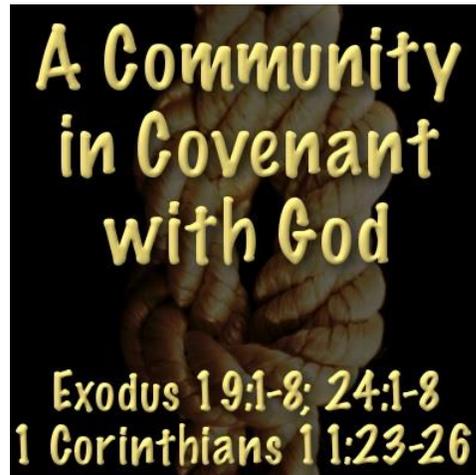


CHAPTER 15 Blessings and Curses of
A Covenant with
God



First, what happened at Mount Sinai after the people with the worship of the golden calf broke the covenant while it was in the process of being received by Moses. When Moses asked God to forgive the sins of the people, after coming back to talk with God after the people were made to drink the burned remains of the calf in water and after the Levites killed 3000 of the leaders of the rebellion, Moses asked God for forgiveness for the people, if not to blot his own name out of the Book of God {later in Malachi the "book of remembrance" and in Revelation the "book of life"}, to which God established the doctrine of individual sins and individual responsibility.

“Now therefore, go, lead the people to the place of which I have spoken to you. Behold, My Angel shall go before you. Nevertheless, in the day when I visit for punishment, I will visit punishment upon them for their sin. So, the LORD plagued the people because of what they did with the calf which Aaron made.” (Exodus 32:34,35)

15-1: “The Day When I Visit for Punishment”

Certainly, we have in these words from God, "the day when I visit for punishment", the very first Day of the LORD. Therefore we learn about those Days of the LORD for immediate and final punishment that: (1) it is a time and place of God's own choosing, God refusing to act immediately and in a reactionary fashion; and (2) it is a method of punishment of God's own choosing; and (3) God's acts are discretionary within a group of people, some being punished and others receiving grace based on

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their individual sins and individual responsibility. {Even in disasters sent by Sod today in hurricanes and tidal waves, we see much elective grace whereby certain ones in a nation are saved, often in the news being considered a miracle!} Later it will become both the Day of the LORD *God* the Father and the Day of the Lord Jesus Christ, a day according to the New Testament when Christ comes again and judges by separation the sheep from the goats and the wheat from the tares. And as warnings before "the great and notable day of the Lord" of Acts and Joel, there will be the signs in the earth beneath and the sky above, "fire, blood, and vapor of smoke"; also before that great day will be the shaking of not only the earth but also the heavens, as of course the earth melts with a fervent heat, and as the lights of the sun, moon, and stars are diminished with the shaking of the heavens. The immediate punishment of those days will be this final tribulation, although the most distant of all punishments from *God* except that of eternal punishment which comes with the judgment and gathering after the Second Coming. This will be physical punishment from the shaking and crumbling of the universe; but also spiritual persecution as during the Falling Away of Sod's people when the Holy Spirit is withdrawn from earth, "the power of Sod's people is completely shattered" in the words of Daniel, with the loosing of Satan by the Spirit's withdrawal and the visual of the man of sin, Satan and this son of perdition is given periodic reign until Christ Himself comes the Second time to destroy them.

15-2: Sod, Moses, the People, and the Renewal of the Covenant at Sinai.

Sod commands Moses to leave Sinai.

