

BAPTIST BEWARE

An exhortation for those who consider joining a church or have been disappointed in the past by churches. A list of common pitfalls that we should beware of and avoid.

The fact that we are living in perilous last days is rather obvious. All of the evils mentioned in 2. Tim. 3:1-5 that are related to these last days have become true and actually represent the character of today's apostate, worldly, restless and materialistic society. This society loves pleasure more than God, as the scripture says. But the scriptures warn us to turn away from such. Have you and your family personally responded to turn away from such a wayward society and its superficial and shallow form of Christianity that denies the power of God.

Whereas the Bible says in 1. Timothy 3:15 that the church of the living God is the pillar and ground of the truth, modern congregations resemble a farce and are not very interested in truth, God's truth, Bible truth. During the past years I have observed that churches increasingly are no longer a source of truth, but rather deception, false doctrine, half-truths, half defined doctrines.

Therefore, in order to stay sound in faith and doctrine we need to practice Ephesians 5:11 and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. Certain things going on in today's churches need to be reprovved sharply because they hurt the cause of Christ.

In these last days churches become more and more Laodicean. What was the mistake of the Laodicean church? They thought they had it all when in reality they had lost everything. They thought they had been there and done that when in reality they had to start the journey all over. They thought they were the cream-of-the-crop when in reality they were at their worst. They thought they were at the top when in reality they were at rock bottom. Their conceit made them unteachable. The Lord told them they were to be spewed out. Their only hope is the counsel given in Rev. 3:18. Please consider this: In Revelation 3:19 a church is called to be zealous and to repent. Many church folks want the sinners to repent and that is right, but I hope churches today will have a broken and contrite heart that is able to repent. Multitudes are too proud to repent. But Isaiah tells us that God is with those who are of a contrite and humble spirit. Isaiah 57:15. God resists the proud. You will not find God in their midst. Even if it says "Baptist" on their church sign.

Let us be humble as we rebuke some of the things that Baptists need to beware of in order to stay sound in faith and doctrine:

- Baptist beware! Many Baptists claim that their church is a "democracy" and needs to be ruled by "majority rule" and have "business meetings". In reality the church is a theocracy because Christ is the head of it and Christ is to receive glory in the church. Business meetings are not mentioned in the Bible. Acts 1:15-26 is not a church business meeting. There was no church until Pentecost. Acts 1:15-26 tells us of the apostles seeking God's will about a replacement for Judas. They cast lots. They don't cast votes. The lot decides by chance/accident. This was not a majority vote. The very idea of majority rule is unscriptural. The overall Biblical message is that the majority is mostly wrong. The majority cried "Crucify him!" before Pilate. Moses warns us that we should neither follow the multitude to do evil nor decline after many to wrest judgment. Exodus 23:2. Many times the minority, the remnant, was right and the majority was wrong. Majority rule can actually muzzle the pastor and force him to decline after many. That

pastor might be intimidated into silence because the majority does not appreciate Bible truth. This is the case in many congregations that no longer have a zeal for God and have become worldly and proud. Bible-believing churches are to be ruled well by rulers. Consider Hebrews 13:7,17. These rulers are also called elders or pastors. 1. Tim. 5:17-19. Many churches ignore these scriptures or claim this means a “spiritual rule“. But “spiritual“ mostly means non-existent. In those backslidden churches members have become selfish and want to do as they please. They don't want a preacher to tell them what to do. And they don't want a preacher to rebuke their pet sin. However, the Bible demands that preachers rebuke and reprove. Titus 1:13, 1. Tim. 5:20. Majority rule has incapacitated many pulpits. The pastor who dares to preach against sin and takes a stand on doctrine or issues will get voted out real quick and a new man will be voted in who will please the multitude.

