

Church of God, The Eternal

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What Is the Purpose of the Written Word of God?—Part XII A Synoptic Review of Past Letters

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Dear Brethren:

Warmest possible personal greetings to you all. At every valued thought of you we are inspired and encouraged. You are the loyal and faithful of God—His very children. There is no greater recognition that can be given. What incomprehensible kindness God has given to this ministry. We are privileged to serve the very begotten children of God. No matter what the station or responsibility it cannot exceed that privilege. Let your mind dwell on it for just a moment. A privilege of actually serving the very children of God.

Now that you have savored the glory of the above fact, let us quickly get to the purpose of this letter.

In August of 1993 I began what has proven to be a very long series of *Monthly Letters* on the subject of "Why the written Word of God?" After several interruptions, it is my delight to get back to that subject.

With the passage of so much time, I do feel it necessary to make the synoptic review of earlier issues a little more comprehensive than normal, yet not making it too comprehensive.

The world, and unfortunately all too often even some who once were taught the truth, seem to manifest a jealous regard for their "right" to study the Bible and come to personalized beliefs for themselves. In fact, so strong and defensive is the nature of the belief that one is forced to come to the conclusion, based on a single Biblical principle, that it is categorically wrong. And that principle is the fact God emphatically stated, the whole world is deceived. Through John, we are told: "And 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). And the Apostle Paul was inspired to make a statement which shows this being was venerated and held in high esteem. The Apostle Paul, to the Corinthian church, wrote: "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (2 Corinthians 4:4). Though he is not called by his true name, Satan, he is the god of this world—even of many who once believed.

Based on a perversion—a twisting—of the real truths inherent in the subject we are addressing, most human beings who feign an interest in the Bible will strongly defend "their right" to read it and come to their own conclusions. Since this is an almost universal belief among any and all who manifest some regard for the Bible, it follows that the concept proceeds from a different spirit. Remember, the whole world is deceived. Yet, the very one who is deceiving them is highly venerated and respected. He is their god.

Again, we need to reemphasize the question with which we are confronted. Why is the Bible—that book which is generally accepted as the Word of God—so broadly printed and distributed around the world? Can it be read and understood? Was and is it written for the intellectual benefit of human beings at and during whatever times they lived? Written so that any man or woman could and can read it and thereby practice those things written therein? That very concept, though almost universally believed, is perhaps one of the strongest proofs that such people are deceived and do not even remotely understand what they are reading. Why? Remember, God made it impossible, by whatever means, for man to return and partake of that tree of life (Genesis 3:22–24).

Let us synoptically review earlier information and at the same time interface it with other pertinent and relevant material.

From the Beginning Truth Deliberately Hidden

Adam and Eve had the best teaching possible. There could have been no error in that which they received. For they were taught by God Himself—the very One who became Jesus Christ many years later.

When given the very truths of God, Adam and Eve faltered due to trial experienced at the very hand of "the god of this world." They had received the message from the Supreme, God Himself. How could there have been a "legitimate" question about the accuracy of what they were taught? Regardless of the qualifications of the Instructor Himself, and the perfection of that which He taught, both of His students failed. The consequence was at one and the same time both devastating and revealing.

Besides being consigned to the necessity of experiencing death, another circumstance of broad consequence was experienced. What action did God take? And why?

And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life (Genesis 3:22–24).

Whatever else these verses may imply they most assuredly indicated that man was not going to be allowed to partake of the tree of life independently and arbitrarily. That factor alone would seem to preclude any presumed right and privilege of men to read the Bible at any time they please, to come to a profound understanding of the truth, and to partake of the way of everlasting life.

Inherent in the text is no indication of when God planned to remove the restriction—for whom and when. As of that moment, man was separated from God. He had no means of reconciliation. Man was left to write the wretched and miserable lessons of a people separated from God.

As individuals they had failed. By the days of Noah all flesh had corrupted His way (Genesis 6:12). As God had intended from the very beginning, man would found nations (Genesis 10). Out of all these nations, He chose one which was to represent Him. That nation was Israel—the twelve tribes of Jacob. As a chosen nation they were to be formed within another nation and subsequently called out under unusual and revealing circumstances. Once called they were given the very laws, statutes, and judgments of God—the God of the universe. Even so, they were never given the ability to obey (Deuteronomy 29:2–4). Obviously God had not yet removed the restriction mentioned above.