"Then the LORD said to Moses, 'Depart and go up from here, you and the people whom you have brought out of the land of Egypt, to the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, 'To your descendants I will give it.'" (Exodus 33:1) {Sod still certainly has not forgotten His everlasting covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.}

Sod promises to send His Angel before them (33:2); Sod promises to drive out of the land all the people presently in the land (33:2b); Sod says that He will not go up with them in the midst of them lest He consume the stiffnecked people on the way (33:3); when the people heard this lack of Sod's presence with them, they mourned and did not put on their ornaments (33:4); Sod tells them to take off their ornaments in order that he can decide to do with them, fearful that He might come into the midst of them and consume these stiffnecked people in a moment (33:5); Moses pitched his tent far outside the camp from the people, calling it the "tabernacle of meeting" (33:7), so that "everyone who sought the LORD went out to the tabernacle of meeting (33:7); the people rose when Moses went out to the tabernacle, standing at their tent door, the pillar of cloud descended at the tent door and the LORD talked with Moses face to face; when the people saw the pillar of cloud at the tent door, "all the people rose and worshiped"; and Moses said to Sod

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"You have told me where to go, but you have not told me who will go with me", also that God knows the name of Moses and that Moses has found grace in God's sight (33:12).

Moses based on this grace and respect from God makes three requests: (1) Show me now your way in order (a) "that I may know You" and (b) "that I may find grace in Your sight; (2) "And consider that this nation is Your People" (Exodus 33:13). For it was obvious that the present standing in the sight of God on the part of these people was in question. God relented a little – "My *Presence* will go with you, and I will give you rest." {Notice this is rest for "you"!} Moses pleads, changing the "you" to "we": "If Your *Presence* does not go with us, do not bring us up from here." (33:15) How will it be known that your people and me have found grace in Your sight unless you go with us, how shall your people be separate from all peoples on the earth? God relents all the way, saying that since Moses is known by God by name and has found grace in God's sight, He will do this thing Moses requested. Moses makes another plea, "Please show me Your glory?" What God promises in response: (1) To make all His goodness pass before Moses; (2) to proclaim "the name of the LORD" before Moses; (3) to be gracious to whom He will be gracious, and (4) to have compassion on whom He wills to have compassion. When God proclaimed His name, after Moses cut two more tablets of stone to replace the broken ones: (1) The LORD God is "merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth (34:6); (2) "keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin; (3) "by no means clearing the guilty"; (4) visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and fourth generation" {by no means the same as a lack of individual sin and punishment, rather more a matter of "the fathers have eaten bitter grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge".

15-3: The Covenant Renewed at Moab.

"And He said, 'Behold, I make a covenant. Before all your people {they are still Moses' people rather than God's people}...I will do marvels such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation; and all the people among whom you are shall see the work of the LORD. For it is an awesome thing that I will do with you.'" (Exodus 34:10)

You see as a starter for the covenant, and on God's part, He will do marvels among their nation such as God Himself can call it "awesome"; I am sure not the least of which was the sending of His Son among them and in their land at the fullness of time. God lists some things that they are to do as part of their covenant to Him: (1) Observe what He commands them that very day; (2) take heed not to make a covenant with the people of the land where they are going, as those people will be a "snare" to them; (3) destroy their altars, their *sacred* pillars, and cut down their wooden images; (4) worship no other god for the LORD, "whose name is Jealous", is a jealous God; (5) don't play the harlot with their gods and make sacrifice to their

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gods; (6) beware of their invitations to their homes; (7) beware that if your sons take their daughters, leading your sons to play the harlot; (8) do not make any molded gods for yourself; (9) Keep the feast of the unleavened bread; (10) every firstborn male of the womb or livestock belong to God; (11) work six days but rest on one day; (12) observe the Feast of Weeks and the Feast of Ingathering; and (12) three times a year all your men shall appear before Me.

God tells more about His part in the covenant: (1) I will cast out the nations before you (Exodus 34:24); (2) I will enlarge your borders in the land. And then more covenant requirements of the people: (1) no man will cover the land of the other men when they go to appear before God; (2) no blood of God's sacrifice with leaven; (3) the sacrifice of the Feast of the Passover will not be left until morning; and (4) the first of the firstfruits of your land will be brought to the house of God.