- Baptist beware! Backsliders have redefined the word “shepherd“. Their idea of a pastor “shepherding the flock“ is the concept of a sweet-talking, nice, cute, soft-spoken compromiser who will do what the people want instead of what God wants. Someone who will sugarcoat the sin of their church people. Someone who will make more backsliders feel more welcome at church. Someone who will never rebuke or reprove but will only be nice and positive.
- Baptist beware! Churches have turned into social clubs. It's no longer about God. It's about a clique of people who want to have their way and are not willing to submit to Bible-believing elders. Social clubs have worldly dress standards. Nobody would ever preach on 1. Timothy 2:9. Bible truths about modest apparel are being ignored. People act like certain things are not in the Bible. Especially those doctrines that require self-denial or nonconformity to the world are being dodged. People pick and choose as far as what part of the Bible they believe. Thereby they make their own noodle and their own whim the final authority in their “church“.
- Baptist beware! As far as dress standards are concerned more and more churches think it is alright for men and women to violate the principle mentioned in Deuteronomy 22:5. Modern churchianity is interested in quantity (more members, more money, etc.) and not in quality (sanctification, separation, service). Therefore women with jeans in church are “OK“ and men with earrings or long hair are “groovy“. Many times women wear dresses or skirts in church, but in everyday life wear men's clothes. The Bible does not encourage this unisex trend in any form or fashion. A Bible-believing church needs to make it clear that men need to look and act like men and women need to look and act like women. Dress standards for Christians need to be defined by the Bible and not by worldly authorities such as TV, magazines, trends, fads, corporate world, etc. Beware of Baptists who have relinquished from teaching the Bible and refuse to teach and preach modesty just in order to make the backsliders in church feel welcome. That's not right.
- Baptist beware! Many Christians today quote the truth, but will do nothing about it. Some churches still quote Colossians 3:18, but then the preacher will quickly give an excuse to the congregation because he doesn't want to offend the females who are successful in the business world. Biblical family values as described in Titus 2:1-6 are no longer being taught for fear that membership will decrease. If we put the lip service to the Bible aside, many churches have already surrendered to feminism, effeminacy and promiscuity. Many Christians quote 1. Thess. 5:22 and profess to believe it, but they are still addicted to filthy TV programs such as soap operas, talk shows and sports events. Many Christians claim to “believe the Bible“, but they are not bothered by Luke 21:34 and their hearts are overcharged with surfeiting (excessive eating) at diverse junk food outlets. Many churchgoers today are not able to sit still and eat moderate

amounts of home-cooked foods around a family table. On Sundays after church these Christians love to riot (excess in feasting, Romans 13:13) after church at expensive restaurants and therefore there is no response to the altar call in church because everybody is “ready to go“. That is a shame! This churchianity is just a show. It's a farce! Please avoid and turn away from this empty churchianity.

- Baptist beware! Churches are forsaking the King James Bible and adopt some new “Bible“ version that in reality is not a Bible because dozens of verses are missing and the whole is based on corrupt Alexandrian manuscripts. The King James Bible is God's word for the English-speaking world. Do you not believe that God is able to inspire and preserve His word? Do you think that God depends on lost secular scholars researching manuscript evidence while trying without any success to reproduce the lost original manuscripts. Churches that forsake the King James Bible soon depart from the truth, become modernistic, jump on the charismatic band wagon and many times end in a disaster of apostasy. Use the Bible God has used. Don't use a modern perversion of the Bible that only serves the business end of large publishing houses. The flood of new versions of the Bible has sharply diminished people's faith in the Bible because it is very easy to find discrepancies between these versions and many young believers end up offended, deceived, disillusioned and disappointed. If you believe in this flood of new versions you thereby deny the doctrine of the inspiration of the word of God and definitely the concept of plenary, verbal inspiration. Or do you think God has Alzheimer's and says one thing in this Bible but leaves it out or alters it in the next Bible? If you are a Baptist and you believe that the Bible is your only rule for faith and practice, then you need the King James Bible.
- Baptist beware! Social club churches are very proud of their fellowship. They emphasize church activities, church membership, church events, etc. Others are proud of their church and “what it stand for“. But many times these church people have no form of personal walk with the Lord. No prayer life. No personal Bible study or quiet time. No family devotions. No personal witnessing or evangelism. Many times you will find people completely focused on THEIR church, but they live like the world, talk like the world and think like the world. To them the Christian life seems to consist only of salvation, church membership and then comes the funeral. They love Sunday-morning-churchianity. They miss Sunday school and they come only for the “11-o'clock-hour.“ They want to listen to the “speaker of the hour“. They want as speaker! They don't want a preacher or pastor reproving and rebuking and exhorting with all longsuffering and doctrine. 2. Tim. 4:2. They want a speech from a speaker that will please their itching ears. 2. Tim. 3,4. These people firmly believe in the “11 o'clock hour“ because as soon as the clock strikes twelve, this crowd is out the door even if the preacher has the audacity to steal some of their precious time to preach until after 12:00pm. After all, there's football, NASCAR, hunting, fishing, golfing out there and you can't let church interfere with that.
- Baptist beware! Today's churches are not really interested in preaching. People have become so fidgety by the flood of audio-visual impulses that they no longer have the desire and the discipline to appreciate and hear preaching. During the preaching service in many churches people are passing notes, whispering, looking at magazines, watching photo albums, clipping their fingernails, chewing gum, passing around and playing with babies etc. Teenagers are somewhere in the back pews given to horseplay. The sad thing is that nothing is done about this disorder. If the pastor tries to order this lack of discipline, the clique that runs the church would immediately run him off and slander him. In today's churches people no longer know how they ought to behave themselves in the house of God. 1. Tim. 3:15. They do what they want and if someone reproves them for their wrong deeds, those guilty of wrongdoing get mad and become

