

## EP71 Revelation 9:20-21 P1

### *Works of their Hands*

#### **Revelation 9:20-21**

The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, so as not to worship demons, and the idols of gold and of silver and of brass and of stone and of wood, which now can neither now see nor hear nor walk; and they did not repent of their murders nor of their sorceries nor of their immorality nor of their thefts.

You would think that after the 5-months of torture at the hands of the locust-like demons and now with the systematic killing of one out of every three people including men, women, children, friends, family members, lovers, associates, and so on, that those surviving would drop down to their knees and repent before the living God. To me that would seem like a very reasonable and practical thing to do, especially given the circumstances. I am just saying.

But no that is not what happens at all. It is unbelievable and shocking, but no one, and I mean no one, repents. It is a dark and narcissistic time where the *agape* love of many grows cold and everyone is out for themselves. It's as if each persons' eternal decision has already been made, and now they are just following through on their choice. This explains why "*the worship of demons and the idols of gold and of silver and of brass and of stone and of wood*" is rendered in the *future* tense and "*repent*" is in the *aorist*. In other words, as a matter of lifestyle, they simply will not repent, because their future has already been decided in their own hearts and their minds—they will worship that which now can neither now see nor hear nor walk.

This phrase, "*did not repent of the works of their hands*" is an Old Testament way to say that these people do not believe that **Only God is Good** or, said in the alternative, that amongst humanity (whether Jew or Gentile) "*there is none righteous, not even one*" and that "*there is no one who does good, not even one.*"<sup>1</sup> Said yet still another way, the "**works of their hands**" expresses the reality that they do not believe in their abject neediness for the grace of God and in its place have substituted all manner of religious deeds which amounts to the worship of demons and idolatry.

This group of people are still trying to be good without the cross—without the righteousness of **Yahweh Tsidkenu**. They are still trying to do it right for God and for man for the purpose of gaining some level of divine acceptance, blessing, and protection based on their own efforts. As it is with so many today, they believe God owes it to them because they have been so faithful to serve, honor, and worship God.

### *Personal Warning*

Before we jump into this passage and understand what the Spirit means by the "**works of their hands**," I must warn you that this is some of the most difficult content to take in and to absorb. This will not be

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<sup>1</sup> *Romans 3:10; Psalm 14:1-3; 53:1-3*

easy. It also builds on all that we have studied so far from *Jude* through *Revelation 9*, so hopefully the familiarity of what we have study will provide the framework for understanding this very difficult passage.

God spent years and years diligently “working” (which is way too soft of a word) to purge from my heart the dedication and enthusiasm I had to the **work of my hands**, and let’s just say that it was not a pretty process. Burning the **work of my hands** (religion) from my soul was (and still is) a very painful process, and **Yahweh** has been relentless.

At the root of it all, He wanted me to come to understand, accept, agree, and choose to believe that **Yahweh Tsidkenu** is my only righteousness, no ifs, ands or buts, and that absent His extension of righteousness to me (which occurs by faith through grace), I have nothing but worthless and vile filth to offer Him—completely unacceptable offerings.

To achieve His goal, He had to address so many areas of wrong belief and unbelief in my heart that kept me chained, bound, and enmeshed not just in my own goodness but in my dedication to the religion of Christianity with all its appearance and commitment to goodness and serving and loving God while at the same time judging myself and others for sin and trying very hard to be holy for God. And this phrase, “**the work of the hands**,” or the work of my hands became pivotal in my coming to understand the depth of my idolatry, or as the Spirit says, the worship of demons.

## Work of the Hands

This phrase “**works of their hands**” comes from the book of *Haggai*.

### *Haggai 2:11-15*

Thus says **Yahweh Sabaoth** (the Lord of hosts), 'Ask now the priests for a ruling: 'If a man carries holy meat in the fold of his garment, and touches bread with this fold, or cooked food, wine, oil, or any other food, will it become holy?'" And the priests answered, "No." Then Haggai said, "If one who is unclean from a corpse touches any of these, will the latter become unclean?" And the priests answered, "It will become unclean." Then Haggai said, " 'So is this people. And so is this nation before Me,' declares **Yahweh**, 'and so is every **work of their hands**; and what they offer there is unclean.

