



NON-PROFIT



TAX-EXEMPT

“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” MARK 16:15

June 2020

FROM US TO YOU

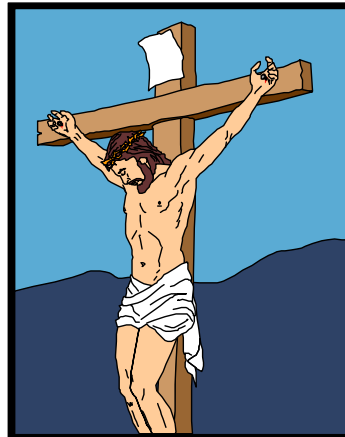
Several decades ago a major television network in New York ran a story about the White House. A part of it showed the Press Secretary standing before a television, watching a news report. Apparently, he had been disingenuous with a correspondent, and he was believed. As the news continued he suddenly clapped his hands with glee and shouted out, “they bought it!” Has the devil been doing that with you lately? Have you been discouraged due to the problems associated with COVID 19? Has Satan been able to convince you that it’s all God’s fault? The virus started in China. However, they didn’t warn the rest of the world about it, but rather exacerbated the problem by allowing it to spread all over the earth. Still they have not accepted the responsibility for it, but rather blamed the United States. Many have suffered during this global crisis, physically, financially, socially, emotionally, medically, or through the death of a friend or loved one. And it’s understandable to be upset about it. However, God is not the cause of the virus. For the Lord is not running this world system right now, Satan is! He admitted this to Jesus, during a time of severe testing and temptation for the Lord. “...*The devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. ‘All this I will give You,’ he said, ‘if You will bow down and worship Me.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Away from Me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only’*” (Matthew 4:8-10 NIV).

In fact, the more influence Satan has over someone, the more they will try to blame someone else for their sins. Have you noticed how often criminals blame the victim for their crimes? They say, “she wanted to be raped because she wore a short skirt.” Or, “he wanted his car to be stolen because he left his keys in the lock.” Or “my wife deserved that beating because she didn’t cook my eggs the way I like them.” This attitude comes from the devil, and his children specialize in the blame game. If you’re a true Christian, you don’t act this way. It is the way “...*you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air; the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. But because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved*” (Ephesians 2:1-5 NIV).

Jesus said to the religious hypocrites in His day, “*You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me!*” (John 8:44-45 NIV). Remember what the Bible says occurred after Satan and one third of God’s angels mutinied against Him and were thrown out of Heaven. “...*The great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which*

deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him” (Revelation 12:9 KJV). The truth is that God is not the cause of your misery. He’s the solution to it! Satan wants you to blame God for your troubles. But the Lord has nothing to do with them. Don’t you know how much He loves you? Who do you love more than anyone else in the world? Do you think that person would be willing to leave a perfect world filled with joy and beauty and enter a sin filled place where he or she would accept a punishment you were supposed to suffer?

Would they be willing to be beaten, stripped, crowned with long thorns, flogged forty times, have their beard ripped out (Isaiah 50:6), then nailed to a wooden cross and hung between two thieves, and left there to die? Given a choice to suffer or call on their Father for help (Matthew 26:53), would they be willing to stay there in agony,



thirst, and humiliation, getting snarled at by a crowd of evil onlookers (see Psalms 22:14-18 and John 19:28)? Would you let your own child go through that to save someone who hates you? Well He who loves you the most did that for you! “*For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life*” (John 3:16 NIV). When someone loves you enough to do that for you, do you honestly think He would deliberately do anything to harm you and make you miserable? Don’t you know how much God loves you? No one you know loves you more (Romans 5:6-8)! So, don’t blame God for the things that the devil does.