Then why did God call, choose, and work with the nation of Israel? There may have been other reasons but two are well understood by the called. First, they wrote lessons, in terms of human experience, for people to be called in the last days (1 Corinthians 10:1–6, 11. Please read the entire chapter for context). The Apostle Paul wrote to the Roman church: "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Romans 15:4).

Second, though Israel failed in character, yet, as a nation, they were chosen to transport the infallible truths of God down to the people of these last days.

This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear. This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us: To whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt (Acts 7:37–39).

Ancient Israel, though never given the spiritual opportunity to obey and serve God, served the called of our time by writing the bitter, hard lessons of resisting God and as ordained by God, brought those priceless ways of life down to those who would be chosen in these last days.

Knowing and Understanding the Scriptures—by Whom?

As already noted, though codified and given to ancient Israel as a law—a covenant—they were never given the ability to perform. Now we shall see that even with the coming of Christ, understanding was not automatic.

When Christ came the people were living in their forced spiritual darkness. We read:

Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee; And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up (Matthew 4:12–16).

That light was Christ. It was the way of Truth, hidden from mankind since the days of Adam and Eve.

He later said:

No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me (John 6:44–45).

So profound and essential to understanding is the above statement that Jesus emphasized it in verses 63–68. He said:

It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life (John 6:63–68).

There is no indication here that the restriction of Genesis, chapter three, was broadly and/or generally removed. On the contrary, the restriction was only very narrowly removed.

Jesus Christ clearly explained a significant component of His mission—responsibility—during the time called His first appearance. John records His comments as follows.

If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me. If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin. He that hateth me hateth my Father also. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father. But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause. But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning (John 15:18–27).

Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth (John 9:41).

In both texts He speaks of their blindness. In all probability this blindness is the fulfillment of Genesis 3:24.

Further, He reveals that He was removing that blindness for specifically chosen people. If anyone assumed knowledge he was still accountable.

Certainly one of the most, if not the most, profound doctrines of the Bible from man's perspective is the truth about the times of salvation. Interestingly, the only people who heard and knew the truth of that doctrine are those who understood the significance of the annual Holy Days. That was a doctrine taught by our mother church before she went into apostasy. It was a doctrine taken from the revealed Scripture and given to a chosen servant of God commissioned by Christ. Understanding that truth was a part of the prophecy uttered by Moses. He wrote:

The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken; According to all that thou desiredst of the LORD thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. And the LORD said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him (Deuteronomy 18:15–18).

Christ was a servant like unto Moses. He came to reveal—to open up the understanding of the Scriptures—but only to those called of God. The "how" is not yet addressed.

What Are Those Scriptures?

That which we call the Holy Bible—as the books and letters were penned by the respective authors—are the inspired Words of God. Paul wrote:

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds (Hebrews 1:1–2).

And John wrote of Christ:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made . . . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth (John 1:1–3, 14).

Christ in the flesh was the personalization of these words which proceeded from the Father from the beginning. He was the living, animated embodiment of all the Words of God from creation.

A statement of the Apostle Peter seems to imply he personally undertook the necessity of canonizing those Words into that which we call the Bible. He wrote:

Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me. Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance. For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy [Spirit] (2 Peter 1:14–21).

Christ came not only to strip the covering from that which had been concealed from creation, but also to live personally these truths without sinning. As the Son of man He lived perfectly that which man from the beginning was unable to live. Thus the first part of Christ's great work was accomplished. The second part is that which He is now performing in the lives of called human beings—during the times appointed and approved by God. That is a subject outside of the one we are presently covering.

Truths Revealed in Last Days

The task of saving mankind—those created by the One who became Christ (Ephesians 3:9 and Colossians 1:16) is a work given to Christ: "For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost" (Matthew 18:11). Couple this statement of Christ with a promise He gave to the Twelve Apostles just before His ascension back to the Father. In this statement is contained a phenomenal promise. What did He promise—a promise and a commission? As recorded by Matthew, we read:

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy [Spirit]: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen (Matthew 28:19–20).

Christ had received all power in heaven and earth. On the basis of that authority, He commissioned that body which He had created (Ephesians 2:19–22). What were they going to be preaching? The same message Christ Himself taught! What was that message? The same as God had given to Moses (Deuteronomy 18:15–18). And how long was that message to obtain? "Unto the end of the world." Matthew makes it very clear that the end of the world is synonymous with the Second Coming of Christ (Matthew 24:3). Therefore someone was called of God, in whom Christ lived, and who fulfilled that commission. How do we know that as a fact? Because the apostasy did occur. You simply cannot have an apostasy unless you have a body who is proclaiming the Truth. Logic and the profound elements of truth and fact are these: Christ taught the way of life given to Moses. By virtue of His authority, He created a church which was the continuation of His own body. That body was to continue preaching the Truth—the gospel of the Kingdom—until the Second Coming of Christ. It is evident, therefore, that God called and commissioned someone in these last days. Further, it is equally evident that many within that body did not really believe and love the Truth. The result was the prophesied apostasy. The actual occurrence made obvious who that body was which was commissioned to preach the same truth Christ Himself taught when on earth in His own body. It further revealed the loyal and faithful children of God.