filled with pride. The wisdom of James 3:17 no longer exists in those churches. In some churches it has become a “sin“ to preach longer than 30 minutes. It is time that people understand that when they go to church they will have to hear preaching. What a blessing it is when the unsearchable riches of Christ are preached! God has chosen to save them that believe by the foolishness of preaching. 1. Cor. 1:18,21. So if you go to a Bible-believing church you are to submit to preaching. Don't expect a Powerpoint presentation, overhead projectors, plays or other gadgets. However, if you are stuck in a church where the unsearchable riches of Christ are not preached and the preaching is not focused on the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, chances are that a false gospel is being preached. Don't wait a minute. Leave that church.

- Baptist beware! More and more churches don't like that blessed old Bible anymore. Church members will carry a big, heavy Bible to church, but they will not open it, not read it, and not study it. In some churches they don't even bring a Bible at all. They come for the fellowship, the fun, the food or whatever, but surely they don't respect that blessed old book anymore. If you actually were to bring a Bible to church, people start looking at you. If you open it up and turn to the verses mentioned from the pulpit, people suspect you of being critical and that you are trying to check out THEIR preacher. After all, in these churches they depend on THEIR preacher. However, they do not depend on the Bible anymore.
- Baptist beware! In some Christian circles it has become a sin to study and believe the Bible. If you are a Bible-believer and you obey the doctrines of the book and you have made adjustments in your life in order to live according to God's word, you will be accused of “bibliolatry“ in those “Christian“ circles. In these groups, those who still are teachable and appreciate the truth will be denounced as “bibliolaters“. This has become an easy excuse for not studying the Bible. Can you imagine in what a horrible condition churches are when even pastors and preachers have not read their Bible from cover to cover? How can they preach the word (2. Tim. 4:2) when they have not even read the word in its entirety? How can these “ministers“ even dare to accuse someone of “bibliolatry“ when someone actually uses the Bible when leading someone to the Lord? In the past, Baptists have given their lives in great numbers in order to have the Bible in their own language. Baptists were burned at the stake for reading, owning or distributing the Bible. Today's generation of backslidden, dead and dry-as-dust Baptists are afraid of the Bible because its message would “split their church“. They spend time watching TV and participating in worldly social events, but they are too lazy to read the Bible. Here's another sorry excuse for not studying the Bible: “It's not enough to know about God. You need to know God.“ Now that sounds super-spiritual. What kind of a mystic experience are they talking about? The fact is that if you are saved, you are indwelt by the Spirit of God, and the Spirit of God gives you a desire for the truth. If you know God, then you want to know more about Him. See 1. Peter 2:1-3! Salvation is not a one-time feeling. It is the beginning of a reconciled personal relationship with the Creator of the universe and the Savior of this world. Praise God!
- Baptist beware! Don't be fooled by superficial emotionalism in today's churches. How strong your walk with the Lord is does not depend on how loud or how often you shout in church, how often you clap your hands, raise your hands, get happy, run the aisles, etc. Your walk with the Lord depends on your faithfulness (1. Cor. 4:2, Rev. 2:10) and obedience (Jn. 13:17, Mt. 25:14-30) to the Lord. The Lord wants obedience and not sacrifice. The Lord wants us to abide in Him. Jesus says: “If ye love me, keep my commandments.“ ““ Please do not make the mistake of condemning a brother or sister who appears more stoic. Don't try to talk the stoic out of his or her salvation. That IS WRONG! Just because some of you shout, clap, run the aisles and get

happy does not make you more spiritual than others. In fact, it might make you guilty of Corinthian carnality because they were proudly showing off their “gifts“ while their church was full of problems and sins and there really was not much to be proud of. Do not mix up emotions with true worship. Accept the fact that some Christians are more quiet and stoic.

