

Lord, What Should I Do?

By

Fred R. Coulter

Dedication

This book is dedicated to all true Christians who love God the Father and Jesus Christ with all the heart, all the mind, all the soul and all the strength; who are pursuing righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and meekness; and who are fighting the good fight of faith to lay hold on the hope of eternal life.

The apostle John was inspired to write of the ultimate love of God the Father and the hope that He has given us through Jesus Christ: "Behold! What glorious love the Father has given to us, that we should be called the children of God Beloved, now we are the children of God, and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be; but we do know that when He shall appear [at His second coming], we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him exactly as He is. And everyone who is having this hope in him is purifying himself, even as He is pure" (I John 3:1-3, AT).

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Lord, What Should I Do?

The churches of God are being engulfed by a sweeping tide of doctrinal change. Doctrines that were formerly condemned by church authorities as pagan and unscriptural are now being sanctioned and upheld as "new understanding." Ministers and local church leaders are often the first to succumb to this subtle, persuasive and powerful subversion of the Truth of God. Many brethren in Jesus Christ are confused and bewildered by the major changes in church teachings, but they are afraid to question church authority. Those who object to these doctrinal changes are threatened with loss of salvation for resisting the "government of God"! But what should we do when we see the churches of God exchanging the eternal Truth of His Word for counterfeit doctrines of pagan origin? What should we do when we see God's churches crumbling from within? Should we keep quiet and continue to attend, trusting that God would never allow His churches to be overcome by false doctrines? Or should we make a stand for the Truth? If we speak out and we are forced to leave, will we lose salvation? What does the Word of God say? LORD, WHAT SHOULD I DO?

Introduction

All true Christians are being targeted by Satan the devil in a subtle conspiracy to destroy their faith and belief in Jesus Christ. Satan is the Adversary! He is the Destroyer! He is the implacable enemy of God the Father and Jesus Christ and every begotten son of God!

In an August 1993 article I wrote, "Satan has launched a major spiritual battle for the hearts and minds of God's people. It is not limited to a single organization. It is a major spiritual attack to destroy the knowledge of God's plan! It is a major attack to ensnare the brethren of God with the deceit of persuasive religious words in an attempt to get them to accept doctrines which deny Jesus Christ and God the Father, thereby causing them to lose salvation.

True Christians are not the only ones who are under attack. Satan is out to attack everyone who names the name of Jesus Christ, regardless of whether he or she is truly converted. Satan desires to expunge every vestige of the name of Jesus Christ and any form of Christianity!

Satan's targets include every fundamental Protestant denomination. Here is a quote from a fundamentalist evangelical Protestant publication: "The Church in America [the Protestant churches] is under attack! The source of this attack is not primarily humanism, secularism, or agnosticism from without, but liberalism from within. **Liberalism within the Church is eating away at the core of the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith. Christianity in America today is facing the same 'downgrade' that the Church in England faced 100 years ago in the days of Charles Spurgeon.**

"Spurgeon said: 'We live in perilous times: we are passing through a most eventful period; the Christian world is convulsed; there is a mighty upheaval of the old foundations of faith; a great overhauling of old teaching. The Bible is made to speak today in a language which to our fathers would be an unknown tongue. Gospel teachings, the proclamation of which made men fear to sin, and dread the thought of eternity, are being shelved. Calvary is being robbed of its glory, sin of its horror, and we are said to be evolving into a reign of vigorous and blessed sentimentality, in which heaven and earth, God and man are to become a heap of sensational emotions; but in the process of evolution is not the power of the gospel weakened? Are not our chapels emptying? Is there not growing up among men a greater indifference to the claims of Christ? Are not the theories of evolution retrogressive in their effect upon the age? Where is the fiery zeal for the salvation of men which marked the Nonconformity of the past? Where is the noble enthusiasm that made heroes and martyrs for the truth? Where is the force which carried Nonconformity forward like a mighty avalanche? Alas, where?'

"If something is not done to stem the tide, the wave of liberalism will engulf our nation as it did England at the end of the last century. The evidence of the liberal landslide is rampant, but a few recent examples highlight its growing intensity. In *Newsweek* (8/9/93) an article entitled 'Dead End for the Mainline?' chronicled the demise of the mainline denominations in America" (*The Prophetic Observer*, November 1993, Southwest Radio Church, Oklahoma City).

The attack against all forms of Christianity has been well organized. Approximately one hundred years ago, the Synagogue of Satan finalized and implemented its master plan to destroy every vestige of Christianity and to conquer the world through its subversive tactics of monetary control of all governments. The ultimate goal is finally to rule the world and destroy all Christian religions. What has happened in England--in its government and its Protestant religion during the past 100 years--was deliberately planned and carried out by the agents of Satan. England has been reduced from the greatest empire in modern times to a minor nation dying of moral deprivation because God has been systematically eliminated from all public affairs and nearly every private life as well.