God wants to ease your pain and get you out of the mess you are in. But He can’t do that when you side with the devil against Him. You have to ask the Lord for help. Admit that you’re a sinner, and ask for His forgiveness. Even if you consider yourself a Christian, you may be in a backslidden position and lost your way. You need to get your feet washed. When Jesus washed the feet of His disciples, Peter told Him, “... ‘*You shall never wash my feet.*’ Jesus answered, ‘*Unless I wash you, you have no part with Me.*’ ‘Then, Lord,’ Simon Peter replied, ‘*not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!*’ Jesus answered, ‘*A person who has had a bath needs only to wash his feet; his whole body is clean...*’” (John 13:8-10 NIV). Peter loved the Lord, and had accepted Him as Lord and Savior (John 6:68-69). But he wasn’t holy at that time (John 13:38). That would come later on (Acts 5:15-16). So, Jesus was telling Peter that, as we walk through this sinful world, even those who love Christ and have accepted Him, tend to get their spiritual feet dirty. “*For we walk by faith, not by sight*” (2 Corinthians 5:7 KJV). So, you need to humbly confess any new sins to Him, and renew your relationship with Him daily (James 5:16). Then “...*the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus*” (Philippians 4:7 NIV).

Through His love we remain, *Eric and Anne Kaestner*

The Rapture

By Anne Kaestner

Of all the prophecy in the Bible one of the most exciting for Christians is the doctrine of the Rapture. For, "...flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable" (1 Corinthians 15:50 NIV). In other words, these flesh and blood bodies that we live in today will never reach Heaven. Your spirit will be wiped clean of sin when you sincerely repent and ask God's forgiveness (Matthew 3:1-3, 4:17). That is, if you **remain** in Christ (John 15:1-8) and live for Him daily (Luke 6:46). However, your earthly body will eventually die. And, contrary to the erroneous belief of reincarnation, you will not come back in some other form. The Bible says a "...man is destined to die **once**, and after that to face judgment" (Hebrews 9:27 NIV). When that occurs, there are only two possible destinations about where we will end up, Heaven or Hell. Before I get to the part about the Rapture, I have some frightening news to tell you. Jesus said that most people will **not** end up in Heaven. He said, "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and **many** enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a **few** find it" (Matthew 7:13-14 NIV).

I know that most people think that you get to Heaven by doing good works, being kind, and doing the best you can. But that's not what the Bible says! In his letter to the young church in Ephesus the Apostle Paul wrote, "For it is by grace you have been saved, **through faith**—and this **not** from yourselves, it is the **gift of God—not by works**, so that no one can boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9 NIV). There is no such place as Purgatory! It doesn't exist. It was an invention of the Catholic church. The idea was that the church was supposedly the mediator between God and man. Catholics were told that they could purchase forgiveness for sins by giving money to the church. When the church received the money, it was called "absolution." Thus, it was taught that the dead person would not have to spend as long paying for their sins. In the meantime, they would work them off in a place called Purgatory. In reality, the word "Purgatory" doesn't even exist in the Bible! It was one of the reasons for the medieval protests by Catholic theologians against the teachings of the church. They were the only ones educated enough to read the Bible for themselves. Everyone else was told to just believe whatever the church told them. Many Catholic priests who were "protestants" against Catholic teaching were burned at the stake, or tortured to death some other way. They were the forerunners of the Protestant faith.

The admonition of the Apostle Paul comes to mind as I write this. He was appalled at such a teaching. In his closing words to the church leaders in Ephesus, he said, "Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which He bought with His own blood. I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from **your own number** men will arise and **distort the truth** in order to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:28-30 NIV). The Apostle Peter echoed the same theme. He wrote, "Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; **not greedy for money**, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock" (1 Peter 5:2-3 NIV). "For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed

down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect" (1 Peter 1:18-19 NIV).

I had thought that the teaching of Purgatory was no longer a part of Catholic doctrine. I was wrong. When my mother-in-law died in 1998 several of her neighbors attended her wake. One of them brought a little card from her church. It stated that she had spent money buying indulgences for the Pope to forgive my mother-in-law's sins. But all it amounted to was a donation to the Catholic church. Only God can forgive sin (Mark 2:1-11)! Because He is the one we sin against. And only God the Son, Jesus Christ, paid the price for our sin. "Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through **Me**'" (John 14:6 NIV). "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5 KJV). Sadly, the woman who bought the indulgences also died about ten years later. And whatever money she spent on indulgences for herself didn't do any good at all!