In addressing the people and the nation, **Yahweh** says that “**every work of their hands**” or all their attempts to serve, honor, and please God to obtain His favor, blessing, and forgiveness are unclean and therefore are unacceptable as an offering to **Yahweh**. He makes the point that even that which they possess which is deemed to be holy, becomes unclean because of the works of their hands. In other words, though they have in their possession something that is holy, the holy item does not automatically transmit its goodness or holiness to them. Rather, like men who are defiled by a dead corpse, all that they touch and therefore offer to God becomes unclean.<sup>2</sup>

**This is a powerful indictment of those in the household of God (those who have not exercised the power they have been given to choose to become a little child of God—like an infant who is dependent**

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<sup>2</sup> *Haggai 2:10-14*

upon God for all things all the time).<sup>3</sup> Thus, even that which they have come to possess when they became born-again, namely the Holy Spirit (the “holy meat” in the fold of their garment), does not automatically transmit holiness to them making their service and their offerings pleasing to God. Rather, all their offerings and every work of their hands are unclean because they themselves are defiled by that “dead corpse” they touched, which is a metaphor for their *Flesh* or their Old Sinful Nature.

## Fiction Alert

**FICTION ALERT**

We are going to take somewhat of a long path to get to this issue of **the work of the hands**, but the path begins with a fiction that spearheads a lot of the wrong belief that has led to the people of God refusing to repent of the works of their hands. Let’s read the passage and then work through it.

### **2 Corinthians 5:16-19**

Therefore, from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him in this way no longer. **Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.** Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

The fiction is confusing, so bear with me. But it centers on this statement about being a new creature; “*the old things passed away; behold, new things have come,*” or as the new King James renders it, “*all things have become new.*”

The Spirit is saying that though we once recognized Jesus according to the flesh, in that He came down to earth as a man who lived and walked amongst us, we no longer recognize Him that way (according to His flesh), since He died for all and then rose again. Thus, now we recognize Him according to His resurrected life.

This passage goes on to say that as we do with Christ, we no longer recognize anyone according to the flesh, for since Christ died for all, then in effect all have died, so that those who are now living (addressing those who have been born-again) should (not “will” but should) no longer live for themselves but for Him

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<sup>3</sup> See **John 1:12**, to become a child of God is a power and a right that those who are now believing must choose to exercise, as “*become*” is rendered in the *middle* voice. This is the same right expressed in **Matthew 18:3**, where one must be converted by God and then dig down deep in their soul and choose to become (rendered in the *middle* voice) as a little child of God (an infant) or they will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

who died and rose again.<sup>4</sup> The point is that just because one has been “born-again”, it is not conclusive that they **will** live for Christ or found to be “*in Christ*”. That should be obvious to all of us.

The Spirit’s initial point is that we are to now see all people through the lens of what Christ has done for them through His death and resurrection. (**His death**) As a sacrifice given for all mankind, He removed from all mankind the barrier of sin which separated God from man; (**His resurrection**) thus, all mankind now has the opportunity to choose to live and escape the spiritual death to which sin had them bound.<sup>5</sup>

Thus, we are to see, recognize, or deal with people no longer according to their flesh (what and who they are in this world), but through the lens of the Spirit. People are either now alive because they have been born-again to new life and are living for Christ, or they are now abiding in death.<sup>6</sup> Jesus said it this way:

### **John 5:24-25**

Truly, truly, I say to you, he who is now hearing My word, and is now believing Him who sent Me, now has eternal life, and does not now choose to come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life. Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is now choosing to come and now is, when the dead *{those who are not now living}* will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.

Now after having laid this foundational understanding that we are to no longer deal with people according to who and what they are in this world, the Spirit goes on to say, “*Therefore (or with that said), if any man is “in Christ” he is a new creation, the old things passed away, all things have become new.*”<sup>7</sup>

This passage has led to a huge misunderstanding, or wrong belief, that has been twisted within evangelical Christianity resulting in masses of people who do not and will not repent of the **work of their hands**, and therefore are NOT now abiding in life.

In short, it is believed that once a person says the “sinner’s prayer,” receives Christ, and is “born-again,” that they are automatically deemed to be “*in Christ*” and are therefore able to offer up worthy sacrifices to **Yahweh**. But this is a huge **fiction** with monumental consequences, for they are unaware that they might even now be worshipping demons.