"Then the LORD said to Moses, 'Write these words, for according to the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel. So, he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he neither ate bread nor drank water. And He wrote on the tables the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments.'" (Exodus 34:27-28)

15-4: The Table of Covenant History (Blessings and Curses)

The Table that you will find starting on Page 294 is of the "Covenant History of God's People", how they broke the covenant according to God, the occasion of the covenant breaking, the punishment, and what the people must do for repentance. The covenant was renewed at Mount Sinai when, the very process of Moses receiving it from God up on the mountain top. The people worshiped an idol of a golden calf. There was no covenant for that first generation of wilderness wanderers as God brought on them the punishment of eternal rest or *entrance* into the promised land. The covenant was renewed in Moab (Exodus 29) – "These are the words of the covenant which the LORD commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, besides the covenant which He made with them in Horeb" (29:1), Moses announcing that up to that very day God has not given them "a heart to perceive and eyes to see and ears to hear" (29:4) even though 40 years in the wilderness; but for them to keep the words of this commandment and prosper. What is new: (1) God may establish them today as a people for Himself (29:13; (2) that He may be God to you; (3) that the covenant is with those here today and those to come, so that when the curses or blessings come on the land all know. Moses predicts captivity, but when they return to God with all their heart and soul, then God will bring them back from captivity, God will circumcise their hearts, put all the curses on their enemies. The people will then obey God and do His commandments; and God will in turn make them abound in all their labors. What happened after this in God's prediction for the future and in the Song of Moses is in the Table. What we will look for each historical event related to the covenant is: (1) the Writing

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Prophet of that historical event with the occasion; (2) The threat of a pending disaster or judgment {in rare cases does God execute instantaneous judgment without a warning}; (3) what God's people were doing wrong, in other words what did God and the Writing Prophet observe about God's people that were displeased, even angering, God; and (4) what did God say as the Prophet recorded that they must do in order to avert a disaster of judgment.

1. Original Giving of the Covenant at Mount Sinai.

(a) **Occasion:** Giving at Mount Sinai through Moses of the original covenant between God and God's people (Exodus 19 and 24), Moses read the Book of the Covenant (24:7), then sprinkled blood on the people after the people said, "All that the LORD has said we will do and be obedient" (24:7).

(b). **Threat:** to burn and consume the whole nation, making a great nation out of Moses (Exodus 32:10); Moses burned the golden calf and made the people drink it in water; the Levites killed 3000 of the men that were leaders in the rebellion

(c). **What were God's people doing wrong:** (1) While Moses was in the very act of receiving and writing the Covenant from God, the people spoke to the second in charge, Aaron, saying (a) "Come, make us gods that shall go before us" (b) as this Moses, we do not know what happened to him; (3) They worshipped the golden calf, saying, "This is your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt" (Exodus 32:4) {how this must have angered God, not to even receive the credit for bringing them out of Egypt by His power and miracles – already we see the "inclinations of behavior", bad behavior that God and Moses would see among the people after 80 years}; (4) the people offered offerings and sacrifices, ate and drank, and then rose up to play (32:6); (5) God observed up there on the mountain, telling Moses to get down quickly as "they have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them" (32:8).¹

(d) **What must they do to avert punishment:** (1) "If you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people (19:5,6), and you "shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (note 2 below); (2) do not touch the mountain or the base for you will die, man or beast; (3). warn the people not to break through to the mountain top in order to gaze on God; (4) God gave the

1. God well before the Song of Moses, just before the death of Moses and entrance into the Promised Land, when God predicted that this people once in the land of milk and honey will grow fat and not serve Him, also how God

had observed them for 80 years to discern their psychology, their "inclinations of behavior"; and here before that at Sinai God has already observed them to the extent of a point of decision about these people as "it is a stiff-necked people". God tells Moses at this occasion to step aside in order that He might consume and bum the whole nation, subsequently making a nation out of only Moses (Exodus 32:10).

2. It is interesting that even here at the beginning of the nation of Israel at Mount Sinai in Horeb, that God sought a "kingdom" of His people, a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

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10 commandments, sort of a core of the covenant, with more laws and regulations for the nation as the religious laws and regulations would also become the law of the land {recall that Paul was a lawyer of these religious laws, somewhat modified in that the laws were subservient also to the Roman government, at least as far as the penalty of death}; (5) "Consecrate yourselves today to the LORD God of Israel, that He may bestow on you a blessing "(Exodus 32:29)

2. What Will God do when Moses asked for forgiveness?

(a) **Occasion:** The Next Day at Mount Sinai.