- Baptist beware! Today's superficial churchianity favors people who love hob-nobbing and meeting and greeting. Silence, devotion, reverence and prayerfulness are no longer found in the house of God. Instead there is loud chatter and worldly talk. Today's superficial churchianity is addicted to social attachment. Anything goes in the name of “Christian fellowship“. Many churches are reeking with gossip, backbiting, evil speaking, tale bearing, tattling, busy bodying, “speaking things which they ought not“ (1. Tim. 5:13), foolish talk, vain words, strife. But TOO LITTLE PRAYER! This evil excess of social attachment should be replaced with plenty of alonetime with God. Many Christians still need to heed God' call to the solitude of the prayer closet. Explain to me the words of Jesus in Matthew 6:6? Have you realized this truth in your life? Have you ever withdrawn yourself into the desert to pray? That's what Jesus did in Luke 5:16. It is sad that modern churchianity exalts attachment over alonetime. The strong Christian needs both. He needs the brotherhood and he needs the “quiet time“. He needs the sanctuary and the prayer closet. The one should never exclude the other. A proper balance is needed. Too many churches are plagued with too much cliquish and clannish attachment and too much talk I hope you do not belong to the crowd that will get on the phone after church to swap gossip stories and run down other Christians and spread lies about them. If you are guilty of such wicked behavior you ought to be ashamed of yourself and please do repent of that and ask for God's forgiveness. If you are in a church that is constantly given to gossip and slander you need to leave that church. Don't try to fix it. Remember Proverbs 26:17. Consider Proverbs 10:17,18. Leave that church immediately. Ask them to exclude you and don't wait to get a letter from them. This church letter business, voting on a letter, etc. is nothing but a mean form of playing politics, religious red tape and cronyism. Read 2. Cor. 3:1-3! Don't worship a piece of paper! I once listened to a conversation with two church members upset about which church another church would give letters to and which ones they would not grant letters to. Who cares? Beware of Baptists who think their life depends upon a piece of paper and a church vote. Don't fall for manmade church traditions. Robert's rules of order are not part of the inspired canon of the Bible. These rules of order might be good for governing clubs, associations and other groups, but let's leave this manmade stuff outside of the house of God. Amen and Amen! God's order for God's church is written in God's book.
- Baptist beware! Do not allow yourself to be influenced by the avalanche of secularism that is sweeping into today's sanctuaries. It is sad but I heard preachers who quote Oprah and Dr. Phil in their sermons, but they do not quote much Bible. They read a scripture at the beginning of their message as a springboard and then they take off and preach things that are not related to the quoted scripture. They hack and stomp and shout and slam their fist on the pulpit and make a noise, but there's little content. There's maybe a basic salvation message. “Yet in church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.“ 1. Cor. 14:19. What about that? Some preachers don't really believe in preparing or doing much study for a message. They claim the Spirit gives them the words to say and that's enough. Another one of those spiritual sounding excuses for not studying the word. But then they quote Oprah and Dr. Phil. What is going on today? So they rather watch TV instead of preparing a sermon. In Christian homes I have seen godless magazines such as Men's Health and even Rosie (a sodomite woman on hellelevision who is very

opposed to Biblical values and liberal). And I have watched these people trying to lecture others on where they ought to go to church and they usually tried to discourage others from Bible-believing churches and get them into respectable social club churches on Madison Avenue. I have given my testimony of salvation in some churches and mentioned that I grew up in Germany. After the service I was approached by the youth of the church and they asked me if I knew certain German death metal rock bands. Why, these kids were not taught in their church nor have they studied in their Bible that God is against this noisy muck. The lyrics are so foul-mouthed and wicked. The rhythm inspires wild, wanton behavior and rebellion. The men in those rock bands are involved in Satanism and have long hair. Young people, if you want to serve the Lord you need to get rid of this worldly music and get excited in the old church hymnal. Let the Lord give you a desire for psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing to the Lord with grace in your heart!

