



NON-PROFIT



TAX-EXEMPT

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

Winter 2014-15

FROM US TO YOU

There is much to tell you since our last newsletter. And it is nice to be able to focus our attention on the things of God since the world has become a very dangerous place these days! The prophecy of the Lord is coming true every day (Matt. 24:6-8). The "birth pains" refer to the end of Satan's rule on earth and the preparation for the Lord's triumphant return (Revelation 19:16). Isn't it wonderful to know that, as Christians who truly love Christ, He loves us and will not allow us to be tempted beyond our ability to withstand it (1 Corinthians 10:13). Of course, while we are in the devil's domain (2 Cor. 4:4, Eph. 2:2-3, John 14:30) we are going to have problems (Psalm 34:19). For we are aliens, and pilgrims (1 Peter 2:11) traveling through this rebellious world on our way to our promised land (Hebrews 11:10, Rev. 21:10 to 22:5). So, whatever troubles come our way, remember that *"...the LORD comforts His people and will have compassion on His afflicted ones"* (Isaiah 49:13 NIV). So, if you are going through a painful trial of faith right now you may think that God has forgotten you and doesn't care about you. Yet the Lord has said, *"Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you!"* (Isaiah 49:15 NIV).

We see such sadness on the news these days, like the Christians in Iraq who have suffered so badly as a result of ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq in Syria). They have traveled far from their homes over difficult terrain in an attempt to escape their oppressors. Incidentally, the name Isis, is also the name of a so-called "goddess" according to Wikipedia. She was worshiped by ancient Egyptians and her idolatry spread throughout the Greco-Roman world. How interesting it is that this evil group would use the same name, albeit initials for their group. However, if the Christians they have oppressed, put their faith and confidence in the Lord Jesus Christ, whether they live or even if they die physically, they will gain the victory in the end. Remember what Jesus told Martha after her brother died, *"...I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in Me will never die..."* (John 11:25-26 NIV). And if that happens, *"Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat... And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes"* (Revelation 7:16-17 NIV).

There are two types of death, physical and spiritual. Physical death is when the human body is unable to sustain life and the person's spirit leaves their body. Spiritual death is separation from God, a state that dooms the person to an eternity of suffering in Hell and the Lake of Fire (Mark 9:47-49, Revelation 20:15). Heaven and Hell are the only choices. There is no such place as Purgatory! The word is not even in the Bible! So Jesus is saying that if we put our hope and trust in Him, and obey God's Word, our spirit will eventually leave our body after death (Ecclesiastes 12:7) but we will enter into eternal life (John 14:2 and Revelation 3:5). And *"...no eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him..."* (1 Corinthians 2:9-10 NIV).

This world has drifted so far away from God, our Creator, that even formerly Christian nations have turned their backs on Him. Yes, there are still isolated pockets of true believers scattered throughout the world. But God is refining His church because, especially in Western nations, churches have become little more than religious social clubs, and places of political forum. Yet Christ is not coming back for a lukewarm, wishy-washy, "give me this and give me that" church. He is coming back for a purified church that has been through spiritual fire. For fire burns up all the impurities in us, through suffering, and refines us as gold is refined in the fire (1 Peter 1:7, Revelation 3:18). Because if we are not pure and holy before Him (1 Peter 1:15-16), we will not reflect the light of Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18, 4:6-7) into this sinful, wicked world.

God wants us to shine like pure liquid gold. But when we first come to Christ we are still clinging to the worthless things of this world. Some of them have been washed away as the prospector washes the dirty rock where he sees the gold hiding. But the gold has been clinging to that worthless ore for a long time. It feels secure as it hides in among the crevices of ore. However, it is worthless to the refiner that way! That stubborn gold will not become separated from the ore easily. Brushing it isn't going to do it. Scrubbing it with soap and hot water is not going to separate the gold either. The only way the refiner can separate the gold from the worthless things of this earth is to turn up the heat. (See 1 Peter 1:3-9).

Some of you who truly love Christ have been through some horrible tests of faith. God's refining fire has been burning off the ore you have stuck to for a long time. Have you lost jobs, friends, houses, loved ones that you once depended upon? If you are a true Christian, you are a part of the body of Christ. Therefore, Jesus said, *"...if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell, where 'their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.' Everyone will be salted with fire"* (Mark 9:47-49 NIV). Anything in your life that will drag you down and keep you earthbound is not going to enable you to rise to the calling God has placed on your life. That even includes family and close friends (see Matthew 10:34-39 and 12:47-50). *"Don't you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough?..."* (1 Corinthians 5:6-7 NIV). The refining process hurts as God turns up the heat in your life. But, as Jesus stated metaphorically, it's better to get into Heaven without the earthly things that you love (1 John 2:15-17) than to die without Christ and burn in hell forever!