The good news is that my mother-in-law, Geraldine Kaestner, is in Heaven today. I led her through the sinner's prayer about five days before she died of colon and liver cancer. She had lived a very worldly existence all her life. When she was younger she loved to party, and eventually became an alcoholic. She had a passion for the occult, and talked about things such as tarot cards, and reading tea leaves. And she told me that she always wanted the "gift" of fortune telling. I thank God that she never received it, as real psychics have to have a "familiar spirit" inhabiting them to do any fortune telling. And that's not a "gift," it's a curse! The book of Acts tells us about a slave girl who had a demon spirit in her that enabled her to tell fortunes. It says, "Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling. This girl fol-



lowed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, 'These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved.' She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so troubled that he turned around and said to the spirit, 'In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!' At that moment the spirit left her. When the owners of the slave girl realized that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to face the authorities" (Acts 16:16-19 NIV).

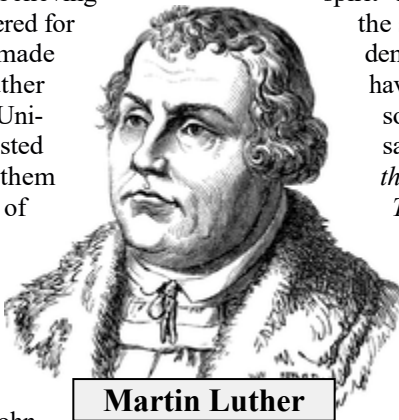
Apparently, the owners of the slave girl would rather make money from her fortune telling than seek after the Word of God. Jesus had a similar experience in Luke 8:26-37 when the owners of a herd of pigs valued their pigs more than their only hope of salvation, Jesus Christ. Sadly, many people these days would rather consult the devil, and the demons who represent him, than the Word of God! In fact, society has gotten so far away from God, that psychics boldly advertise their trade on television. As for Paul and Silas, "they brought them before the magistrates and said, 'These men are Jews, and are throwing our city into an uproar by advocating customs unlawful for us Romans to accept or practice.' The crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas, and the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten. After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully. Upon receiving such orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks" (Acts 16:20-24 NIV).

However, even bad things can be used by God, to glorify Him

and bring new souls into the Kingdom of God (Romans 8:28). *“About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everybody’s chains came loose. The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped. But Paul shouted, ‘Don’t harm yourself! We are all here!’ The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. He then brought them out and asked, ‘Sirs, what must I do to be saved?’ They replied, ‘Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.’ Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family were baptized. The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God—he and his whole family. When it was daylight, the magistrates sent their officers to the jailer with the order: ‘Release those men’”* (Acts 16:25-35 NIV).

Gerry’s husband was the son of a Lutheran minister, who apparently was very strict. She said he believed that we have to work our way into Heaven, and would assign each member of his congregation jobs to do around the church. This is the exact opposite of what Martin Luther (1483-1546) really taught. Luther was a Catholic monk. He willingly endured great suffering in the monastery, believing that he would be more acceptable to God if he suffered for his own sin and worked hard. However, it never made him feel any more holy, only more miserable. Luther continued his studies and earned a doctorate at the University of Wittenberg. Eventually he became interested in the writings of Augustine, and began to study them more closely. Augustine emphasized the authority of the Bible as the primacy of Christian faith, even above church teachings. In early 16th century Europe some theologians were already starting to question the teachings of the church. Many millions of people had already been killed by the Catholic church because they protested against church teachings. This included such godly men as John Huss and William Tyndale, who translated our Bible into the English language. Both were burned at the stake. The worst suffering was said to be endured during the Spanish Inquisition which had been started by King Ferdinand and his wife Isabella in 1478. (They were the ones who financed Columbus’ voyage to the “new world.”) However, things were slowly beginning to change, and Luther wanted a better understanding of the Christian faith.

Then one day, upon reading the Bible, he found a verse that changed his life. *“For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: ‘The righteous will live by faith’”* (Romans 1:17 NIV). He began to read more scriptures and it revolutionized his understanding of the Word of God. He became alarmed at the difference between what he had learned and the teachings of the church. Luther realized that others were probably suffering as he had and he wanted to tell them what he had discovered. He wrote out 95 Theses and on October 31, 1517 nailed them on the door of Wittenberg’s main Cathedral. Luther claimed that his 95 Theses did not oppose the teachings of the Pope. He was wrong. Pope Leo X called Luther a heretic and gave him 120 days to recant. Luther refused and was excommunicated from the Catholic church. Thus the “Protestant” religion was started. It’s so sad that we have come full circle these days and the most fundamental principles that the church of Jesus Christ was founded on have been attacked by the church, both Catholic and Protestant. The consequences are lost souls!



