

Latter Days – Part Three

(Sermon Notes) By Warren Zehrung 1/5/2019

Matthew 24:12 Because iniquity shall abound, the **love of many** shall wax cold.

The apostle Paul picked up on this loveless trend when he warned Timothy of these dangerous last days:

2Timothy 3:1 This know also, that in the **last days** perilous times shall come.

Why? There is a lot of love – but the wrong kind of love.

2Timothy 3:2 For men shall be **lovers** of themselves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

2Timothy 3:3 Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, **despisers of those that are good,**

Those faithful brethren who are endeavoring to live their lives in accordance with Godly principles are put out by those who would rule over them. That is what ‘despisers of those that are good, means.’ The Scriptures war us over and over that there will be persecutions upon those who are doing it right. If you are not suffering persecution – perhaps you are not living your faith – and taking a stand for God’s way, and laying our lives down. Do not think it a strange thing when these terrible trials come upon us.

2Timothy 3:4 Traitors, heady, high-minded, **lovers** of pleasures more than lovers of God;

This is going on among God’s people at Church!

2Timothy 3:5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: **from such turn away.**

1Corinthians 5:11 But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an **one no not to eat.** [do not socialize with those “brethren” who are disobedient to God’s truth.]

That self-serving kind of love is destructive and ungodly. God says that it is **not divisive** to walk away from those who exhibit that kind of detrimental and harmful conduct among His people. In fact, it would be **wrong** to hang around and thereby **condone** that kind of faithless behavior.

We will be talking a lot about discernment today – and how to **have right discernment.** It takes Godly character and spiritual **discernment** to know what to do when encountering such vile behavior among God’s people. That kind of loveless environment is not something we want to rub shoulders with.

It is a Godly **unifying love toward others** that must be growing in us. If we are to understand the will of God, it is imperative that we distinguish – that we discern – between the things of this present evil world and the things of God. That takes spiritual **discernment.**

Paul described how the spiritual domain of God the Father and Jesus Christ superseded the physical things of the world. Paul had to enlighten the brethren to the fact that the spiritual presence of God is **more real** than the visible world human beings live in.

Paul wrote it this way:

1Corinthians 2:10 God hath revealed the wisdom of God (:7) unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God.

Paul introduced this concept of **spiritual discernment**. Christians are to grow from their initial unconverted carnal state – to the point of having **greater spiritual discernment** as their conversion increases.

My wife and I watched an old movie recently "**A Tale of Two Cities**." Written by Charles Dickens. It is the story of the storming of the Bastille set in the late 18th century against the background of the French Revolution. I want to talk about:

A Tale of Two Churches

One church is **large** with headquarters and large congregations. The groups that make up the **large** church are basically large chunks of Worldwide which finally broke off - who will not have much to do with one another.

The **other Church** is unseen, small, below the radar, scattered, "independent" – in that they are nonaligned and want no part of the corporate organizations. They are still licking their wounds, **anonymous** and sometimes fearful.

Where did the small scattered Church originate? One by one – not *'en masse'* – but, little by little they could not attend with the corporate organizations anymore – for a large variety of reasons. Not the least – was persecution. They went underground for safety and peace.

You have all heard of **PTSD** is short for **post-traumatic stress disorder**. It affects many of our troops returning from wars overseas. I want to compare that syndrome to what has happened in God's Church. I strongly suspect that the first century Church of God experienced much the same thing. The persecution at Jerusalem became too intense:

Acts 8:1 ...At that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all **scattered** abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria...

Acts 8:3 As for Saul, he made havoc of the Church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison.

They were all scattered abroad suffering from **post-church-traumatic stress disorder**. It is very real.

Most of the brethren we serve around the world are suffering from P C T S D to one degree or another. For many of the brethren it is unbearable and quite debilitating.

P C T S D is a condition of the psyche, mind, heart and spirit - that's triggered by a traumatic event having to do with church. It is a disorder in which a person has difficulty **recovering** after experiencing or witnessing brutal, dangerous, shocking and startling events. I'll give you an example:

There was a young person, enthusiastically **dedicated**, hard-working, baptized, totally involved with serving God and His people – who was brutally confronted and accused of ulterior motives by a mistaken “senior church official.”

That young person was crest fallen – heart broken – destroyed – saying, “If this is what God’s church is like – I want no part of it,” and that young adult **never** went back to church again. That misjudged person was disappointed, downhearted, despondent, disheartened, discouraged, and dejected to the point of no return.

I believe that that travesty will be on someone’s head when we all stand before the judgment seat of Christ and give account of ourselves to God (Romans 14:10-12).

Many, many brethren have a terrible story to relate – similar to that. Many others are **fearful**. They desire no visits will not give out their addresses – for fear of retaliation. Families are literally destroyed – their children never marrying because they have been ostracized and banished by some misguided church authority.