When a person takes **Step-1** and allows God to convert them and they are “born-again” of the Spirit, what happens is that God imbues within their being a container so-to-speak in which the Holy Spirit dwells or makes His abode. This “container” (for lack of a better image) is called the New Creation or the new self, having been created after God in righteousness, holiness, and truth.<sup>8</sup>

However, as expressed in **Haggai 2**, just because the Holy Spirit abides in this New Creation, He does not automatically transmit holiness to a person, for all our wrong belief about what God wants from us is

<sup>4</sup> **2 Corinthians 5:14-16**. “might no longer live” is rendered in the *subjunctive*

<sup>5</sup> See **John 3:16, 4:42; 1 Timothy 4:10**. See also **Romans 5:12-21, 6:16, 23, 7:9-13, 8:6; Hebrews 2:9, 14-15; James 5:20; 1 John 3:14**

<sup>6</sup> **1 John 4:9**

<sup>7</sup> **2 Corinthians 5:17**

<sup>8</sup> **2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 4:24**, “created” is rendered in the *aorist passive participle*

that dead body that defiles all we do. And that is why **Step-2**, the choice to become a little child of God, OR NOT, becomes salient. And it is this choice that determines if one is now abiding in life or has returned to death.

Now let's take this step-by-step because it is critical that we understand both **Step-1** and **Step-2** because of how the failure to take **Step-2** is what leads to the worship of demons and to idolatry.

## **The Gospel**

### **Step-1 and Step-2 Explained**

- In **Step-1**, a person invites Christ to come into their life believing that He is the resurrected and living Son of God, and the only source of their salvation, which comes by way of grace through faith and not a result of works.<sup>9</sup> In so doing, a person becomes born-again by the Spirit of God and the Spirit cleanses their heart by faith.<sup>10</sup>
- The effect of being born-again is that a person is "Called" or brought into the household of God, separated from those who are in the world. In God's household, such a person is given a crucial choice. They must now decide if they will choose to become a son of God (a son of promise, a Chosen one, a bondservant of Jesus Christ) who lives in **unrestrained freedom** (imaged in Isaac, the son of Abraham and Sarah) or continue to live like a slave in God's household bound by the law (imaged in Ishmael, son of Abraham and his slave woman Hagar).<sup>11</sup>
- Keep in mind it does not matter whether a person is bound by your law, my law, their law, or the law of God. They are a slave to the law: a system by which one attempts to obtain righteousness or to be good in the eyes of God attempting to ingratiate His blessing and favor.
- Jesus was clear, however, "*The slave does not now remain in the house forever; but the son now does remain forever. If therefore the Son shall make you free* (shall and not "will" indicating a contingency), *indeed you will in the future choose to be free.*"<sup>12</sup>
- This is a critical distinction because the one who continues to live like a slave (a bondservant to law), **will not inherit** with those who choose to become sons of promise, or sons of God (bondservants to Jesus) living in **unrestrained freedom**. In fact, those who choose slavery to the law **will be cast out** of the household of God, for they have not chosen to let Jesus (**Yahweh Yasha**<sup>13</sup>) free them. In that vein, the Spirit says that they have fallen from grace and are cut off from Christ, because they depend on the **works of their hands** and not solely upon the grace of God to free them or to save them.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>9</sup> **Acts 15:11; Ephesians 2:5, 8-9; 2 Timothy 1:8-10; Titus 3:4-7**

<sup>10</sup> **John 3:4-8; Acts 15:8**

<sup>11</sup> See **Galatians 4:21-30**

<sup>12</sup> **John 8:35**. "...if the Son makes you free" is rendered in the *aorist active subjunctive*; "you will be free" is rendered in the *future middle indicative*

<sup>13</sup> "**Yahweh Yasha**" means **Yahweh** who sets free, or saves

<sup>14</sup> See **Galatians 4:21-5:6; Revelation 2:4-5; Hebrews 6:1-8, 10:26-31**