- Baptist beware! As America keeps on drifting away from God, churches are increasingly being influenced by this drift. We now have Baptist church-goers who will also buy lottery tickets, get into gambling, have some liquor every now and then and use foul language. And they sure hate any preacher who preaches against their sin. They will invent tales and exaggerations in order to slander any preacher who preaches against their sin. But on these Sunday mornings they get into this pious mood and they play church. Beware of such hypocrisy. Such people often display an extreme pride in a certain church, which is not scriptural. Pride is ungodly. Christians are to be humble. God resisteth the proud. If you are too proud of your church, then God will resist you and your church.
- Baptist beware! Please avoid churches that are run by women. Many liberal denominations already have women preachers, deacons, bishops, church officers. Most Baptist churches at least pay lip service to the concept of male headship. In Baptist families male headship is under attack and being replaced by unbiblical, secular feminist concepts. Glory to God for the church that still preaches and practices God's order in 1. Cor. 11:1-16. Nowadays we already have long-haired and earring-wearing men as Baptist church members. As men cease from being men and turn into effeminate sissies it can be clearly seen that even in Baptist churches women are allowed to violate the scriptures by usurping authority over the man. 1. Tim. 3:12. The women is to be under the man (Gen. 3:16) and it is striking that the word silence is mentioned twice in 1. Tim. 2:11,12. This ties in with the "meek and quiet spirit" in 1. Peter 3:4. Today's superficial churchianity preaches and practices the opposite. Women become loud, forward, bossy, dominant. That is not the testimony God wants them to have. Even Isaiah prophesies against governance by children and women in Isa. 3:4,12. Isaiah prophesies against an evil womanhood in Isa. 3:16-26. Does that description agree with modern churches where standards of modesty and Biblical role models have been abandoned by the majority? In dead churches we see that the women run their husbands. While the women do not officially run the church, they run the church through their husbands, who have turned into inactive vegetables. These married women act like the backslidden widows in 1. Tim. 5:6,11-15. These women ignore the admonition in 1. Timothy 3:11 which is directed at them. Time and time again I see that God blesses the church that is ruled by men and esp. faithful men (2. Tim. 2:2) who love God, rule their own house well and put God first in their life. In the dead, dry and uptight churches we see men who are affluent, respected and highly reputed, but have resigned from being a spiritual leader and therefore their wives usurp their authority and usually these churches are geared toward being socially acceptable, liberal, formalistic and ritualistic and do not have much zeal for the truth. Bible truth is being avoided because it is viewed as divisive and disrupting to their

false harmony.

