says the wife has made herself ready for the marriage. In the context of keeping our garments clean, this would strongly imply that the wife kept her garments clean—either by not allowing the 5 things we mentioned to tarnish her garment, or by cleaning that garment as soon as it was spotted by one of those things. But clearly, making ones self ready for the marriage would include having a clean garment at that time.

So when John says it was granted that the wife: “...*be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white*...this is a reference to a *second* garment. She already has one garment that she has kept clean. Now she is to be given a second garment, called fine linen. That second garment is clearly said to be “the righteousness of saints”—or the righteous deeds or acts of the saints. So that second garment is a reward for keeping the first one clean. The first one is kept clean by *living* a holy life; by living a righteous life. The second garment is the reward for living that kind of a life. She is going to wear her works. She is going to be *clothed* with the *glory* that comes from living a holy life. Her reward is the *level of glory and honor* that results from following after righteousness. And those who do not keep their garments clean will not receive that second garment. They will not receive the reward that goes with pursuing holiness.

So the issue we face as believers—especially in the last days—is keeping our garments clean. The issue we face is keeping ourselves unspotted from the flesh, from sin or iniquity, from the “women” in Revelation, from the world, and from whatever killed the church at Sardis. It's our job to “be found” in Christ without spot when He comes.

If we find that we are being spotted by any of these things, it's *our job* to recognize it. It's *our job* to repent and ask God's forgiveness for it. It's *our job* to get deadly serious and desperate about the issue and plead with God to give us the power and the determination to turn away from that thing and overcome it. God will do His part if we will do our part. He will do that which we can never do by our own strength. But He demands that we do our part. If we don't, you can be sure He will let us sink deeper and deeper into the pit we are trying to crawl out of.

Now, there's is one more thing that defiles the believer, and it's demon spirits. That's the reason they are called "unclean" spirits throughout the New Testament, and particularly the Gospels. Every demon spirit, regardless of what kind of spirit it is, is spiritually unclean—and any demon spirit that moves in the life of a believer makes that believer unclean. Right now, the most dangerous kind of unclean spirits we face are *religious* spirits. The reason they are the most dangerous ones is simply because they are the *least recognized* type of spirits, even by those who understand that Christians can walk under the influence of demon spirits. Even solid deliverance ministries that I have known down through the years have almost no understanding of how to recognize the religious spirits that have been unleashed in this hour.

One of the reasons God's people have no idea what these religious spirits are capable of doing, and they can't even recognize them, because they are reading the warnings of Jesus about the abomination of desolation with the carnal mind instead of by the Spirit.

*When ye therefore shall see **the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place,** (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.*

*Matthew 24:15-18*

All Christians have been told that the "abomination of desolation" was either the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD by the Romans, or it will be a literal idol, set up in the *Holy Place* of re-built temple in Jerusalem in the last days. The political Antichrist—who Israel will receive as their Messiah—will take away the Levitical sacrifices that will be re-established once the Temple is rebuilt, and he will set his own image up in the Temple. This view is based on the prophesies of Daniel, which Jesus was alluding to:

*And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall **take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate**. And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries: but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits...And from the time that **the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up**, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days.*

*Daniel 11:31-32 & 12:11*

The first view of this abomination—that it consisted of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 AD—is false because the angel clearly says that there will be a 3½ year period of time between this event and the return of the Lord. Clearly, the abomination of desolation—whatever it is—takes place in the final years of this present age.

As for the idea that the abomination is a literal statue of Antichrist that's set up in a literal re-build Temple in Jerusalem, I believe this is wrong as well. I give you my reason in a minute. But there is a second reason people don't understand what the abomination is. That reason is because they have been taught that being a believer automatically precludes the possibility of having demon spirits operate in our lives. The familiar cliché: "a Christian cannot have a demon" carries with it the *connotation* that we cannot even come under the influence of one. Preachers are loath to admit that evil spirits can still work *in* believers and *through* believers—and even overcome us if we play games with God.

These two errors—that the abomination is a strictly literal event, involving a stone idol and a stone temple 3½ years after the rapture; and also the error that cannot be overcome by evil spirits—make it utterly impossible for God's people to understand what's happening right now.