On a personal basis, we are enthusiastic about the ebooks that we have been selling worldwide! The United States and United Kingdom are the source of most of our sales. However, at this writing, sales are also occurring in Germany, India, and Australia as well. So if you haven't had a chance to take a look at the ebooks we have available, we encourage you to do so.

In the Lord's service, *Eric and Anne Kaestner*



SEVEN MISTAKES CHRISTIANS MAKE

By Anne Kaestner

When I was a child at the church where I accepted Christ as my Savior, there was a special enthusiasm I felt each time I attended one of their services. Unlike the boring sermons and lukewarm (Rev. 3:16) spirituality I'd felt at churches I'd attended previously, this was different. There was an excitement in the air, a type of spiritual high that didn't need any artificial stimulant. I felt the Presence of God there and left the church with a sense of inner joy *"and the peace of God, which transcends all understanding..."* (Philippians 4:7 NIV). Then my family moved from Queens, New York to Nassau County, Long Island. My parents, who had never attended the church in Queens with me, began looking for a new place of worship. My mother, especially, wanted something that made her feel like a Christian but without the Presence of the Holy Spirit (Acts 7:51, 2 Tim. 3:5). She already felt righteous in her own mind (Luke 10:29, Romans 2:13, 12:3, and Isaiah 64:6) because she was born in England, which in those days, was considered a Christian country. And because she occasionally attended a church. My mother had a lot of pride (Proverbs 11:2) and didn't want to feel any tugging at her heart, or conviction of sin in her life. My Dad usually went along with whatever my mother wanted even though it was his mother that loved Christ and prayed me into the Kingdom (Mark 10:15).

The church they chose was a disappointment to me. Not only didn't I feel the Presence of God there, but I noticed a definite change in the attitude of the congregation. The church grew bigger as the years went by, but not due to newly reborn Christians. It relied on human births, disregarding the scripture which says, *"...to all who received Him [Christ], to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God - children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God"* (John 1:12-13 NIV). In other words, Born Again (John 3:3) through the Holy Spirit. There was no desire toward holiness on the part of the congregation. They believed that they were Christians because they attended church (Isaiah 66:1-2). They felt Born Again, and thought that such was good enough for them to get to Heaven. They didn't feel any special urging to get closer to the Lord. Their feeling was that church attendance was enough and that God would accept them as they were (Matthew 18:3).

As Christians we need to **grow** in our walk with God. The Born Again experience is only the **beginning** of our relationship with the Lord. Not the end! We were not saved from the power of this sinful world (1 John 2:15-17) so that we can continue to live as before (Ephesians 2:1-5). The Apostle Peter told the church, *"...rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation"* (1 Peter 2:1-2 NIV). The term "newborn babies" does not refer to a mature child of God. It is the job of the church to teach the congregation how to please the Lord (see 1 Peter 5:1-11). But too many churches try to make God acceptable to men. They do so through secular music, like rock, or by dressing in a sloppy fashion. They do not have enough respect for the Lord! *"But just as He who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: 'Be holy, because I am holy'"* (1 Peter 1:15-16 NIV). The church has a responsibility *"to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we... become mature... Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming"*

(Ephesians 4:12-14 NIV).

Do you, as a believer, read the Bible consecutively by yourself, or are you manipulated into specific doctrines taken out of context by denominational Bible studies? The devil is so cunning that he can twist scripture around so that it appears to have a totally different meaning than the one that was intended (Acts 20:29-31). And he doesn't come with horns and a tail! Jesus said he comes in "sheep's clothing" (Matt. 7:15). In other words, he comes disguised as a child of God! You may think such a person is bringing the light of God into your life, but in reality *"...such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve"* (2 Corinthians 11:13-15 NIV. Also, see 2 Peter 2:18:22). It is not just important to have the Word of God in your heart. You need to have Him in your head as well! The writer of Hebrews told the early church, *"...though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again... Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment"* (Hebrews 5:12-6:2 NIV).