- Baptist beware! Many Baptists believe in the doctrine of Baptist succession, which is the idea that down through the ages there have always been true born again believers in independent churches who have held to Baptist beliefs without being attached to Romanism and its Protestant offshoots. This doctrine is based on the promise in Mt. 16:18 and the great commission in Mt. 28:18-20. However, some Baptists preach an exaggerated (per)version of this idea and make it a physical-chain link of churches. They deny the existence of the universal body of Christ, which is the unity of all born again believers by the Holy Spirit. They claim that Christ founded a local church only during His earthly ministry and that a “true church“ of today must derive its origin down through the ages back to the hills of Jerusalem or else they are an alien church. Some preachers go as far as saying that those Baptist churches who do not believe in tracing their lineage are not churches and have no authority to baptize or preach. The problem is that many churches who believe in this exaggerated idea of church succession (sometimes called Landmarkism or Baptist Bride) cannot really produce their “church pedigree“ back to John the Baptist, whom they call the first Baptist preacher and falsely elevate John over Jesus. These groups often depend on vague und unverifiable accounts of church history. They refer to a book called “The Trail of Blood“ written by J. M. Carroll. But that book does not teach physical chain link churchianity with a lineage traced back to John the Baptist. That book teaches a mere succession of doctrine and not of local churches. This book gives a number of identifying marks of true churches who have abided by Bible doctrine down through the ages. This book does not claim that these groups were all tied together by a church letter, council of recognition, being „baptized into a church“, etc. Those Baptists who believe in this exaggerated idea of church succession/lineage are even split among themselves and are suspicious of any dents in the lineage of other churches of their own denomination. It is a confusing mess that has led to a lot of unnecessary strife, debate, splits and hatred. It is horrible to see how these groups wrest the scriptures in order to prove their point. They claim that Isa. 2:2 and Micah 4:1 talk about the “church kingdom“. Their idea is that if you are saved you are in the family of God, but if you do not belong to their type of church then you are not part of the kingdom of God or the bride and body of Christ. That gets them in trouble with 1. Cor. 12:13, which they often wrest. And they don't like Eph. 5:25-27 because if you are blinded by this doctrine you will think Christ died only for this kind of church. The Bible teaches in reality that you are part of the church, the body of Christ, once you are saved and not when you are baptized into a church that claims to be baptized by some one who was baptized by John the Baptist. But these groups go to Isa. 62:2 and John 1:6 to say that Baptist is the new name by which God calls His people. Can you imagine how much denominational pride and arrogance this false doctrine has caused. Then they go on and take Mark 3:13 where Jesus called the twelve apostles into a mountain and tie that together with Isa. 2:2 where a mountain is mentioned and use this random connection of two scriptures that really don't belong together as proof that Jesus founded a church during His earthly ministry. These groups will not see that Isa. 2:2 talks about a future kingdom for Israel which will be established in the millennium. These groups of Baptists who hold to physical chain link succession instead of a succession of doctrine usually are amillennial which means to them the whole book of Revelation as well as most of the Old Testament prophets are all “spiritual“. These groups of Baptists hardly ever preach anything from Revelation and they are not interested in prophecy and the Lord's coming. If you become entangled in this doctrine you will neglect the Bible because it has been spiritualized away into non-existence. Baptist beware! If you get entangled in this twisted

doctrine, you will soon no longer care about the Lord's imminent return. The Lord wants us to watch, take heed and pray. The Lord wants us to be comforted and encouraged by the imminence of His coming, but these groups of amillennial Baptists often seem like they could care less about the details of the Lord's coming. Another spiritual sounding cop-out for not studying the Bible. They can quickly point at Daniel 2:44 and preach about their church kingdom while they ignore the context of God's promised restoration of Israel and the future messianic kingdom with Christ ruling as king in Jerusalem during the millennium.

- Baptist beware! Many Christians today think they can reclaim America for Christ by supporting conservative legislation, voting Republican, giving money to conservative public policy organizations or legal ministries. While such public involvement is commendable, Christians need to acknowledge that Biblical morality cannot be enforced purely by legislation, politics or media influence. Unfortunately, many Christians are fighting the wrong battle. Instead of working to see souls saved and properly taught the Bible they are involved in protests to keep the motto "In God we trust" on the dollar bill. They are busy fighting for the legal right to put up nativity scenes on public property. Instead of fighting the spiritual war for the souls of mankind they are merely engaged in a cultural conflict. The Great Commission (Mt. 28:18-20) goes beyond influencing culture. It influences eternity. Don't ever think you can restore Biblical morality by giving \$20 a month to a conservative pro-family, pro-life organization. Moral values are not defended by conservative newspaper columns, Christian talk radio or other media outlets. Moral values are exemplified through YOUR conversation. The word conversation in the Bible means "general course of manners; behavior; deportment; especially as it respects morals". "Let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ." Phil. 1:27. "Be ye holy in all manner of conversation." 1. Pe. 1:15. Biblical morality is not defended by legislation, activism or the clout of conservative lobby groups. It is defended by your holy manner of life, your good testimony for the Lord Jesus Christ and by winning souls to Christ who will be disciplined and taught to believe the doctrines of the Bible by strong local churches.
- Baptist beware! Too many churches walk the worldly pathway of social acceptability. In certain areas it is quite common for affluent, respectable people to be a member of all kinds of charitable, social, and community organizations. When I read the obituaries in the paper I am often amazed how many organizations and clubs people have joined. Rotary, Lions, Al Menah Shriners, Order of the Eastern Star, Toastmasters, Masonic Lodges and the list goes on and on. How in the world do they have time to be committed to all these clubs? Moreover, Masonic groups reach into the occult and practice secretism. They misuse the Bible to create their own system of false doctrine and abuse their Bible for very questionable rituals. Bible-believing churches ought to require those who desire church membership to sever all ties to such Masonic groups. For many of these people involved in this myriad of clubs, church is just another club "good people" are supposed to join. Why in the world should a Bible-believing Christian even join all these groups? What is the real motive behind that? I tell you a lot of people join these groups in order to find customers for their business and to seek the praise of men and to seek self-glory and present themselves as good philanthropists. However, for a Christian who puts good first the multitude of such club memberships is a burden on time, money and family. How can you afford to pay dues to all these clubs and still tithe and give to missions? I hope you do tithe and give to missions, if you are saved. I understand that if you want to play this game of handling all these many do-gooder memberships that you want a church that just meets once a week or even less and where they don't care if you don't give and basically stay out of your life, so you can do your thing. I think the best way is to quit all these memberships and give it all to