Moreover, the money exchangers have destroyed its wealth through wars, debt and the subversion of its government. Today, England is a mere vassal state controlled by the "unseen hand" of the Synagogue of Satan. At the present time, the United States is experiencing the greatest siege ever by the full forces of the Synagogue of Satan. Every type of Christian religion is under attack. Our government at all levels is dominated and controlled by the forces of the Synagogue of Satan. What has happened in England for the past 100 years is happening in America today. It will not take 100 years, however, to complete the enslavement of America. In only a few more years, the shackles of governmental and religious slavery will be locked in place.

In America today, Satan is attacking in full fury any religious organization that teaches any Truth from the Word of God. Now that he has nearly completed the subversion of Protestantism, he is focusing all his efforts on Sabbath-keeping Christians and their organizations. His ultimate goal is the annihilation of all Christians--all who are the begotten sons of God the Father and the true brethren of Jesus Christ.

True Christians need to be aware of Satan's devices. They need to wake up and perceive what is now taking place within the churches of God. Satan's subtle deception is being accomplished--not by a direct attack from without, but by a clever, insidious conspiracy at work within the churches' own headquarters. Satan is launching his attack with an avalanche of false doctrines through the top authorities and highest-ranking ministers within the churches of God. These ministers, who purport to speak the Truth of God, have in reality erred from the Truth and have been subverted by Satan into accepting false teachings. Wittingly

or unwittingly, they have become Satan's agents by promulgating false doctrines from within.

This book reveals how pseudo-scholars and self-seeking ministers within the centrally organized churches of God are being used by Satan to undermine and destroy the faith of true Christians, ministers as well as members. The original apostles of Jesus Christ were confronted with the same subtle attack by false teachers and so-called apostles. The New Testament is filled with warnings against these "false apostles" and "deceitful workers."

You, your fellow brethren in Christ and the church you affiliate with may be experiencing such attacks. This book is designed to answer the question, "*Lord, what should I do?*"

Jesus Christ inspired and preserved in the New Testament what every true Christian needs to know in order to overcome the subtle, cunning deception being perpetrated by Satan. God has provided us with the knowledge of His Word and the power of the Holy Spirit to repel all the fiery attacks of Satan the devil. The battle is for eternal life. Jesus Christ is on our side, and He has promised to be with us to the very end of this present age. We can do all things through Jesus Christ who strengthens us. We are to fight this fight of faith--even unto death.

"And I heard a great voice saying in heaven, 'Now is come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Christ; because the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who accuses them before our God day and night.' And they overcame him [Satan the devil] through the blood of the Lamb, and through the word [their message] of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto death. Because of this, rejoice you heavens and you who dwell in them. Woe to those who inhabit the earth and the sea, because the devil is come down to you, having great fury, knowing that he has a short time" (Rev. 12:10-12, *AT**).

In these trying times, our love and faith are being tested to see if we truly love God the Father and Jesus Christ with all our hearts, with all our minds, with all our souls, and with all our strength. God the Father has proven His great love for us through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son. May this book be a tool to help strengthen you in your love and faith toward God and in your resolve to be faithful to His Word.

* *AT* designates the author's translation. All other Scriptural references are from the KJV.

Chapter One

What Is Happening to the Churches of God?

Today, Satan is skillfully and subtly using one of his most powerful spiritual weapons against the churches of God, regardless of the size of the organization! It is one of Satan's most ancient and effective weapons, which he has so masterfully used time and time again with astounding success!

This weapon is the instigation and promulgation of false doctrines from within the churches of God! These ancient, recycled lies of Satan are always depicted as "new truth" or "new understanding." But the reality is that Satan's subtle lies consume and destroy spiritually. Like cancer, when they begin to take root, they are not even noticed! These malignant teachings encircle and slowly destroy the spiritual vitality of a church, just as cancer consumes the physical body. Their deadly tentacles reach into the vital spiritual organs of hope, faith and love, seeking to strangle, destroy and kill. Just as people have learned to live with cancer, many brethren are allowing themselves to be subjected to wave after wave of false doctrine, edging them closer and closer to spiritual death. While they may feel that "something is wrong," they are not aware that Satan is attacking them in an all-out assault against their faith and love of God. His diabolical aim is to destroy their understanding of God's Word and their gift of salvation through Jesus Christ!

In many local churches, ministers and members are accepting these "new teachings." Shocking though it may seem, many of these ministers and brethren have admitted that they know these teachings are false! Yet they are going along with these doctrinal changes. They are so spiritually lethargic that they are ignoring their personal spiritual responsibility to God the Father and Jesus Christ. How could so many of the brethren of Jesus Christ, the spiritually begotten children of God the Father, sink into such a dangerous state of spiritual blindness and slumber?