For many centuries, Satan has been working through religious leaders to build a doctrinal "yellow brick road" away from the faith that was "once delivered to the saints" (*Jude 1:3*). Line upon line, error upon error; each doctrinal brick of error has had a specific purpose. Each has been designed to perfectly fit the errors laid down before it. Each one has taken multitudes further and further away from the truth and prepared them to embrace a counterfeit Christ in the last days of this age. The two bricks of error I just referred to—a Christian can't come under the influence of demon spirits, and the abomination is a literal idol to be placed in a literal temple—have put the majority of believers in such a frame of mind that they are not even *capable* of considering the possibility that *we* are the "temple" that is to be defiled. They wouldn't tolerate for a moment the idea that the abomination of desolation is being set up *in the Church*. To them, this is absolutely impossible.

Well, I'm here to tell you that this is *exactly* what Daniel, Jesus and Paul were talking about when they warned us of these things. What we are witnessing today is the *beginning* of the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy concerning the *removal* of the daily sacrifice and the setting up of the abomination of desolation in the Holy Place.

One of the things people refuse to consider when they read the Old Testament prophets is that God spoke to them in terms *they* were familiar with. God did not speak to them about things like the coming Church or the "body" of Christ in *New Testament* terms. He spoke to them in *Old Testament* terms. So when they talk about something like the temple or the sanctuary in the last days, they are talking in terms that they know and understand. The understanding that under the New Testament, God's temple and sanctuary would *no longer* be a stone building but a corporate body of believers, was not given to them.

When we read what they say about temples and sacrifices and various things in the last days, it's up to us to translate those terms into our present reality. God doesn't expect us to view these things with an Old Testament mind-set or frame of reference. The Hebrews feasts, commandments, rituals, sacrifices, holy days and convocations, the Tabernacle with all its furniture, and the Temples, are clearly said to be the *SHADOW* of things to come (*Col. 2:16-17; Heb. 10:1*). All these things represent New Testament *realities*

and experiences. We are not supposed interpret the things of the Old Testament with an Old Testament mind-set or in an Old Testament theological framework. We are supposed to interpret them in light of *the realities* of the New Testament.

What this means is that the Old Testament terms “temple” and “sanctuary”—when they are being spoken of in a *prophetic* way regarding the last days—are not to be interpreted in their most literal and narrow sense. They are to be understood according to *present* New Testament realities—and that reality is, *we* the temple of God under the New Testament; *we* are the sanctuary of God under the New Testament. There is no other temple or sancrury!

*For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, **which are the figures of the true**; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:*

*Hebrews 9:24*

The writer of Hebrews tells us the Tabernacle of Moses was a “figure” of the “true” Tabernacle in heaven. This applies to the Temple of Solomon and Herod as well, for those Temples were mere copies of the original Tabernacle in the Wilderness. All these temples—including the one described in Ezekiel—were merely a representation of spiritual realities in heaven. It has always been the intention of God to make those spiritual realities, physical realities. This is why, while the Jewish people were still building the Second Temple, the Lord spoke prophetically through Zechariah of another, yet-future Temple which the Lord Himself would build:

*And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and **he shall build the temple of the LORD.***

*Zechariah 6:12*

In the Old Testament, the Tabernacle and Temples were only *temporary* accommodations until the *real* temple—the body of Christ—could start being built. This is why both Stephen and the Apostle Paul said God does not dwell in temples made by men (*Acts 7:47-48 & 17:24*). Literal temples were the shadow; the body of Christ is the reality. Once the reality has been established there’s no going back to the shadow. God will never allow another Jewish temple to be built with a reconstituted Levitical Priesthood and animal sacrifices. So whenever you read things about the “temple” or “sacrifices” in the last days, just know that you are dealing with *spiritual* realities, not carnal realities.

*Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand),*

*Matthew 24:15 NKJV*

I've said this before but it needs repeating. Any rebuilt temple would be along the same basic lines as the other temples of Israel. It would be divided into the Outer Court, the Holy Place, and the Holy of Holies. No political Antichrist would set his image up in the "Holy Place because the Holy of Holies has always represented the place and presence of God. Any image would be set up in the Holy of Holies because that is what the symbolism would require. The true God dwells in the Holy of Holies. A usurper would never settle for having his image in a *lesser* place in that Temple.

Something else most people don't ever seem to consider when they look at this whole issue is the fact that even if the Jews did succeed in rebuilding the Temple and re-instituting animal sacrifices, they would do so in unbelief and rebellion. Do you really think God would *refer* to a temple that's been financed and constructed by Christ-hating Jews who have made a pact with Antichrist, "His" Temple? Please! Such a temple, and the commencement of animal sacrifices which would go along with it, would be an utter *abomination* to God and it would only *anger* Him.