When the Hebrews were delivered by God from Egyptian slavery, they didn't get to the Promised Land right away. And chances are, you won't get to Heaven right away after being Born Again. You'll continue to live in this sinful world, filled with all the lust and temptations that prevail (1 John 2:16-17 NIV). If you begin to backslide in your walk with God, and fall into the devil's trap, you put yourself in danger of being cut from the Vine of Christ (John 15:1-2). Jesus Christ is the Heavenly Vine of Life for us. If we remain in Him, we will have the peace and inner joy that He brings, and a reservation waiting for us Heaven. However, this is conditional! For Jesus said, *"I am the Vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in Me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in Me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned"* (John 15:5-6 NIV. Also, see Isaiah 64:6).

As for the Long Island church my family attended, I will give you an example of what I am talking about. I was still feeling close to God when I first started going there. But something happened that contributed to the backsliding I did for several years. I was a teenager by then and had a crush on a boy who took up the collection in Sunday school. I'll call him Bobby, but that was not his name. I was nervous and shy and so I took a friend of mine to a young people's meeting I attended there. I had hoped that she would "break the ice" as they say, for me. Her name was Loraine. And she did break the ice. A week or so later, Bobby called me up on the phone and asked me for Loraine's phone number. They went out on a date together. And Loraine told me that when she had asked him about me, he had said, "Oh, Anne? She's too religious!" It hurt me to hear that and began the progress of me slowly slipping away from Christ. I went through about seven difficult years after that before I returned to the Lord. And it wasn't easy. The hypocrisy of the church got worse over the years and I couldn't find my way back to the fold. Yes, I had once been Born Again, but I am totally convinced that I lost my salvation during that time! It was a miserable, lonely experience.



It took Christ Himself to bring me back to His protective and loving kingdom. For this little lost lamb (see Matthew 18:12-14) had drifted so far away from the Lord's fold that I had no illumination to find my way back. However, through a series of various experiences, the Lord finally found this lamb and brought her safely back to His fold. And I know now how dangerous it is to fall away from my Redeemer! I didn't consider myself an evil person then. I still did good works occasionally, but that wasn't good enough (Galatians 5:4)! All too many church people take their salvation for granted. They think that they can have one foot in the world and still live for Christ. But it doesn't work that way! *"For it is time for judgment to begin with the family of God; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God? And, **If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?"*** (1 Peter 4:17-18 NIV).

Do you feel righteous in your walk with the Lord? Ask yourself how you measure up against the following. Do you dress in a manner that brings God glory? Or do you wear sloppy, or salacious clothes? I was once shocked to see a young Christian woman in a bikini giving out Christian tracts on a beach (1 Timothy 2:9-10). The point is that the light of Christ should shine through us and not be diminished by ostentatious ornament or sexy apparel. As for the men, I am pleased to see that the long, knee length bathing suits are fashionable at the moment. I always hated those skimpy European style suits that left little to the imagination. It's not the type of bathing suit a man of God should wear! Likewise, the hobo look that some men wear, where the crotch of their pants is down around their knees is ridiculous. And it shows a part of the anatomy that should be kept out of public view! And back to the women. It always bothers me to see low cleavage on a woman. And it's not just the young ones that wear it. Lots of older women have been dressing that way as well! If the others want to expose themselves in that manner, we can only hope that the fashion trend changes. But no true child of God should dress in such a revealing way! Some women wear cleavage so low that it looks like they will pop out of their garments any time! I know this sounds like preaching from a bygone age. It's sad that churches have fallen so far away from God that such teaching is seldom heard anymore. However, true Christianity is not a popularity contest (2 Timothy 4:2-5)! As Paul told the churches in his day, *"Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ"* (Galatians 1:10 NIV).

When I was a child, my mother's friend had a lot of "National Geographic" magazines around her house. I'd leaf through the colorful pages and see pictures of men and women in strange tribal attire. They'd have very few clothes on, and their bodies would be covered in tattoos. Some of them had faces full of tattoos and tribal makeup, with bones or some kind of jewelry in their noses. Missionaries from Christian countries suffered great hardships to go to these tribes in the farthest, spiritually darkest places in the world in order to bring the light of Christ to these people. And many of them had success. The natives heard about God's love and the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ (John 3:16-17), and they received the Lord's salvation. When that happened their manner of dress changed as well. They began wearing more clothing, and removing painful ornaments from their faces. How sad it is today that the very nations that sent these missionaries out, mostly Europe and the United States, have slowly been falling so far away from the Lord that they are looking more like the native tribes they used to reach!