Two Fundamental Errors

The foundation for this degenerate spiritual condition was inevitably laid when the churches of God began to follow two fundamental teachings which appear to agree with Scripture but which in reality are gross misapplications of Scripture. The first erroneous teaching has misled many churches of God into accepting and practicing a form of church government which is actually contrary to the express words of Jesus Christ in the New Testament. This false teaching is the assumption that God works through a hierarchical government, as we see in the nations and corporations of this world. Based on this belief, church leaders have patterned themselves after the governments of this world by organizing themselves in a hierarchy of ministers. Church members have accepted this ministerial hierarchy because they were told that this was God's form of government as taught in the Scriptures.

In accepting this form of church government, the brethren of Jesus Christ abandoned their God-given responsibility to guard the true teachings of the Word of God by "proving all things." Instead, they allowed a hierarchy of ministers to be superimposed over them. They looked to this "line of authority" to tell them what they should believe. The sad result is overwhelmingly evident in local congregations today. Church officials of various tides and ranks have exalted themselves above their brethren and are exercising complete authority not only in doctrinal matters but in all aspects of their brethren's lives.

Whole churches have been led to believe that this **hierarchical overlordship exercised by the ministry is "God's government."** Based on this claim, everyone is expected to give unquestioning obedience to ordained ministers of any rank and especially to the "top leader." Everyone must obey their teachings and commands as the teachings and commands of God! The brethren, deacons and "lower rank" ministers are told that the men in charge have been chosen by God. God alone is personally guiding them in everything they do! Surely God won't allow them to make mistakes or to sin. However, if they do make mistakes or do sin, only God can correct them because the chosen leaders are "God's anointed." If anyone dares to question their authority and their teachings, or dares to expose their mistakes and their sins, that person is labeled as rebellious against "God's chosen authority."

This teaching is firmly entrenched in many churches of God. Ministers wield absolute authority over their brethren's lives. Any challenge to their authority is met with stern, arrogant threats of disfellowshipment and ultimate loss of salvation. Ministers have even been known to tell brethren, "Don't you know that I have the power and authority to command you to sin, and if you don't obey me, you are going against God!"

To perpetuate their authority, ministers repeatedly threaten and intimidate their brethren. When the gross sins of a "top leader" of a large church of God were on the verge of being exposed, he excoriated and browbeat an entire church by thundering, "Brethren, you are all a bunch of dumb sheep! None of you are going to make it into the Kingdom of God except me, and perhaps a few other ministers, and I even wonder about them!" This kind of ministerial abuse, in effect, denies that the churches of God are composed of the brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ, who are the children of God the Father. Instead of being nurtured and inspired to grow spiritually, the brethren of Jesus Christ are merchandised and arrogantly told that their "only duty is to pay and pray and support this work. That is the only reason God called you in the first place."

Where this kind of "church government" is exercised, the men in charge have unlawfully usurped the absolute power and authority of God! God the Father and Jesus Christ have never relinquished their absolute power and authority to any man! When a church leader claims that all his words and actions carry the absolute authority of God, he has laid the foundation for the subversion of the church by Satan. This is the very claim that Satan used to raise up the Catholic Church, and by which he has maintained the absolute power and authority of the popes and priests for centuries. Yet the "top leader" of the largest denomination of a church of God praised the Catholics for their "church government from the top down." He repeatedly said, "If there is any one thing the Catholics have right, it is church government from the top down." No one thought to ask the question, "Why would God use Satan's hierarchical form of government in

His Church?" The Truth of Scripture is that God never intended this form of government for His Church.

The assumption that God works through a hierarchical government has led to a second fundamental error in some churches of God. Their members have been taught that God works exclusively through *a single hierarchy* of ministers and therefore **a single church organization constitutes the ONLY TRUE CHURCH OF GOD ON EARTH.** This false claim is a clever device of Satan which church leaders willingly use to their own advantage! This teaching is falsely based on Scriptures which speak about **one "church of God,"** referring to the **body of spiritually begotten believers,** not to a corporate church organization. To claim that these Scriptures are describing a single corporate church organization is a deceitful misapplication of Scripture.

The True Church of God Is Spiritual

When the New Testament speaks about the "church of God," it is speaking about those who are spiritually begotten of God the Father. It is not designating any particular church organization as "the only true Church of God on earth."

How is the spiritual Church of God differentiated from a corporate church organization?

The spiritual Church of God is not limited by the laws of any state or country. It is governed by the laws and commandments of God as magnified by Jesus Christ. Moreover, the spiritual Church of God is not restricted to any corporate organization. It is the entire "Church of God" as God the Father in heaven has identified His people, the brethren of Jesus Christ! It is composed of every individual whom God the Father has personally called and selected and who has been baptized and has received the begetting of the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, it includes everyone who has the faith of Jesus Christ and who is keeping the commandments of God (Rev. 14:12). The spiritual Church of God consists of every individual who has the Holy Spirit of God dwelling in him or her and whose name has been personally written in the book of life by Jesus Christ Himself.