- The Spirit expressed it this way: “*Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be an heir with the son of the free woman.*”<sup>15</sup> Even though Ishmael was a son of Abraham, living in his household, he was the son of a slave woman; and therefore, was prevented by God from inheriting alongside Issac, who was a son of promise, the son of Sarah, Abraham’s wife. As previously stated, Ishmael is a picture of those who are bound by slavery to the law. Though they grow up in the same household as the son of promise, though they benefit from all that the household has to offer during their stay, though they call Abraham daddy, or Abba, though they are known by others as a son of Abraham, they will not obtain the inheritance, and one day they will be cast out of the household and sent away.
- Oddly enough, as with Ishmael, though they do not inherit along with the sons of promise, in His mercy, God will make a **great nation** out of them. And that is what we see in the religion of Christianity, a great nation of those who should be sons living in freedom but instead are bound by law.<sup>16</sup>
- Despite the abundant and even overwhelming population of those in God’s household who choose to live as slaves, they **will not inherit** the kingdom of God. However, God will provide for them during this life. It is the same thing He did with the Israelites who participated in the exodus, journeyed through the wilderness, but did not choose to believe that God would save them in the Promised Land. In fact, they refused to enter the Promise Land.<sup>17</sup> As a result, **Yahweh** did not allow them to enter the Promised Land and made them wonder for 40-years in the desert until all those who would not believe that He has been, is, and would be their **I AM**, died.<sup>18</sup> Yet, during their wanderings, He fully provided for them. Their clothing did not wear out nor did their feet swell. He provided them food (manna from heaven), water, and when they cried out, meat.<sup>19</sup>
- God’s provision (practical and spiritual) tends to militate against those who are bound by law from understanding that they do not know **Yahweh**. As such they can cast out demons, do amazing miracles, and even prophecy in His name, and yet He will say to them: “*I never knew you; depart from me you who practice lawlessness (unauthorized deeds).*” By the way, Jesus was quoting a line from **Psalms 6:8**, which says, “*Depart from me all who do iniquity.*” Jesus began this line of thought by saying, “*Not everyone who says to me ‘Lord, Lord’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only those who do the will of my Father who is in heaven.*”<sup>20</sup> This is the same indictment He spoke against the church at Sardis. The **works of our hands** are iniquity and do not equate to the works of the Father, despite their supernatural display of power exhibited in, for example, the casting out demons, miracles, and prophecy.
- The **Codex** explains that “*the righteousness of God is now revealed from faith to faith; as it had*

<sup>15</sup> **Galatians 4:30**, quoting **Genesis 21:10, 12**

<sup>16</sup> See **Genesis 12:14-21**

<sup>17</sup> See **Numbers 13:31-33**

<sup>18</sup> See **Numbers 14:26-35**

<sup>19</sup> See **Deuteronomy 8:1-5, 29:5; Exodus 16:9-12**

<sup>20</sup> **Matthew 7:21-22**

*been written, the righteous shall choose to live by faith.*"<sup>21</sup> With "choose" being rendered in the *future middle indicative*, we know that this is a process, something that a person must learn to choose, it is not an automatic reality just because they said the "sinner's prayer". This is the essence of the **gospel** of Jesus Christ, all must be accomplished by grace through faith.

- It is clear however that this righteousness is not derived from law (or from the **works of our hands**—all our attempts to keep law that are in effect lawless) but from that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God based on grace through faith.<sup>22</sup>
- Therefore, "*having been being justified by His grace* (which speaks of a process), *we should be made heirs* (not that we will be made heirs, but we should be) *according to the hope of eternal life.*"<sup>23</sup> Those who choose to live as sons of promise are heirs, but those in the household who choose to be bound to the law are slaves and will be cast out and sent away. But, again, the path to becoming a son of promise is a process, for most everyone who is brought into the household of God in effect starts out as a slave. Similar to those in the exodus, we all start off as slaves and are given not just the opportunity to be free, but to freely enter the land of promise.
- Let's go a bit deeper into this explanation. When a person is born-again, and is now believing, they are given the right or the power to **become** a child of God—one who is both Called and Chosen of God. They are given the power to choose to become an heir. Although they are given the power to make this choice (a power provided by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit in the New Creation), they still must dig down deep in their soul and choose to be a Chosen one—a son of promise. This is the crux of **John 1:12**, which literally says, "*But as many as received Him, He gave to them the right (or the power) to choose to become sons of God, to them that are now believing on His name.*" The Spirit does not say they are given the right to choose to **be** sons of God, but to **become**, indicating a process or a series of future choices; hence, "**become**" is rendered in the *middle voice*.
- This choice (or series of choices) to **become** a son of God (or to choose to be an heir and not a slave) is explained in **Matthew 18:3-4** where Jesus says "*Except you be converted by God **and** choose to become as a little child, you **shall not enter** the kingdom of heaven. Whoever therefore humbles (or depresses) himself as a little child, this the same is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven.*"
- This is where **Step-2** comes into play. First a person must be converted by God (or born-again). One cannot convert themselves, but it is an act performed on us by God, as "*converted*" is rendered in the *passive voice*. But then comes this ominous "**and**" which is a critical, pivotal, monumental conjunction that is practically ignored by most of evangelical Christianity.
- The idea is that a person must reject the **works of their hands**, what they believe they can do for God out of their own goodness, effort, and sincere intentions, and dig down deep in their soul and choose to depress their pride and their ego and their desire to control the outcomes