Martin Luther

Please don’t misunderstand what I’m saying. I am not telling you not to do good works. I am saying that, when you really live for Jesus, the Holy Spirit will guide you (John 14:26, 15:26, 16:7). You won’t do the choosing, God will. *“For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do”* (Ephesians 2:10 NIV). In other words, long before you were created, when God’s plans for your life were drawn up in Heaven, it was decided that you would be given certain talents and abilities by God. They were chosen by Him in order to enable you to achieve certain objectives. Some were given musical talent. Some were given an ability to articulate things well. Some would have an aptitude for technical skills. Others would have a curiosity and talent for exploration or invention. God planned for us to achieve certain goals. He gave similar talents to His angels.

However, when one third of them mutinied against Him (see Revelation 12:7-9) they gave their allegiance to Satan, their leader. He became the devil, and the angels who mutinied with him became demons. God destroyed their solid bodies (Ezekiel 28:16-18), but they retained the talents God had given them when they were created as angels. However, because their hearts were no longer right with the Lord, they perverted their talent. That’s how we ended up with weird, evil looking paintings, and demonic music. You may have heard of people having multiple personalities. Some personalities have artistic talents, some musical, etc. That’s when the person has a “familiar spirit” inside of them, also called demonic possession, like the slave girl mentioned earlier. It depends on which demonic spirits inhabit the person and what talents they have. Jesus warned us that such things can happen when someone does not have the Holy Spirit in them. He said, *“When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, ‘I will return to the house [human body] I left.’ When it arrives, it finds the house swept clean and put in order. Then it goes and takes seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that man is worse than the first”* (Luke 11:24-26 NIV).

During a particularly scary time during my life, decades ago, I had a dream where there were empty cloud-like cartoon figures walking about, representing people. All I saw was the outline of the figures with nothing inside of them. I was aware of some evil danger all of them were in. I felt a foreboding of something frightening that was about to happen. Each one of them was about to be under an attack by some **spiritual** force, and they had no protection against it. Then, off to the right, I saw two more figures. They represented my husband and myself. The spiritual enemy tried to attack them as well. However, the demons couldn’t get close enough to them because they had something that looked like **fire** in them, representing the Holy Spirit *“for our ‘God is a consuming fire’”* (Hebrews 12:29 NIV). The evil spirits in the dream could not enter the bodies of those who had the Holy Spirit in them. It would be the same for anyone who truly has the Holy Spirit in them. You may go through some physical attack by other humans, as Paul and Silas did. You may have an accident or get some illness. But demons cannot enter your body when you **remain** in Christ!

Do you remember what happened when the church first received the Baptism in the Holy Spirit? *“Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from Heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them”* (Acts 2:2-4 NIV). As John the Baptist told the church, referring to Christ, *“The ax is already* **(Continued On Page 4)**

at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will clear His threshing floor, gathering His wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire” (Matthew 3:10-12 NIV).

The dream was obviously from God. It was for the purpose of reassuring me that He had everything under control during a frightening spiritual battle I had been going through at the time. But I learned something from the dream. That’s how vulnerable people are without the Holy Spirit in them. As John the Baptist said, Jesus will be clearing His threshing floor to separate His wheat from His chaff. And the chaff will end up in a fire that can never be quenched. Translation, Hell and the Lake of Fire (Deuteronomy 32:22, Mark 9:45-49, and Revelation 20:14-15). That’s why we need to **remain** in Christ. That’s the only way to grow good fruit for God. We constantly need the nourishing sap running through our hearts from the holy Vine of Christ (John 15:1-8). That’s how the Holy Spirit makes us aware of what we must do (John 14:15-17). That’s when you produce good fruit, not for the world, but for the Kingdom of God. A tree needs plenty to light from the sun in order to produce fruit. We need the light of Christ (John 8:12), God’s Son (Matthew 14:33, John 1:1-4, 3:16). *“In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they*

may see your good deeds and praise your Father in Heaven” (Matthew 5:16 NIV). Without Him, *“All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away”* (Isaiah 64:6 NIV). You know what happens to dead, shriveled up leaves. They are good for nothing but the fire!