On the other hand, a corporate church organization, or association, consists of individuals who have decided to group themselves together under a corporate or associate name. In most cases, such church organizations are registered with the state(s) or country(ies) in which they conduct business. The state or country in which the "corporate church" conducts business may require such incorporation or registration.

In the world today, there are well over 400 Sabbath-keeping "churches of God" which are separate corporate organizations. Many of these Sabbath-keeping organizations also hold services on the annual holy days commanded by God in the Scriptures. Any Christian who has the Holy Spirit of God may choose to fellowship and affiliate with a particular corporate organization. The spiritual Church of God is composed of all those individuals who have the Holy Spirit of God, regardless of corporate affiliation.

God Did Not Appoint a Ministerial Hierarchy!

Nowhere does the Bible teach that God works through only one church organization or ministry. The New Testament clearly shows that there are differences of "ministrations" or "administrations." The different administrations are spiritual gifts which are given by Jesus Christ, who is the Head of the spiritual Church of God. "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; and diversities of administrations [works of service] and the same Lord; and there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God who is *doing* the inner workings in everyone in all things" (I Cor. 12:4-6, AT).

God does not limit Himself to work through one corporate church organization. God the Father Himself gives the begetting of His Holy Spirit to whomever He wills! He can never be restricted by the organizations of men. There is no truth in the claim that a particular church organization is "the only true Church of God on earth"! God does not give absolute authority to one "top leader" in any church organization. God never intended His people to be ruled by a hierarchical ministry with a line of "apostolic succession." This type of church government is contrary to the express commands of Jesus Christ!

"And there was a dispute among them, *namely* this one: which of them is thought to be the greater. And He said to them, 'The kings of the nations rule over them, and those who are exercising authority over them are called benefactors. But you *shall not be as they are*; rather the one who is greater among you, let him be as the younger, and the one who is leading, *let him be* as the one who is serving. For which is greater, the one who is reclining to eat, or the one who is serving? Is not the one who is reclining to eat? But I am in the midst of you as one who is serving' " (Luke 22:24-27, AT).

Contrary to this teaching of Jesus Christ, ministers in many churches of God have ruled the lives of their brethren with absolute authority "from the top down." Adding error to error, they have convinced the brethren that their salvation is assured as long as they submit to this form of authority. Those who have accepted and believed this false claim have been lulled into spiritual complacency. This spiritual lethargy makes it easy for Satan to introduce false doctrines which bring about spiritual blindness. In time, those who fail to awake from their spiritual slumber are overcome by total spiritual darkness! They have exchanged the "light" of Jesus Christ for the "darkness" of Satan the devil.

"And this is the judgment [and it is an ongoing judgment], that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than the light; because their own works were evil. Because anyone who is practicing evil is hating the light, and is not coming to the light so that his own works may not be exposed *as evil*. But the one who is practicing the truth is coming towards the light, so that his works may be manifested that they have been wrought in God" (John 3:19-21, AT).

When a true Christian--whether minister or church member or not affiliated with any church organization--is continually loving God the Father and Jesus Christ, keeping the commandments of God and walking in the light of the Word through the power of God's Holy Spirit, he or she is walking in the light. When a true Christian turns from God and is not loving God, not walking in the light of the Word of Truth,

and not keeping the commandments of God, he or she is walking back into the darkness.

One authoritarian pastor, who no longer wanted to be bothered when confronted with the truth, retorted, "I don't care what doctrinal changes are made! This [corporate church organization] is God's only Church. I'll stay put. Its leaders cannot be wrong! They are the experts; I will leave the doctrinal matters to them. Whatever I am told to preach, I will accept and preach, regardless." Satan can exploit this spiritual condition most successfully, and he will be able to lead such a person back into total darkness.

In another case a minister was asked, "How can you live with yourself before God, when you know all about the corruption, false doctrines and gross sins, and you continue to go along with it?" His answer was most revealing: "I just pull steel blinders down over my eyes, so I don't see anything." What a "steely" bit of self-justification to perpetuate his own position of power. He was more than willing to condone sin and corruption. He was more than willing to embrace false doctrines and satanic teachings. He was more than willing to continue to receive his paycheck. This kind of person has willfully blinded himself. This is the kind of attitude Satan desires to use. And true to Jesus' sayings, "If the blind lead the blind, they shall both fall into the ditch."

How is your spiritual vision? Has the darkness partially blinded you? Can you see enough of the light of Truth to understand what is happening? Have you put on "spiritual blinders" so you won't have to face the light of God's Truth? Will you open your eyes to the Truth of God, or will you accept twisted interpretations being presented as "new understanding"? What will you choose to believe? Your eternal salvation is at stake!

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