Few people realize the large numbers of – **Church at home** only – or only with a very few brethren. They have the shades drawn – lights off. They want nothing to do with “the church.” They are unable to see that there are some brethren enduring as best they can. We have sadly come to a time when many of the Church brethren suffer from:

P C T S D post-church-traumatic stress disorder is the syndrome where Church brethren they say, “Never again will I be subject to the abuses heaped upon me to the point that I cannot take anymore.” Changes in the mind and body help defend against the trauma reoccurring.

Unfortunately, brethren in the **large** corporate groups are in denial. They believe that the **excluded** brethren had it coming, caused it, or brought it on themselves. They say, “Get over it, get a grip, suck it up,” not understanding how the persecution leaves a person helpless.

These brethren – a real part of the Body of Christ, - who made great sacrifices of time, family, jobs, when coming into God’s Church are left destitute of the emotional strength to confront any more difficulties.

God’s **discernment** is evident: He has empathy and understanding.

Ezekiel 34:4 The **diseased** have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye **brought again** that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with **force and with cruelty have ye ruled them**.

Ezekiel 34:5 And they **were scattered**, because there is no shepherd:

The stress and fear remain long after the danger has passed. Hiding and avoidance of a real or perceived danger seems to be their only recourse. They stay away from people, threats, places, events, or objects that are reminders of the traumatic experience. Sadly, they call their Church experience, a “big mistake.” In severe cases the shunned brethren avoid thoughts or feelings related to the traumatic event – they draw into their protective cocoons.

P C T S D - post-church-traumatic stress disorder can make the person feel angry, alienated and detached from Church brethren, friends or even family members. Though they are sometimes difficult to locate, spending time with other trusted and faithful brethren is beneficial. It is good to **confide** in a trusted friend or relative – but the dread that a trusted one will turn on them is overwhelming. If you are able, tell others about things that may trigger symptoms.

James 5:16 Confess [Confide] your faults [concerns] one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

Expect your symptoms to improve gradually, not immediately. Identify and seek out comforting situations, places, and brethren. Start with the very elderly brethren – they are lovable and harmless. Ask for God’s healing.

There is a reason – we find it in the Scriptures – why so many brethren have been ostracized. I want to lay a foundation that I can build on. This is a very serious matter - more momentous than life and death – because it concerns our **salvation**.

I want to start taking a good look at a particular Greek word.

The word is **'diakrino.'**

It is a most Difficult word to translate – and harder to understand. The King James translators had a great deal of trouble with it – translating it umpteen different ways. Mr. Armstrong got it all wrong on occasion... I think that you would have to be a **fluent Greek scholar** to understand it totally.

But it is very important that we understand it – if we are even going to have a **little understanding** of what is going on in the Church of God today.

The word is **'diakrino.'**

It’s basic meaning is to **Discern: Strong's Greek G1252 'diakrino'**

It is Strong’s Number **G1252**, **'diakrino'**

Here is what Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance says **'diakrino'** means.

From **G1223** and **G2919**; to **separate thoroughly**, that is, (literally and reflexively) to **withdraw from**, or (by implication) oppose; figuratively to **discriminate** (by implication **decide**), or (reflexively) **hesitate**: - **contend**, make (to) **differ** (-ence), **discern**, **doubt**, **judge**, be partial, stagger, **waver**.

I do not believe that definition gives anyone a good idea of the sense of the word **'diakrino.'** It is better to let the Scriptures interpret the Scriptures.

'Diakrino' is made up of **two** Greek words.

G1223 = **'dia'** means "**through**" as passing through a circle (English **diameter** – right **through** the **circle**) Now there are two halves to consider = you take ownership of the situation. "**dia**" = on account of / or because of

And:

G2919 = **'Krino'** means judge, determine, conclude

In English, "discern" means - perceive or recognize or distinguish something.

Greek - **'diakrino'**

Let's turn to the **last verse** in **Matthew 15** weather

Matthew 15:39 [Jesus] sent away the multitude, and took ship, and came into the coasts of Magdala.

Jesus sometimes visited the coastal town Magdala, the home of Mary Magdalene. There was a synagogue there. Magdala is a fishing town at the foot of Mount Arbel, the most prominent landmark on the western coast of the Sea of Galilee – only a brisk two hour walk from Capernaum where Jesus resided during His public ministry.

Matthew 16:2 [Jesus] answered and said unto the Pharisees and the Sadducees, When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red...:3 And in the morning, It will be foul weather today: for the sky is red and lowring.

Two thousand years ago everyone knew that little ditty that could predict the weather. "Red sky at night, **sailors' delight**, Red sky in the morning, **sailor's warning**." It is based on the reddish glow of the morning or evening sky, caused by clouds related to storms in the region.