After salvation, it is so easy for people to return to their old lifestyle and old friends. Since we run a Christian ministry to prison inmates, I get letters from many of them who are excited about being “Born Again” (John 3:3). They are eager to get out of prison, they say, to spread the Gospel. Usually they are eventually released. Some of them stay faithful. They are in the minority. Others we never hear from again. We trust God that someone else will take over from us and lead them in the right direction (1 Corinthians 3:1-7). The problem is they are no longer getting fed on the true Word of God as they did through Christian chaplains in prison. Worse still, the former inmate may be looking for the truth, but falling prey to “wolves in sheep’s clothing” (Matthew 7:15). They are returning to the same friends and family they knew before and they are facing temptation! They are most vulnerable as infants in Christ (1 Corinthians 3:1-3 and Ephesians 4:13-14). So, Satan will seek that much harder to reclaim what he has lost.

After His death and resurrection, Jesus emphasized this to His disciple Peter. *“When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon son of John, do you truly love Me more than these?’ ‘Yes, Lord,’ He said, ‘You know that I love You.’ Jesus said, ‘Feed My lambs.’ Again Jesus said, ‘Simon son of John, do you truly love Me?’ He answered, ‘Yes, Lord, you know that I love You.’ Jesus said, ‘Take care of My sheep.’ The third time He said to him, ‘Simon son of John, do you love Me?’ Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, ‘Do you love Me?’ He said, ‘Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.’ Jesus said, ‘Feed My sheep”*” (John 21:15-17 NIV).

The true church of God is the Bride of Christ. He is the Bridegroom

(2 Corinthians 11:2-3). Jesus spoke a parable that was a metaphor of these last days before His return. He said, *“At that time the kingdom of Heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the Bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five were wise. The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. The wise, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. The Bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep. At midnight the cry rang out: ‘Here’s the bridegroom! Come out to meet Him!’ Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish ones said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.’ ‘No,’ they replied, ‘there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.’ But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with Him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut. Later the others also came. ‘Sir! Sir!’ they said. ‘Open the door for us!’ ‘But He replied, ‘I tell you the truth, I don’t know you.’ Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour”* (Matthew 25:1-13 NIV).

The oil represents the Holy Spirit, which you need in order to remain in the Vine of Christ (John 15:1-8). The message of the ten virgins is a warning to the church to be alert and ready for the Lord’s return at the time of the Rapture. The rest of the world and the backslidden church (foolish virgins) will remain here. But those who have the Holy Spirit in them, will suddenly be changed. We will have solid, glorified bodies, like the one Jesus had when He rose from

the dead, but without the wounds (see John 20:19-28 and 1 John 3:2-4). It will happen, *“in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed”* (1 Corinthians 15:52 NIV). *“For the Lord Himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.*

And so we will be with the Lord forever” (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 NIV).

It will not matter whether those who died in Christ were buried, cremated, or eaten by lions. We will receive glorified, perfect bodies, and we will be taken to Heaven with Jesus. Those who remain will face the worst misery this world has even known. It will be called the Tribulation. It is spoken about in the book of Daniel and Revelation. That’s when the Antichrist will come. The devil will enter the body of a human man, like in demonic possession. But it will be Satan himself, who is also called the dragon (Revelation 12:9), and will deceive the people. The Apostle John saw the future. He wrote, *“Men worshiped the dragon because he had given authority to the beast, and they also worshiped the beast and asked, ‘Who is like the beast? Who can make war against him?’”* (Revelation 13:4 NIV). Christ will defeat him! And God will use that time to try to bring people to repentance (Revelation 9:20-21, 16:9-11). Today’s church in the free world is just beginning to feel God’s wrath. It is the latter-day Laodicean church mentioned in Revelation 3:14-18. Christ said, *“Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent. Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with Me. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with Me on My throne, just as I overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches”* (Revelation 3:19-22 NIV).