A Revelation and Confirmation

Immediately above we noted a couple of factors made plain by the fact of the apostasy. Yet, there is a third concept which precedes those two and is in all probability of greater significance. And what might that be? To the Corinthian church, the Apostle Paul wrote:

For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, *it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching* to save them that believe (1 Corinthians 1:18–21).

He clearly stated that men could not, indeed, did not, come to the knowledge of the Truth by the employment of their own intellectual prowess. For, as Paul emphasized, God had chosen the system of preaching as the means by which men would be called and given an opportunity for life. He emphasized this concept when writing to the Roman church. He said:

For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them. But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that

is, to bring Christ down from above:) Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! (Romans 10:5–15).

He clearly indicated that those called came to the knowledge of the Truth through the preaching of one commissioned and sent.

Considering all the concepts involved, it is an incontrovertible fact God called someone in these last days, commissioned him to proclaim the gospel of salvation, that an apostasy would occur whereby most would turn to their own ways—espousing that which they had determined for themselves, and finally, only a small remnant would remain faithful to the way Christ taught through that end-time servant. As indicated above, the fact of the apostasy speaks volumes—but perhaps only to those truly called of God and who continue to love genuinely that unalterable Truth.

The gospel Truth was given to someone. The apostasy substantiates that as a fact. As a confirmed fact, it substantiates and underscores that which the called must obey and honor. As the called of God they must continue to obey that which God had first given to Moses. Even as Christ in His own day had to differentiate between that tradition built up around the truths of God, so the people of God today must understand the difference between the eternal truths of God and the arbitrary encrustation which the last-day church had accepted. In reality what the faithful people of God want is that same eternal truth given to Moses, that which Christ and the apostles taught, and that which was first given to a chosen servant of these last days. The faithful are not interested in a mix of that which God gave to Israel—His chosen people of yesterday—and that which He allowed Gentiles to develop and practice before they were called and converted (Deuteronomy 4:19).

Some Books, Writings, Yet Closed

Despite the fact God is pulling back the covering placed over His perfect way of life, some parts of the compiled books, called the Bible, cannot even now be understood. Until God specifically reveals the intent of many mysterious prophecies uttered centuries ago they remain closed and therefore not understood even though they are at times subjected to arrogant human interpretations (2 Peter 1:20–21). Added to that long list of generally closed material, until revealed by the Author, God Himself, there exists some works emphatically closed. To Daniel God said: "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book even, to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased" (Daniel 12:4). Continuing, God emphasized: "Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end" (Daniel 12:9).

In some unique way several of the most traumatic events of the last days—days just before the return of Christ—are not only hidden in meaning but also cannot even occur short of the active participation of Jesus Christ Himself. Of these very events John wrote:

And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne (Revelation 5:1–7).

Note carefully Christ was worthy to do two things. He not only opened the books; He also had the power "to loose the seven seals."

The Apostle John became acquainted with the spectacular. On an earlier occasion, he heard a strong command from God peel out of heaven: "And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not" (Revelation 10:4).

We saw earlier that much of what was given to Daniel was to remain closed until the last days. On a specific occasion (Daniel 8:23–26) Daniel received a frightening vision of the last days, a vision closed, however, until a future day. He wrote:

And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people. And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand. And the vision of the evening and the morning which was told is true: wherefore shut thou up the vision; for it shall be for many days. And I Daniel fainted, and was sick certain days; afterward I rose up, and did the king's business; and I was astonished at the vision, but none understood it (Daniel 8:23–27).