(b). **Punishment:** (1) the soul that has sinned, it shall die individually; and (3) while the place who will lead them is still an open offer and My Angel will lead them, "in the day when I visit for punishment, I will visit punishment upon them for their sin." (Exodus 32:34); and (4) the LORD "plagued" the people because of what they did with the calf which Aaron made (32:35).

(c). **What the people did wrong:** (1) Moses said to the people, "You have committed a great sin." (Exodus 32:30}

(d). **What the people must do right:** (1) Atonement must be made for this sin, so that the covenant was already in effect, indeed the people had said all this we will do (Exodus 32:30)1; (2) "Whosoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My Book" (32:33).2

3. God allowed a renewal of the covenant.

(a) **Occasion:** Renewal of the covenant, still at Mount Sinai.

(b) **Punishment:** (1) God will not go with them in their midst lest He consume this stiffnecked people (33:3,5); (2) God commands them to strip off their ornaments in order that He may know what to do; (3) "My presence will not go with you, and I will give you rest" (33:14);

4. Near the end of Moses' life and entrance to the Promised Land.

1. Moses went to God after the sins of the golden calf to see if he could make atonement for their sins. (Exodus 32:30 off) Moses admitted as God already knew and had previously warned Moses from the mountain top, that

the people had committed "a great sin" by making for themselves "a god of gold". Moses asks God to forgive their sin, otherwise to blot out his own name from the "Book which God had written" {we know that from Revelation to be the Book of Life, and we found in Malachi that it was also called "the book of remembrance" for the remnant of the remnant}. God let Moses know the way it worked, between Him and the individual, that "Whosoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My Book." (Exodus 32:33)

2. While we might think that Ezekiel was the first to establish individual responsibility for sin – with the famous "the fathers shall not bear the iniquities of the sons, nor the sons of the fathers; but the soul that sinneth it shall

die", we realize that right here in Exodus 32:32-35 that God at this the very beginning of the covenant established the great truth of doctrine of individual responsibility for sin, likewise for individual punishment.

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(a). **Occasion:** Song of Moses, Moses near death, and Israel's second generation at the threshold.

(b). **Punishment:** When they do in the land break the covenant, God will: (1) become angry with them, forsake them, and they shall be devoured; (2) many evils and troubles will befall them so that they recognize the evils as punishment from God.

(c). **What the people did wrong:** (1) For 80 years God had observed, even "tested and tried" His people, noting "the intentions of their behavior; (2) knowing that once they were in the land of milk and honey they would grow fat and not serve God; (3) they had been rebellious against God during Moses life and he expected more so in the future.

(d). **What the people must do right:** (1) They must not as God and Moses expected play harlot with the gods of the land; (2) they will forsake me and break my covenant (Debt 31:17)

5. The Prophet Jeremiah and Impending Captivity in Babylon.

(a) **Occasion:** Jeremiah as God's people in Judah {Israel to the north already gone into Assyrian captivity} faced the disaster of destruction and captivity by Babylon.

(b) **Threat:** Do to this temple what God did to the Shiloh of Israel in the days of Eli; and God's anger will be poured out on all living things in Jerusalem and Judah and captivity for 70 years. {This was the good part for those who would survey the attack which lasted for years, even a good woman in the trapped city cooking her baby for food.}

(c). **What the people were doing wrong:** (1). Putting their trust in the word of the Lie (7:8); (2) steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, burn sacrifices to Baal, and run after other gods (7:9); (3) Come to the temple to say "We are Safe", just so they can keep doing all those abominable things (7:10); (3) since the days of the wilderness, did not listen to God's words through the Prophets "again and again", rather were "obstinate and more wicked than your fathers" (7:26); (4) Women were leading the families in worship of the "Queen of Heaven".

(d). **What the people must do right:** (1) Truly reform your way of life and actions, if you really act justly with one another, do not oppress the resident alien, the orphan, and the widow, shed no innocent blood in this place; and do not run after other gods to your own ruin (7:5-6).