Matthew 16:3 ... O ye hypocrites, ye can **discern** [Greek - '**diakrino**'] the face of the sky; but you cannot **discern** the signs of the times.

This is our first Biblical example of '**diakrino**.'

We need to understand what **DISCERN** means – what '**diakrino**' means. Jesus was saying, "You **can tell**, you can discern if it is going to be stormy or clear. You read the conditions – the clouds – the color of sunrise and sunset. But (more importantly) **you cannot tell** how near the end time is."

'diakrino'

Matthew 21 is about a fig tree (this example of '**diakrino**' is a little telling. Jesus had cursed the fig tree and it withered away! The disciples were amazed and said, "how'd you do that?"

Matthew 21:21 Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and **doubt** ['**diakrino**'] not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done.

Here, discern means without question - no question about it - without a shred of a doubt.

'**Diakrino**' is a difficult word – but it is extremely important – your life may depend on it – don't **doubt** me on that – that is a serious play on words!

Mark 11 is about a mountain.

'**Diakrino**' means look at a situation **every which way**, – hear all the sides of the story.

Mark 11:22 And Jesus answering said unto them, Have faith in God.

Mark 11:23 For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not **doubt** in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.

Mark 11:24 Therefore I say unto you, What things so ever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

Discern, without doubt means to believe down deep in your heart. It has to be a part of you – not just something superficial.

Acts 10:13 And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat.

Acts 10:14 But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean.

Acts 10:15 And the voice spoke unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.

Acts 10:16 This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven.

Acts 10:17 Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius had made enquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate,

Acts 10:18 And called, and asked whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, were lodged there.

Acts 10:19 While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee.

Acts 10:20 Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, **doubting** [*'diakrino*] nothing: for I have sent them.

Acts 10:21 Then Peter went down to the men which were sent unto him from Cornelius; and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what is the cause wherefore ye are come?

Acts 10:22 And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee.

Acts 10:23 Then called he them in, and lodged them. And on the morrow Peter went away with them, and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him.

Acts 10:24 And the morrow after they entered into Caesarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends.

Acts 10:25 And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him.

Acts 10:26 But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man.

Acts 10:27 And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together.

Acts 10:28 And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.

Acts 10:29 Therefore came I unto you without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for: I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me?

Acts 10:30 And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing,

Acts 10:31 And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God.

Acts 10:32 Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter; he is lodged in the house of one Simon a tanner by the sea side: who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee.

Acts 10:33 Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.

Acts 10:34 Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:

Acts 10:35 But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.

Act 10:36 The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:)

Acts 10:37 That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached;

Acts 10:38 How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.

Acts 10:39 And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree:

Acts 10:40 Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly;

Acts 10:41 Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead.

Acts 10:42 And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead.

Acts 10:43 To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

The Holy Spirit is given to the Gentiles

Acts 10:44 While Peter yet spoke these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all them which heard the word.

Acts 10:45 And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 10:46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter,

Acts 10:47 Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Spirit as well as we?

Acts 10:48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

'*diakrino*' means to **contend**. It means to assert something as a position in an argument.

The Jews at Jerusalem – said, “No Way will Gentiles be welcomed among our numbers.”

Acts 11:1 And the apostles and brethren that were in Judaea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God.

Acts 11:2 And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision **contended** [*'diakrino*'] with him, [**contended = G1252**

Acts 11:3 Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them.

Acts 11:4 But Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning, and expounded it by order unto them, saying,

Acts 11:5 I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a trance I saw a vision, A certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me:

Acts 11:6 Upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.

Acts 11:7 And I heard a voice saying unto me, Arise, Peter; slay and eat.

Acts 11:8 But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth.

Acts 11:9 But the voice answered me again from heaven, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.

Acts 11:10 And this was done three times: and all were drawn up again into heaven.

Acts 11:11 And, behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house where I was, sent from Caesarea unto me.

Acts 11:12 And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing **doubting** [*'diakrino*']. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house:

'*diakrino*' = **difference**, means God put no difference...

Acts 15:9 And G2532 put no **difference G1252** G3762 between G3342 (G5037) us G2257 and G2532 them, G846 purifying G2511 their G846 hearts G2588 by faith. G4102

Acts 15:10 “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved,” said the Jews

The will of God was shown in that He gave His Holy Spirit - yet the Jews demanded MORE proof. God has bestowed faith in Christ upon the gentiles, they accepted the blood of Christ for their sins - and it was counted to them for righteousness. Not by works of the flesh, but by the graciousness of Christ they were saved (Acts 15:11).

'*Diakrino*' also means **staggered**, means never **wavered** in believing God's promise means never **doubted** or questioned God's promise, means hesitated not at the promise of God through unbelief.

End: Latter Days – Part Three