In order for a temple to be desecrated, it would *first* have to be holy and spiritually pure. Unbelieving Jews who sign a covenant with Antichrist will never be able to produce anything holy or spiritually pure—of that you can be sure! So the whole idea that Antichrist could desecrate a temple that would *already be* a desecration in the eyes of heaven, is stupid. The idea that a politician could make a temple that was *already* an abomination in the eyes of God, a further abomination, is illogical.

Any temple that's built by unbelieving Jews with the help of a Antichrist will be an abomination *before* the first stone is laid. It will be a complete desecration *before* the first animal sacrifice is killed. Hello? You can't make something that is *already* an abomination, an abomination; and you can't desecrate something that has *already* been desecrated!

*Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that **he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.***

*II. Thessalonians 2:3-4*

Almost all Christians who read this passage automatically assume Paul was talking about an political leader taking his seat in a rebuilt Jewish temple in Jerusalem. But when you understand the revelation God gave the apostle Paul regarding the true (corporate) nature of God's temple, you'll understand that Paul would never, never call *any* future stone temple—much less one built by Antichrist!—the "temple of God". To do so would be a *denial* of the very revelation God gave him. Again, such a temple and everything related to it would be an unclean, spiritual abomination. So there's no way Paul would ever refer to such an edifice as "the temple of God".

***Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?***

*I. Corinthians 3:16*

*What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.*

*I. Corinthians 6:19-20*

*Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all **the building** fitly framed together groweth unto **an holy temple** in the Lord: In whom ye also are **builded together** for an **habitation of God through the Spirit**.*

*Ephesians 2:19-22*

On the Day of Pentecost, the Temple at Jerusalem *ceased* being God's temple. Never again will God put a visible manifestation of His presence in or on a building. Never again will a building function as, or be called, the temple of God. We are the ones Antichrist wants to sit in. We are the temple he wants to defile.

Look through the New Testament and you will find that Paul *never* refers to the then-present Temple at Jerusalem as the “temple of God”. He always calls it “the temple”—period (*Acts 22:17; 24:12&18; 25:8; 26:21; I. Cor. 9:13*). Do you know why he never calls it the temple of God? Because he realized it *ceased* being the temple of God after the resurrection of Jesus. On the Day of Pentecost, the Temple at Jerusalem *ceased* being God's temple. Never again will God put a visible manifestation of His presence in or on a literal building. Never again will a literal building function as, or be called, the temple of God.

This was the revelation God gave Paul nearly 2000 years ago. He showed Paul that the *historical* temples were only temporary types and shadows of the *true* temple He would eventually build Himself—a temple in which He will  *dwell* for all eternity. He showed Paul that *this* temple would be a many-membered group of people called the body of Christ and one new man. It would be comprised of elect Jews and Gentiles, and it would manifest all the different facets of God's divine nature. Through this revelation, Paul came to understand that it's the presence of God—and the presence of God *alone*—that makes something His temple. Once that presence has gone, that thing is *no longer* the temple of God.

Now, if Paul wouldn't call the Temple of *his day* the temple of God, why on earth do we think he would call a future temple, which will actually be the temple of Antichrist and an spiritual abomination, the temple of God? We are the temple of God, my friends. We are the temple this *religious* spirit (Antichrist) is seeking to defile. We are the place in which this powerful religious spirit is trying to take his seat.

Interestingly enough, in the old pre-trib rapture movie series, “A Thief In The Night”, they had the Antichrist sitting in the Holy of Holies—which is the only logical place to have him, though that's not where Jesus said the abomination would stand. Jesus said the abomination would stand in the “Holy Place”. The Old Testament Holy Place in the Tabernacle *represents* the Spirit-filled life of New Testament believers. It represents the place of supernatural power and manifestation of the Holy Spirit. When we say this or that person is walking in the Holy Place, we are saying that they have not only been born again, but they have

also been baptized in the Holy Spirit. The Holy Place represents moving in the realm of supernatural gifts, revelation, ministry and power—and this is *exactly* where you find the *greatest* manifestations of the spirit of Antichrist in this hour. This religious spirit is brazenly manifesting itself in Pentecostal and Charismatic circles among those who are open to the supernatural moving of God.

What most of God's (Pentecostal or Charismatic) people don't understand—or in some cases, what they refuse to accept when you try to tell them—is that anyone who is open to the supernatural moving of the Holy Spirit in these days is in danger of being deceived by the religious spirits that have been granted the power to *counterfeit* all those things.