Jesus and yield to Him and let Him have your time, energy and resources. Quit all these unnecessary clubs so you can faithfully attend a Bible-believing church and put your resources into the ministries of your local church so the Lord gets all the glory.

- Baptist beware! Those churches who want to be socially acceptable and appealing to the wealthy, healthy and worldly wise rarely get involved in gospel tract work, street preaching or visitation work. They once again have a spiritual sounding cop-out and say that this is the work of cults. They say they don't use tracts because there are no good ones available. They don't approve of public preaching because that hurts their reputation and image. Beware of Baptists who care more about their name and their reputation instead of being busy for the Lord. If a church gets too preoccupied with their reputation, chances are that it is a dead church because Jesus Christ made himself of no reputation and humbled himself and died for us while we were yet sinners. Christ preached the truth without caring for his reputation. Beware of social clubs who care about their name, their splendor, their reputation, their standing in the community. This is not the worship of God. This is the worship of self.
- Baptist beware! More and more Baptist churches refuse to preach on what the Bible says about giving. The reason they do not preach on this subject is that they are afraid of being compared with charismatic charlatans on TV who constantly beg for money. It is sad that when a Baptist preacher preaches the Bible on tithing and supporting missions, false accusers will accuse him of being greedy and “after the money“. In reality it is the backslidden church member who is greedy because he basically wants to give nothing or just a few leftovers. Too many Christians are welfare Christians. Just as some folks don't want to work and expect the government to pay for everything, so some Christians don't want to give and expect the Lord or someone else in church to take care of it all. Some Christians are God-robbers according to Mal. 3:8-10. They sure don't want to hear a preacher preach about the fact that the tithe existed before the law under grace. See Abraham and Jacob! To many churches handle giving the wrong way. They love to spend money for self-glory and splendor such as expensive pews, stained-glass windows, chandeliers and stuff. They love pretentious giving. I have seen churches where each pew and each stained glass window had a golden plaque saying “Given by ...” “In memory of ...” “Sponsored by ...” Jesus says: “Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them ..let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth.” Matthew 6:1,3. The Lord does not like this pretentious giving in front of men. The Lord wants faithful und cheerful givers. Be aware of churches where they proudly rejoice in the fact that they kept and spent all their money in their church. The Bible ways is exactly the opposite. 2. Cor. 8 and 9 and Philippians 4 teach about churches who gave their resources to others in order to advance they gospel and to help those in need. But today when a missionary comes along, they tell him “The Lord will provide for you“ and give him nothing. They are always leery of mooch-inaries. On their statement of faith they might pay lip service to the idea of world missions, but in reality they do not support one missionary on a regular basis. Many churches tend to be like spoiled brats. They want all their money spent on themselves and their toys, but they don't want to make a faith promise missions conference where the get before the Lord and ask Him how much they are going to give to OTHERS. Many of these dead, dry-as-dust churches will not even pay for a full-time pastor and they have the weirdest, super-spiritual sounding cop-outs for not having a full-time pastor. But all these reasons are really excuses for not giving to the work of the Lord. They want to use their money for their own pleasures and savings. It's that simple. 1. Cor. 9:14, Gal. 6:6, 1. Tim. 6:18, 2. Cor. 9:7 clearly teach the church's responsibility to provide for the ministry. However, modern churches need to beware that they don't mix up giving with buying.