God Knows All Things From the Beginning

There is absolutely nothing hidden from God. The entire plan for human beings has been laid out and is occurring in accord with what God knew and understood from the beginning. Is it possible many of the relevant prophecies of these closing days of humanity have been recorded, not to give advance knowledge to men, but though hidden to men recorded for the purpose of eventually revealing their presumptive arrogance and hatefulness? A section of the book of Isaiah seems to imply this very fact. Isaiah wrote these words of God:

I have declared the former things from the beginning; and they went forth out of my mouth, and I shewed them; I did them suddenly, and they came to pass. Because I knew that thou art obstinate, and thy neck is an iron sinew, and thy brow brass; I have even from the beginning declared it to thee; before it came to pass I shewed it thee: lest thou shouldest say, Mine idol hath done them, and my graven image, and my molten image, hath commanded them. Thou hast heard, see all this; and will not ye declare it? I have shewed thee new things from this time, even hidden things, and thou didst not know them. They are created now, and not from the beginning; even before the day when thou heardest them not; lest thou shouldest say, Behold, I knew them. Yea, thou heardest not; yea, thou knewest not; yea, from that time that thine ear was not opened: for I knew that thou wouldest deal very treacherously, and wast called a transgressor from the womb. For my name's sake will I defer mine anger, and for my praise will I refrain for thee, that I cut thee not off. Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction. For mine own sake, even for mine own sake, will I do it: for how should my name be polluted? and I will not give my glory unto another (Isaiah 48:3–11).

Though not perfectly understanding the context of Isaiah, chapter forty-eight, the author of *The Living Bible* seems to grasp many basics. It is worthy of the space to be included here. He wrote:

Hear me, my people: you swear allegiance to the Lord without meaning a word of it, when you boast of living in the Holy City and brag about depending on the God of Israel. Time and again I told you what was going to happen in the future. My words were scarcely spoken when suddenly I did just what I said. I knew how hard and obstinate you are. Your necks are as unbending as iron; you are as hardheaded as brass. That is why I told you ahead of time what I was going to do, so that you could never say, "My idol did it; my carved image commanded it to happen!" You have heard my predictions and seen them fulfilled, but you refuse to agree it is so. Now I will tell you new things I haven't mentioned before, secrets you haven't heard. Then you can't say, "We knew that all the time!" Yes, I'll tell you things entirely new, for I know so well what traitors you are, rebels from the earliest childhood, rotten through and through. Yet for my own sake and for the honor of my name I will hold back my anger and not wipe you out. I refined you in the furnace of affliction, but found no silver there. You are worthless, with nothing good in you at all. Yet for my own sake—yes, *for my own sake*—I will save you from my anger and not destroy you lest the heathen say their gods have conquered me. I will not let them have my glory (Isaiah 48:3–11, *The Living Bible*).

So perverse is man that though existing in ignorance (darkness) he claims on the basis of his own intellect that he understands those things which God prepared to correct His rebellious children. While loudly and emphatically laying claim to prophetic understanding he is at the same time giving credit to his strange gods—false spirits. How perverse can man become?

Until opened, man cannot understand prophecy or the Truth. The Truth of God is hidden from men until the Father wills to reveal it through His Son. And the only way He reveals it is through the preaching of a chosen vessel. It is a simple fact. God chose to use the foolishness of preaching by which to bring salvation to mankind. Further, since He is the Author of all prophecies, it is He, and He alone, who can explain the meaning of the intent and even to whom they apply. Once called and informed, faithfulness is imperative.

Individual Understanding Not Possible

God concealed, hid, the Truth from the beginning. The *only* way He has chosen to reveal it is through His chosen ministry. There may be many false ministries, but that does not mean there is not a true ministry doing the will of God. The called sheep hear that voice. They are able to tell the difference. That, too, is the promise of Christ. Did He not say, "My sheep hear my

voice"? Those who are not of the true flock will be led to the slaughter. That will occur because they did not do the things they should have done from the beginning of their call.

If God is using only the system which He chose—the preaching of the gospel by a true ministry—it is most clear—evident—no one is coming to the knowledge of the Truth by his own effort. Such people may be coming to some perverse understanding of specific Biblical texts, but that does not mean they have heard the Truth. They simply heard the false interpretation of men who arrogated responsibility though not called and commissioned by God.

Hopefully this subject can be completed in the next issue of the *Monthly Letter* devoted to this topic. We did feel that a thorough synoptic review was necessary—so much time had passed since the last issue covering the subject had been issued.

There are yet several pertinent concepts which need addressing. Considering the scope of the subject and the depth of its perversion, it will require one more letter to complete that proposed extensive coverage. According to our writing schedule, that final issue should come in the month of July 2001. Thanks for your patience.

Again, all our warm love and regards. Our prayers and thoughts are with and for you daily. Remain strong in faith and confidence.

Your servants in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Raymond C. Cole". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial 'R'.

Raymond C. Cole