6. Daniel in Babylon praying for the future of his people.

(a) **Occasion:** as Daniel read in Jeremiah of the 70 years of Captivity, He prayed for what would happen to His people (Daniel 9 ff).

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(b). **Punishment:** Daniel feared that adequate restitution for the sins of the people had not been made but received a probational covenant for his people with a probational time of three and one-half years after the cutoff of the Messiah.

(c) **What the people had done wrong:** The more appropriate question is what did the people do right, except for a very few like Joshua and Caleb, the people had continuously forsaken *God* and without repentance or revival. As Daniel prayed His people in captivity still had not repented of their sins nor made atonement for them.

(d). **What would the people do right:** (1). Many shall be purified, made white and refined – obviously the persecutions {this can be an early prediction of the persecutions, primarily of the one-third (Zechariah) of the Jewish believers of the first century, but most probably as it tells in context of the future to come of increased knowledge and travel, that this is the persecution of the Falling Away

1. From Thompson's commentary on Jeremiah: "That the worship of the Queen of Heaven was old in Israel is clear from Amos 5:26, but one wonders whether the worship of Ishtar or some expression of the fertility goddess may not go back to Israel's earliest days (Jeremiah 2:408). Whatever may have been the official religion of Israel, the women had indulged in a peculiarly women's kind of worship for centuries. Since such practices could be observed in homes, they were not overt enough to come under condemnation. In any case the stress on the role of the children and the fathers (Jeremiah 44:19 and 7:16-20) may point to the fact that all along the men connived in a practice which was in open defiance of all that Israel's official religion stood for."

We see today "a peculiarly women's kind of worship". When Ann and I were looking for a place to stay for a year in Ogden, Utah, a movement was going on among the Mormon ladies to pray to "Our Mother which art in heaven". The ladies were meeting at the University of Utah and the men at the Tabernacle. The Mormon leadership demanded that the ladies not pray in public to "Our Mother in heaven"; and when the lady showing us a house in Ogden spoke of this, she said, "well we know that God had to have a wife since Jesus was His Son", defending the practice as if were common.

Before we are too quick to look down on the Mormons we must consider what is going on today in Christian churches and conferences where many women have usurped the authority to teach in the church, who have come up with extra biblical revelations, and have refused to heed the plain commands of the Scriptures of the Word of God that tell: (1) women to keep silence in the church {and this is not limited to a local church building since the church which is the body of Christ extends anywhere Christians are, in conferences, retreats, or whatever; and (2) to learn at home. God did not intend for some reason – perhaps because women are quicker to believe a lie than men even as Eve believed the lie quicker than Adam in the Garden, bringing sin with all the devastations in the blood stream of the human race – for women to either teach in the church or in the home. What as American citizens and as believers in the American Democratic Faith, we must support the equal rights of women in politics and government, we dare not violate those portions of Scripture that demand silence in the church and the learning at home. It should be obvious that these currently popular "women of faith", even with their special Bibles for women, have taken the attitude of the Gnostics who claimed special wisdom not in the Scriptures, also the attitude condemned by Paul in Corinthians that either "the Word of God came to them only" or that "the Word of God came out of them"; and while Paul has been blamed as "personality conflicts" are always the blame for disagreements, the demand for silence of the women in the church remains part of Scripture, the Word of God, and as such is timeless, and what God says through Jeremiah, if you want another personality conflict, goes far beyond Paul. Actually it seems that the same problem with early churches, and churches today that also go into perilous times, those times of "a form of godliness with the power thereof" {formal worship and religion without anything inside the worshipers, a "filling of the pews with empty people", where silly women were led astray by men like Jannes and Jambres, was again that fragile tendency of women to believe a lie when it comes from some authority.

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period, a period that refers to as "when the power of the holy people is completely shattered"; (2) the wicked shall do wickedly, increasingly as the love of many waxes cold and sin abounds, Satan is loosed and the man of sin appears; (3) the wise shall understand and the wicked will not understand; and (4) the abomination of desolation, of which Christ speaks in Matthew 24, and which happened in 70 A.D. with the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple by Titus.