<sup>21</sup> **Romans 1:16-17; Habakkuk 2:4; Galatians 3:11; Hebrews 10:38**

<sup>22</sup> **Philippians 3:9; 2 Timothy 1:8-10; Titus 3:4-7**

<sup>23</sup> **Titus 3:7**



of their lives, and instead choose to be as a little child who is dependent upon their parents for life.

- I have used this phrasing “like a little child” so often that there is a possibility we might not entirely grasp its meaning. The Greek word translated as “*little child*” speaks of a child who is anywhere from an infant to a toddler—one who is entirely dependent upon their parents for all aspects of their life. That sets the context for our understanding what Jesus was speaking of in terms of the choice that those Called into the Household of God must make in “**Step-2**”.
- The act of being born-again, was 100% a work of God. This was something impossible for us to do on our own.<sup>24</sup> The prerequisite, however, was for us, by faith, to invite Jesus to cause us to be born-again. This invitation is an expression of our belief, of our **willingness** to let Him bring us into His household. And it was a necessary step, for Jesus said: “... *unless one is born-again by God, He cannot be caused to see the kingdom of heaven.*”<sup>25</sup> Becoming a little child is accomplished in the same way, it is how we are *caused to see the kingdom of heaven*.
- The idea is that a little child does not control their life, they do not tell their parents what they should do or how they are to do it. The child is provided food, clothing, education, and told what to do, when to do it, and so on. The child may not know why they must eat their veggies, brush their teeth, not drink coffee or a beer like dad and mom, or why they must go to bed at 7:00 pm, or why they must see a doctor, get a shot, or go to school, and not watch certain programs. Still, they choose to do what their parents require of them, even though they do not like much of it and tend to throw a fit here-or there. Sometimes they need parental incentive through correction, but when it is all said and done a little child tends to follow their parents leading because on-the-one-hand, they have no other option, they are dependent beings, but on-the-other-hand, they trust their parents implicitly.
- It is the job of parents to do what is right for a child and to choose the paths they should walk, including the friends they are to hang-out with. And a little child trusts all of this, their entire lives, to their parents’ oversight and care.
- As adults or teens, Jesus is telling those who have been Called into His household that we must depress ourselves or humble ourselves (to let go of our demand to be in control of the outcomes of our lives) and be willing to trust that He is always in control of all things (all the time), and therefore like a weaned little child in His mother’s lap, we are to simply rest trusting in Him. After all, our lives became His 100% responsibility when we “gave ourselves” to Him. It is His job to care for those in His household.
- This idea of humbling ourselves is captured in a Psalm of King David. “*O Yahweh my heart is not proud nor my eyes haughty; nor do I involve myself in great matters, or in things too difficult for me. Surely, I have composed and quieted my soul; like a weaned child against his mother, my soul is like a weaned child within me. O Israel, hope in Yahweh, from this time forth and forever.*”<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> See **John 3:1-8; Matthew 19:26**

<sup>25</sup> **John 3:3**

<sup>26</sup> **Psalm 131**



- Are you getting the picture of humility? This king of the nation Israel trusts all that is great and difficult to **Yahweh**, and he simply quiets his soul and chooses to rest as a child. Each of us is a king, so-to-speak, of our own kingdom (our lives) and **Yahweh** wants us to similarly rest and put our hope in Him, from this time forth and forever.
- Thus, to choose to become a son of God (a son of promise, an heir), like a little child, we must be willing to give way to what our Father wants for our lives and thereby do only what He wants, when He wants it. We must be willing to come to accept His reasons, even if we disagree and do not like it at all. We must be willing to humble ourselves and accept the paths He has set before us (whether in times past or now), even when we feel and believe we know there are better paths and better ways that He could have led us. He wants us to be willing to accept His wisdom and not rely one iota on our own understanding.<sup>27</sup> He wants us to now be believing that His is and always has been in control of our lives and that He alone is good.
- He wants us to now be believing that He now is and always has made the right choices for our lives, for He declares that He leads us down the best pathways for our life (even though it does not feel that way, and our lives have been terrible and full of all manner of trauma). *“Yahweh says, “I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you. Do not be like a senseless horse or mule that needs a bit and bridle to keep it under control.”*<sup>28</sup> He therefore wants us to be willing to believe this is true and put our hope in Him even though we so often think there should be a better way than the path He has chosen for us to walk.
- If this idea of a choice scares you, as if you will somehow do it wrong. I hope you noticed that **Yahweh** only wants us to be **willing** to invite Him into our lives and then to invite Him to transform us into His image. He will do the work of transforming us into what He wants when He wants it, we just need to be willing to choose to be that little child. And when we are struggling with our willingness, we can trust that even then He is our provision, for *“God is now working in us both to will and to do for His good pleasure.”*<sup>29</sup> As a man once declared, *“I do believe, help my unbelief.”*<sup>30</sup>