There are some churches who think that by offering a good salary they can pay the minister to shut up about certain inconvenient Bible truths. That ought not to be so. Usually this happens in churches that are run like a business. The pastor is basically a hireling who has to report to a ruling board of deacons, elders or families and he has to please this group or he will get fired. This is unbiblical. It contradicts Hebrews 13:17. The Biblical approach is that the pastor is the ruler and reports to the Lord first of all. Submission to spiritual leaders in the church is of utmost importance. Just as many wives have been seduced by feminism to no longer submit to their husbands, so many church members have been deceived by manmade rules of church government to no longer submit to the elders of their church. Insubordination to parents, church leaders, mature Christians and government is a widespread problem. Churches today need to be taught the truth and the value of submission. A Bible-believing church cannot expect the Lord's blessings and revival when everybody wants to be his own boss. If the Lord Jesus Christ is not the boss in your church, you need to leave that outfit immediately.

- Baptist beware! When you need to make a decision about which church you are going to attend, please let the Lord lead you. Do not go to a church because your family has always gone there. Do not go to a church because it's close to your house. Don't let your decision be influenced by social standing, prestige, reputation, family ties, in-laws, gossip, women, coworkers, pride of education, the news media, etc. Let God speak to your heart. What has God laid upon your heart? If you are a Christian man, then you need to be the spiritual leader in your home. Otherwise you will end up in the wrong church for the wrong reason and church will do your family no good and your attendance will do the church no good. However, don't waste your time looking for the perfect church. You will not find it this side of Heaven. There will be a perfect church after the rapture when the Lord has come to receive His bride and present her to Himself spotless and without wrinkle washed in the word. As long as you have a body of flesh on you, there will be no perfect church and no perfect family. Many Christians have worn themselves out in trying to be the perfect family in the perfect church. Sooner or later they were worn out, burned out and fell apart and fell back into the world. In this present evil world nobody is perfect. In the next world wherein dwells righteousness everybody is perfect. Glory to God.

Churches in these sinful, perilous last days are under heavy attack by Satan. Entire denominations have forsaken the Bible and adopted a one-world-spirituality that endorses many sinful practices. Many times even people in otherwise good churches can severely disappoint you or do you wrong. Maybe you expected that being in church would be a place of joy and good brotherhood, but you have found it to be a place of bitterness and strife. If you have come to this point, I would like to encourage you to turn your eyes upon Jesus. Look up to Him! And the things of life will look strangely dim in the light of Christ's glory and grace. Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. Hebrews 12:1,2. Are you still running the race for the Lord Jesus Christ? I am not running the race for Baptist or for a certain church. I am not running to have a good reputation in my community. I want for you to run for Jesus Christ. But we need to run with patience. I once ran a marathon and it sure taught me patience. 26 miles of running really wore me out. My feet started hurting. I hated to run over this rocky ground. A part of me wanted to quit. But then when I reached the last mile the announcer would name the names and numbers of those who neared the finish line. What a joy to see that finish line after all that painful running. Then my name was mentioned by the announcer and I really had joy. At the beginning of the marathon the spectators looked at us quietly

and sometimes with doubt whether we would really endure the whole marathon. Some spectators were mocking. But on those few yards to the finish line the spectators were cheering. And then I made it through the finish line. Wonderful! I thought it was worth it all! There was a meadow with some shady trees and I just fell down and rested and I was full of joy. I got a medal and some certificate. I think the Christian life is very similar to that experience. But we need to run with patience and then one day we will be with Christ and we will get a heavenly reward for our earthly faithfulness and endurance. The main thing is we need to get sin and weight (harmless things that make us tend to sin) and look to Jesus. Even if churches are dying and becoming stale, dead, dry and uptight, according to the Bible there is still hope for them, IF they BUY IN. Find you a church that BUYS IN. Have you followed Christ's counsel and bought gold, white raiment and eye salve. Only if you BUY IN, you will be rich and clothed and able to see. Take the rebuke. Take the chastening. Be zealous and repent. Don't be one of those churches where they only want lost sinners to come to the altar to call upon the Lord. We live in a time where entire churches need to be in the altar with their faces on the floor and getting humble once again and get rid of that pride and that bitterness. Don't be a church as in Rev. 3:20 where Christ is outside at the door. Can you imagine this church excluded Christ? But he knocked at the door and made his voice to be heard. Open the door, so He can come in. I WILL COME IN, Jesus promises. Baptist beware! BUY IN and OPEN THE DOOR!