



## SAFE HARBOR

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### Words for Living

The age we live in is full of despair, hatred and anger. It is world that praises power and wealth but seeks to discredit the Eternal Source of life. Every day we are accosted by those who would remove all decency and respect and replace these with a false hope which leads to grief. In many ways the Light of God seems to have a bushel basket put over it in an effort to snuff that Light out.

The truth is that the Light even under the basket continues to glow. You see that bushel basket is not air tight and is full of holes. The dishonesty that the world attempts to rule by, passions, lust for power and a life without boundaries cannot satisfy the soul which longs for the presence of God in one's life.

In this world, that has given itself to extremes to persecute and make meaningless the worship of God in his fullness, we must stand firm. For the strength of faith comes not in creeds, ritual, empty words but in the person of Jesus Christ who before the world was, he was and will be now and until the end of time.

### INSIGHTS

After the end of World War II there was a gathering of pastors and theologians which served as the basis of the book, To Resist or Surrender, authored by Paul Tournier. The author was looking for an answer as to why some choose to resist evil or surrender to it. With a backdrop of Nazi Germany the participants had either resisted the evil of the Nazis or surrendered either to silence or simply accept or ignore what was happening around them.

In our world today Christians are faced with the same dilemma whether to actively resist evil or to ignore and accept it as part of a society that we live in. The answer is not simple nor easy.

If you recall when Satan tempted Jesus, he brought acceptance to terms that would run counter to God's command and was rebuked. Paul, in Romans 1:32-2:1-5. The churches

found in the Apocalypse are upbraided because in way they had given in to accepting the way of their society.

We are told that to stand firm in our faith is bigoted and full of hatred. Christians are known for excusing their failings by saying "I am not Perfect"; "I must show love and acceptance for all" and so on. The fallacy is that a very real part of God's love is saying, as did Nathan the prophet, "You are the one" and that God will punish you for your sin.

So the question of the ages that you must daily answer is **Will I resist this world of evil each day** or **Will I accept evil and succumb to the tempter and accuser of all mankind?**

With the presence of God through the Indwelling Holy Spirit, you have the power to resist and move forward in your faith.

## **POINTS TO PONDER**

### **Have you ever wondered just what is the church?**

The answer to this question may be a point of confusion as well as misunderstanding among many claim the title of Christian. The Bible is extremely clear as to what the church is and its mission in the world that it is a resident of.

First, the church is not a building. In the early beginnings of Christianity, the term *ecclesia* and its counterpart *synagogue* denoted **a gathering of people to worship God, share in their faith, pray together as well as learn.** Perhaps these people would listen to a traveling disciple bringing words of encouragement as well as faith. It was not until later that a more formal structure which included what we would call pastors came into being. Also consider that there was not a Christian Bible. Much of the Scripture taught was of the Hebrew prophecies concerning God's grace and mercy and the realization of the fulfillment found in Jesus.

Rather the church was a vibrant living body of persons who spread the good news of God's forgiveness through Jesus as well as the *Better or Fulfilled Covenant* of which they had become a part of. Those works we call epistles are not theological treatises but letter to correct errors, bolster faith as well as exhort those churches to move forward with God residing within as true witnesses.

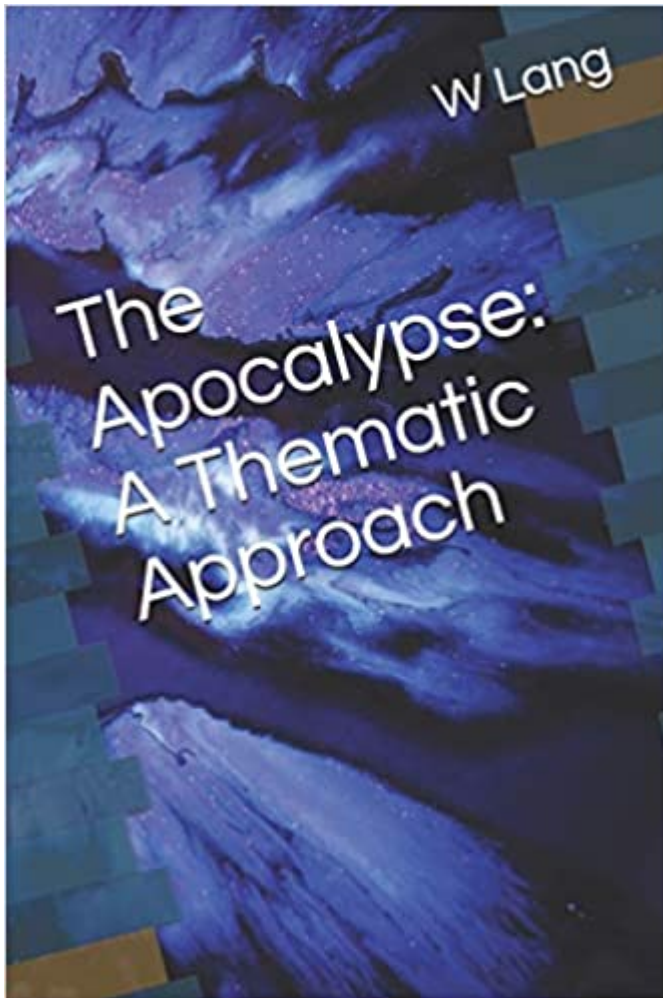
These gatherings might have been held in private homes, perhaps synagogues, open spaces such as parks, in the market places, etc. Later when persecutions developed the meetings moved into more hidden places. Archeology tells us that it wasn't until Constantine that the church began assembling in buildings set aside for that worship.

(to be continued next newsletter)

The task is before us. The hope is ours. In faith and love let us move towards the prize that awaits.

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My book of poetry, **Midnight Musings: Thoughts from a Restless Mind**, is also available on Amazon and also Amazon Kindle. Your patronage and thoughts would be appreciated.