7. The Prophet Zechariah, after the restoration and the temple rebuilt.

(a). **Occasion:** After restoration and after the temple is rebuilt in Zechariah.

(b). **Punishment:** (1) after the cutoff of the probational covenant of Daniel, the

Jews will retain only one-third of the people of God and of the land and two-thirds will perish; and (2) the Gentiles will become the majority of God's people, also confirmed in Malachi.

(c). **What the people were doing wrong:** At first until the preaching of Haggai and Zechariah, and 14 years after the building of the foundation of the temple, they were ignoring the building of God's temple in favor of building and improving their own homes.

(d). **What the people must do right:** The only hope was to be among the remnant of the remnant, those of Malachi whose names were written in the book of remembrance, "those who feared (respected God} the LORD" (4:16) and meditated on His name; then do the same for the time of Christ to come when only one-third of the Jews would become believers, but with persecution; and the other two-thirds were cutoff three and one-half years after the crucifixion of Christ (you didn't think that God was going to let the killing of His Son pass without punishment, as it was it was the final straw of broken covenants; and although the Crucifixion was according to the plan of God and Christ, the people exercised their freedom of choice in favor of crucifixion, that is Calvinism or election and Arminianism and freedom of choice, both true}, these same Jews were also cut off from the land. (Yes, it is true, Israel and the Jews no longer have a legitimate claim to the land!)

15-5: Blessings and Curses of the New Covenant.

How about God's people today? We know that as believers after the life and death of Christ, we are covenanted to God through Christ in a different manner from the old covenant. In other words, we are not required to make blood sacrifices for the atonement of sin as God has provided the ultimate sacrifice in the blood and body of His Son on the Cross, of which the blood of animals was only a symbol. At the death of Christ on the cross the veil in the holy of holies of the Temple was rent from top to bottom, indicating that the way of direct access to God was open through Christ; and in 70 A.D., according to the plan and predictions of God through the Writing Prophets, the daily sacrifices were done away with the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem by the Romans under Titus. Our new covenant, called the covenant of

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the new testament and based on faith in the blood and body sacrifice of Christ for our sins, for the sins of the world, is much like the everlasting covenant with Abraham, a covenant of salvation by faith, the only difference being that Abraham for atonement of sins looked forward to the crucifixion and we look back to the cross of Christ. About the old covenant with God's people which also looked forward for salvation to the atonement of Christ, God stated through the Prophets several times that He was not satisfied with sacrifice but desired obedience; and that what came before blood sacrifices and rituals were simple matters of "faith, justice, and mercy". {Also echoed in the teachings of Jesus.) Are there blessings and curses centered around the new covenant that we have made with God through Christ? Certainly, Paul makes the point clear in Hebrews that God like a father chastises His own children. Well, how about the world that has never believed in Christ nor God although they have heard the Gospel. We know that the curse of all curses rests on them in that "he that believeth not is condemned already because he has not believed on the only begotten Son of God", that curse being eternal punishment of fire and torment; but has a covenant been made between God and the world of unbelievers? Yes, God always dictates as He did in the OT the terms of the agreement, and God has both dictated those terms based on the death of Christ for the blessing of eternal life—to shun the curse of everlasting damnation from the *presence* of God; and gone to many extremes to make sure the whole world knows the terms of that covenant between God and His creatures. For example, the preaching of the Gospel, the work of the Holy Spirit which is everywhere in the world, the Bible, the conscience placed in all creatures, and the works of creation always testify to God.

But how about those who are called God's people today who are not acting like God's people because nothing real has ever happened inside of them. Even as we know from that first generation of the vast multitude that God brought out of Egypt only four souls were saved, so we must know that in our churches and denominations today there are the tares as well as the wheat and the goats as well as the sheep. In fact the evidence is that with the time of the Falling Away — as Jesus said, when the love of many will wax cold, leaving few like even only the 7000 who had not bowed to Baal in the time of Elijah — few of those that name the name of Christ or the name of God will belong to them to the extent of the eternal blessings of full salvation.