Sadly, there are so many within evangelical Christianity who believe the Gospel is merely **Step-1**. This is a grave error and a deep-rooted **fiction** that has put many lives in danger of apostasy, and being cast out of the Household of God, for there will be many who refuse to repent of the **work of their hands**.

With that said, let’s go back to our **fiction**, a subtle twisting of the **Codex** that has been proffered upon Christianity (primarily evangelical Christianity) and believed by far too many. As stated previously, this **fiction** states that if one says the “sinner’s prayer” and receives Jesus into their life as their “Lord & Savior” that they **ARE** a New Creation in Christ, and that **ALL** things have become new.<sup>31</sup> Therefore, they conclude

<sup>27</sup> See **Proverbs 3:5**

<sup>28</sup> **Psalm 32:8-9**

<sup>29</sup> **Philippians 2:13**

<sup>30</sup> **Mark 9:24**

<sup>31</sup> See **2 Corinthians 5:17**

that they are holy and good, essentially worthy to offer up sacrifices to God through their service, worship, giving, preaching, ministering, missions, etc. (all those “**works of their hands**”).

And though they proclaim that those who said the “sinner’s prayer” **ARE** a New Creation and **ALL** things have become new, they don’t really have a good explanation for the presence of the *flesh*, the Old Sinful Nature, and they just kind of ignore the fact that if one is a New Creation and **ALL** things have become new, then why in the world is the “Old Man” (the Old Sinful Nature, their *flesh*) still present and active and controlling and defiant and unrelenting.

Jesus was clear, “*No one tears a piece of cloth from a new garment and puts it on an old garment; otherwise, he will both tear the new, and the piece from the new will not match the old. And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise, the new wine will burst the skins and it will be spilled out, and the skins will be ruined. But new wine must be put into fresh wine skins.*”<sup>32</sup>

Through this picture, Jesus was communicating that the old wine skins or the old garment (which are metaphors for our physical bodies) cannot handle “*new wine*” or a “*new piece of cloth*” (both metaphors for the Holy Spirit), for those old wine skins would burst in the same manner that the old cloth would tear away from the old fabric. And with the cloth metaphor, He makes the point that the new piece will not even match the old. That is because the New Creation, having been created after God in righteous, holiness, and truth, is not like the old garment of our humanity that is corrupted through-and-through.<sup>33</sup> They are fundamentally different in nature.

This is the reason the Holy Spirit was not just placed into our bodies willy-nilly, but must dwell within this New Creation, or in the new wine skins (that “container”), which God imbues into our being when we are converted by God.<sup>34</sup> Again, the New Creation is created in the likeness of God, righteous, holy, and true. And if that was the end of the story, if all that is righteous, holy, and true was automatically transmitted to our entire being by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, then the New Testament would be quite a bit shorter and simpler, “Say the prayer, have fun, live life and see you in heaven soon.” And in that vein, much of the Old Testament, like that passage in **Haggai 2**, would be unnecessary. Truly, **ALL** things would have become new because God cannot lie.<sup>35</sup>

But to the contrary, we are instructed, as a manner of lifestyle, to dig down deep in our soul and choose to put on this New Creation, or literally, put on this New Man.<sup>36</sup> This occurs when we now let God renew the Spirit of our mind. He is the one who does this work, we must simply be **willing**; in fact, we are commanded to be **willing** to let Him do this sort of transformative work.<sup>37</sup> He does not do it automatically, as He never forces Himself on us. He comes to the door and knocks.<sup>38</sup>

Likewise, we are instructed as a matter of lifestyle (not commanded but instructed), to lay aside, or

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<sup>32</sup> **Luke 5:36-38**

<sup>33</sup> **Ephesians 4:24; Romans 3:10-18**

<sup>34</sup> **Matthew 9:17**

<sup>35</sup> **Hebrews 6:18; 2 Timothy 2:13; Titus 1:2**

<sup>36</sup> **Ephesians 4:24**, “put on” is rendered in the *aorist middle infinitive*

<sup>37</sup> **Ephesians 4:23**, “renewed” is rendered in the *present passive infinitive*; **Romans 12:2**, “be transformed” is rendered in the *present passive imperative*.