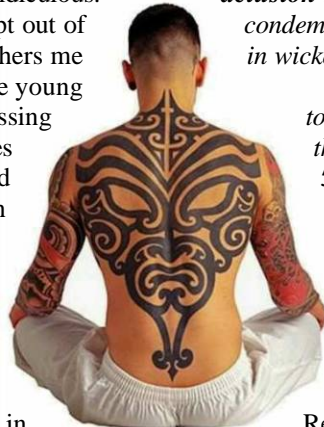
That brings us to statues. Ancient cultures didn't refer to them that way. The Bible calls them "graven images" in the King James Version, and "idols" in the New International Version. The second

commandment states, *"You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of **anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below**"* (Exodus 20:4 NIV). In other words, not of anything heavenly, earthly, or under the earth, which is Hell! Unfortunately, this has been horribly disregarded by the church! Even the most elite of ministers seem unaware of how strongly God advises against this! One well known Evangelist wrote of book years ago. The cover contained a picture of the "Statue of Liberty" with a tear in its eye. When Eric and I went to the Middle East years ago with a Christian travel group, I noticed that one of the places the hosts of the tour also took people to was to Brazil. I asked the woman in charge what was special about Brazil that made it interesting to a Christian group. She seemed surprised and started telling me about the huge statue of Jesus in Rio de Janeiro harbor. It's as if she never heard of the second commandment! Jesus is in Heaven! And Heaven is included in the ban on graven images! Even a statue of the Lord is sinful in the eyes of God! The devil can twist such things around to deceive even those who love the Lord! People have seen tears coming from statues, and I wouldn't be surprised if they heard demon voices coming from them too! For Satan and his cohorts can imitate human voices and have fooled many people that way. For we live in the last days before the return of Christ and, *"the coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of **counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. For this reason God sends them a **powerful delusion** so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness"*** (2 Thessalonians 2:9-12 NIV).

Then there's pornography! *"For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. But everything exposed by the light becomes visible"* (Ephesians 5:12-13 NIV). If you become sucked into Satan's pornographic quagmire, don't think God doesn't know what you're doing. *"The eyes of the LORD are everywhere, keeping watch on the wicked and the good"* (Proverbs 15:3 NIV). One elderly evangelist once had a huge ministry. His name became a household word until his ministry was greatly diminished through scandal, which he blamed on an addiction to pornography.

Remember the infamous serial killer, Ted Bundy, blamed pornography for his murders. It's one of Satan's strongest forms of bait! Bite into it and he will reel you in. If you have temptation in this regard, it is not too late to repent to the Lord. After all, Jesus said, *"...They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance"* (Mark 2:17 KJV). After all, *"For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him"* (John 3:17 NIV). *"For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His love for those who fear Him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him; for He knows how we are formed, He remembers that we are dust"* (Psalms 103:11-14 NIV). And, like any drug, no one goes from purity to X rated material overnight. You may start with an R rated movie, or some Playboy magazine you see in a barber shop. It's sinking sand, and if you walk into the bait you will be swallowed up by it!

Another thing is bazaars and flea markets in the churches or synagogues. It is just as sinful to attend one of these events as it is to hold one in your house of worship! It amazes me to read how angry Christ was when He *"...found men selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. So He made a whip out of cords, and drove all* (Continued On Page 4)



from the temple area, both sheep and cattle; He scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. To those who sold doves He said, 'Get these out of here! How dare you turn My Father's house into a market!'" (John 2:14-16 NIV). Nowhere in the entirety of the New Testament does it describe Jesus being so angry! And yet even churches that normally love and serve Him seem to have no qualms about having their flea markets on church property. It makes no difference whether it is in the parking lot or not. The men Jesus became angry at were selling their merchandise in the temple courts, not the temple.

The next thing on my list is blasphemy. It amazes me how many Christians who think they are living for God allow words and phrases like, "Oh my God!" and "Jesus!" to come out of their mouths, not as prayer, but as exclamation. Many times I have called out to the Lord during dangerous times, often when we were driving somewhere and something frightening occurred. One example that comes to mind is the time Eric and I were traveling through Virginia on the way to a family wedding. We were keeping up with the traffic around us, which was going very fast at 70 miles per hour. We were in the left lane at the time and our van suddenly got a flat tire. As Eric fought to control the van, it seemed as though we were destined to have a horrible accident. For it was pulling toward the middle lane of traffic, which totally surrounded us. I shouted out "Jesus help us!" Then I looked out of the window. The traffic which had been right next to us seconds earlier was suddenly all in the distance. Eric was able to steer the van off to a grassy area on the right side. While he changed the tire I sat on the grass, almost breathless, praising God and thanking Him for intervening. However, there's a big difference between using the Lord's name in prayer and using it when something startles or shocks you. The commandment is clear, "*You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses His name*" (Exodus 20:7 NIV).