What I said last week bears repeating—most of God's people still don't realize that Satan has been on a leash during this present age. However, in the final hours of this age God will let him off that leash. This is what Paul is talking about when he says: “*For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains {will do so} until he is taken out of the way*” (II. Thess. 2:7 NAS). For 2000 years, God has been “restraining” Satan from using his full power and potential for deception. But that leash has now come off, and Satan is being allowed to do things he has never been allowed to do before, in the realm of deception and counterfeiting the things of God.

You can tell when people don't have a grip on what's happening because they continue to say the main battle we are facing is the battle against the “flesh”—which simply isn't true, *unless* you are a true-blue Fundamentalist and you have rejected the whole supernatural realm. In that case, your main battle will probably be with the flesh. But anyone who is open to the moving of God's Spirit needs to understand that there has been a shift in the spirit realm and the whole game has changed.

I can tell when someone doesn't have a clue regarding what's happening because they will tell people to keep their minds of heavenly and spiritual things, but they won't warn them to be careful because religious spirits can replicate and duplicate all those “heavenly” things. You see, the issue is no longer a simple matter of choosing between thinking on things that are carnal or thinking on things that are spiritual; or between pursuing things which are carnal and pursuing things which are spiritual. Everything spiritual that you can pursue or think about can be counterfeited. Now we have to not only choose between things that are carnal and things that are spiritual; we also must choose between spiritual things that are *real* and spiritual things that are *counterfeit*.

This is why so many genuine believers are going down right now. They do not understand Satan can counterfeit the things of God. They don't understand he can counterfeit the voice of God; they don't understand he can counterfeit the supernatural gifts of God; they don't understand he can counterfeit the fruits of the Spirit; they don't understand he can counterfeit *anything* the Spirit of God can do in your life.

Even when they are presented with the truth, most people still reject it because they don't have the guts to face it. They can't live with such an unpleasant reality. Of course, no one's going to admit they are too scared to accept the truth—they are much *too proud* to admit that. Instead, what they do is they start pulling out their favorite doctrines to prove that the warning you are sounding is a bit over the top. One of those doctrines is the sovereignty of God. A woman who went on a verbal rampage against me because I dared to suggest that right now, our “flesh” is not our greatest enemy, threw the sovereignty argument at me in her 7-page rebuke. She wrote:

"I find it very troubling that you have painted a picture of Satan as being a 'god-like' entity. Yes, he is a powerful, spiritual being, one that we are no match for, but **my understanding is that he can only do those things that GOD allows him to do**, (i.e. Job)."

It never ceases to amaze me how people will quote *only* those portions of Scripture which happen to match their views. Of course it's true, Satan can only do the things God allows him to do because God is sovereign over all His creation, including Satan. But that's only half the truth. The other half of the truth, which this woman and all those like her like to forget (or ignore), is the fact that according to the Scripture—not according to Dan Mace but according to the Scripture—in the last days, God is going to "allow" Satan to overcome many genuine believers (Dan. 7:20-22 & Rev. 13:5-7). What this woman and all those like her seem to forget (or ignore) is the fact that according to the Scripture—not according to Dan Mace but according to the Scripture—in the last days, God will "allow" Satan to take his seat in many of those who comprise His "temple" (II. Thess. 2:4) and His "sanctuary" (Dan. 8:13).

What do you think the difference is between the ones who end up deceived and the ones who don't? The difference between these two groups of BELIEVERS has to do with the CHOICES they make as they walk through this life. It's the choices you and I make, not God's sovereignty, that will determine which group of saints we end up in, in the last days. So if you're wise, you won't place your security in the fact that God is sovereign over Satan because His sovereignty won't ever stop you from making wrong choices that will eventually cause you to be defeated. His sovereignty won't ever stop you from making wrong choices that will eventually lead you into the arms of Antichrist and eternal destruction.

Let me tell you my friends: the battle we are now facing with these religious spirits is much more dangerous than the battle we are facing with the "flesh". Anyone who doesn't see that is blind; and it may be that they are blinded by the *very same* religious spirits I'm talking about.

So we really need to add these spirits to our list of things which can defile our garments. Ask God to give you wisdom and understanding in this whole area because I can assure you, you are being touched by these kinds of spirits all the time. They are very active in the lives and ministries of believers right now—and they don't always look like the kind of stuff you see in a Todd Bentley meeting. Many times they look just like the real thing. They can look right and they can feel right. And many people are being defiled by them at this very minute because they don't believe they are a threat, and they wouldn't know how to recognize them even if they *did* think they were a danger.

Pure religious before the Father is to keep ourselves unspotted from anything and everything that is not of God—and that includes *religious* things are not of God, and fellow believers who are themselves mixed up in things that defile them.