<sup>38</sup> **Revelation 3:20**. See the discussion in the letter to the church at Laodicea regarding the door and our step-by-step transformative process.

cast off, our former manner of life (literally, the “Old Man”) that is now being corrupt in accordance with the *lusts of deceit*.<sup>39</sup> Excuse me, but that does not sound like “**ALL** things have become new”.

And what are those “*lusts of deceit*”? As we studied in **Jude** (the Prelude to **Revelation**), it is all the *religious licentiousness* that people have adopted according to their *instinctual religious wisdom*, which includes any form of law that is imposed upon the life of one Called into the household of God, other than the law of *agape* love (which can only be fulfilled in-and-through our lives by the One who is *agape* love).<sup>40</sup> This explains why the Spirit was very concerned that the Corinthians were falling prey to these “*lusts of deceit*” or to “another Jesus” or a “different gospel.”

He said, “*But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the **simplicity** and purity of devotion to Christ. For if one comes and preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted, you bear this beautifully.*”<sup>41</sup>

And what is this simplicity? Grace! That formula which is 100% what God does and 0% what we do. Remember, you did not birth yourself a new, it was a work of God—you just made the invitation. This is the reason why the “**works of our hands**” are nothing but defiled offerings which derive from a different gospel and another Jesus.

The proper understanding of **GRACE** captures the simplicity and purity of our devotion to Christ which is entirely based on what He does for us and not what we do for Him.<sup>42</sup> Remember, as He expressed to the church at Laodicea, all He is looking for is our willingness to open the door, and in His timing, He will come in and do the work of transforming us into His image. He is just waiting for the invitation. And as He told those at Sardis, He will now choose to come as that thief in the night, during our dark times, with the intention of binding the strong man and plundering out of our house all that does not belong, and He wants us to be ready for Him.<sup>43</sup>

By the way, the Spirit had the same issue and concern with those in the church at Galatia. He said, “*I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ.*”<sup>44</sup> Like the Corinthians, those in Galatia were being overcome with an *instinctual religious wisdom* that blended what we do for God (the “**works of our hands**”) with what God does for us through His grace. The Spirit considers this such a violation that He says those who bring forth this abominable convergence of trying to be good for God (or trying to be good like God) and grace are literally damned or cursed (in the Greek “*anathema*”).

Moreover, he calls those teachers “false brethren”. He makes no bones about it and does not try to appease anyone’s sensitivities. Even though they purport to be teaching Christ and are of high reputation within the Christian community, and considered to be “brethren,” their intent was to spy out the liberty

<sup>39</sup> **Ephesians 4:22**, “put off” is rendered in the *aorist middle infinitive*; “corrupted” is rendered in the *present passive participle*.

<sup>40</sup> **John 13:34; 1 John 2:7-11; 2 John 2:5-6; 1 John 4:7-8, 16**

<sup>41</sup> **2 Corinthians 11:3-5**

<sup>42</sup> See **1 John 4:10, 19; Romans 5:8, 10**

<sup>43</sup> **Revelation 3:3, 16:15; Matthew 24:42-44, 12:29**

<sup>44</sup> **Galatians 1:6-8**

(or the **unrestrained freedom**) which true believers have in Christ. They hoped to bring the people of God into bondage through their form of law, through this convergence of grace with the “**works of our hands**”.<sup>45</sup> About these teachers He says:

***2 Corinthians 11:13-15***

For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, now choosing to be disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. No wonder, for even Satan now chooses to disguise himself as an angel of light. Therefore, it is not surprising if his servants also now choose to disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds.

Let us stop here and we will pick up in our next Podcast with the idea of what it actually means to be “in Christ” and the distortions that have surrounded that understanding.

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<sup>45</sup> *Galatians 2:4*