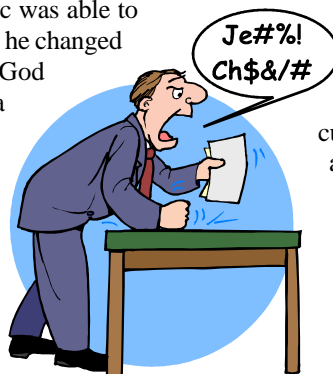
The next thing on my list is lying. The Bible says, "...the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars - their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death" (Revelation 21:8 NIV). Yet it amazes me how many Christians think nothing of lying, even to Christian leaders. In our ministry we have had employees lie to us. They no longer work for us. But I was shocked at the time to see how easy it was for them to look me straight in the eyes and lie. Of course I knew it was a lie because the Holy Spirit has a way of revealing that to those He puts in a position of leadership. However, I would not want to be in their situation, especially when we are warned so strongly about this in the New Testament as well as the old. Remember the story of Ananias and Sapphira (see Acts 5:1-10)! And they were a part of the early church, which was persecuted by the Roman Empire and the Jewish religious leaders. So they must have initially made a serious commitment to Christ. Yet the Lord has said, "*If a righteous man turns from his righteousness and commits sin, he will die for it; because of the sin he has committed he will die*" (Ezekiel 18:26 NIV). And according to Revelation 21:8, that includes the second death and the lake of fire!

The last sin on my list is pilfering. You may not be the kind of person who would steal from a department store. If you take your commitment to Christ seriously, you wouldn't think of stealing a car or robbing someone at gun point. You know better than that. However, do you have the same ethics when it comes to your place of business? Do you think that it is alright for you to swipe something at work that you know you shouldn't take? At our company I was

appalled one day to see that my employees had taken one of the paperback Bibles that we keep to send out to correctional facilities and had placed it, highly dog-eared, in our front office for reference material. Yes, I know that this is not the same thing as taking it home with them. But it was one less Bible that we had purchased for prison inmates. And Bibles in prison are in great demand. Prisoners really thirst for the word of God and it is one of the most frequent requests they ask us for. And there was no need to take this one as we had a Bible program on each of their computers as well as a large leather Bible in our front office.

Moreover, I also noticed several items that disappeared from our lunchroom draws that I have become suspicious about. And since we are such good stewards of the donations we receive I had purchased those items with my own money! On another occasion one of my secretaries told me that she had used our photocopy machine to make some personal copies for herself. She said she wanted to pay for them. I asked her how many copies she made and she told me something like, five or six. "Don't worry about it," I told her. "That's not enough to worry about." After we had to fire her for other reasons, Eric cleaned out her desk draw and found a stack of personal photocopies she had made that were about half an inch high!

Christians, remember one thing. You may think that no one sees what you do in secret, but "*The eyes of the LORD are everywhere, keeping watch on the wicked and the good*" (Proverbs 15:3 NIV). Of course, I know that all that I have mentioned sounds like something from a bygone time. People say that society has changed today. That



the old rules don't apply anymore. However, God does not change! As I write this I am recalling a television movie Eric and I saw recently. We watch very few television movies these days and no current television shows because of the blasphemous and salacious nature of them. However, this one was on the Hallmark network and was edited for content. Yet I was still shocked. It was a crime drama that was about eight years old. There were three women in the movie who were all attracted to the same man. One was a real estate agent, another was a city attorney, and the third was a lawyer. They all had one thing in common. They had no qualms about jumping into bed with the leading man, when they had only just met him!

I guess people who watch regular television programming are used to this type of thing. But when you haven't been contaminated by this kind of immorality lately, and you come in contact with it, it is shocking. It's rather like the old anecdote about the frog that was put into boiling water to cook. He feels the heat right away and jumps out. But if you put that frog into cold water and gradually turn up the heat a little bit at a time, the frog doesn't notice that he is being cooked until it is too late! And if you think this isn't influencing young women to think that such behavior is appropriate and expected of them, you are deluding yourself. No wonder God's anger has been seen in the Hollywood, California area in homes near where the movie and television industry is based. I believe the fires and drought are a warning from God in the hopes that it will bring some people to repentance before it is too late!

Jesus said, "*Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with Me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city. Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood. I, Jesus, have sent My angel to give you this testimony for the churches...*" (Revelation 22:12-16 NIV).