We make God in our own image, and He winds up being as fussy, as rude, narrow minded and judgmental and legalistic and unloving and unforgiving as we are. I've been in churches in Bangor, Maine; Miami; Seattle; San Diego; and St. Louis, and, honestly the God of so many Christians I meet is too small because He is not the God of the Word, He is not the God revealed in and by Jesus Christ, who this moment comes to your seat and says, "I have a word for you. I know your whole life story. I know every skeleton in your closet. I know every moment of sin and shame, dishonesty and degraded love that has darkened your past. I know your shallow faith, your feeble prayer life, your inconsistent discipleship, and My Word to you is this: I dare you to trust that I love you, just as you are, not as you should be, because none of us are as we should be.

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PRAYER STUDY #478

WHAT IN THE WORLD IS GOING ON?

But concerning the times and seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. You are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober.

1 Thessalonians 5:23

1. This passage is about the times and seasons of the coming of the Lord.
2. The Day of the Lord comes as a thief in the night. The Day of the Lord is a period of time (not just one day) in history at the end of the age in the last days when the Lord openly intervenes in the affairs of men. It is an apocalyptic term and also a prophetic term and is thought to be the Lord's outpouring of His wrath (see Psalm 2) and will be characterized by catastrophic weather and earthly calamities such as plagues, famines, pestilence, and drought. (see Isaiah 2:12, Isaiah 13:6-9, Amos 5:18-20, Jeremiah 46:10, 1st Corinthians 5:5, 1st Thessalonians 5:2, 2nd Peter 3:8-10). According to Jay Atkinson of The Latter Rain Ministries, "It is that time between the age of evil, in which we presently live and which will be destroyed, and the golden

age of peace and justice, the future Millennial Kingdom to come on the earth. It is the fall of the old order and the ushering in of the new." Joel tells us that this will come as a destruction from the Almighty, a day of wrath and fierce anger, trouble and distress, a day of gloom and thick darkness for the proud, the rich, and the lofty. Joel also asked the question in Joel 2:11, "Who can endure it?" And indeed without the fullness of the Holy Spirit we will not be able to endure it and will not stand. The Day of the Lord will culminate in the final shaking and sifting of the Church, the fall of the Babylonian World System, the fullness of the Latter Rain, and the coming forth of the Bride who has made herself ready. The Bride will come out of the closet and meet the Bridegroom. The Day of the Lord comes as a thief in the night. The scriptures emphasize that many in the Church will be asleep and unprepared. The Word says that they that sleep, sleep in the night. This is when the thief comes. We must wake-up from our spiritual slumber and be ready. Many think that we have already entered the beginnings of this day.

3. You will hear a lot about "peace and safety," such as the current proposed treaty of the United States with Iran. It is being promoted as a peace treaty. In this passage, that peace is false and sudden destruction will come. I believe that we will regret the day this treaty was signed, if it passes.
4. We are not in darkness and need to wake-up spiritually.

What Are the Characteristics of the Day We Live In?

1. **GOOD IS CALLED EVIL AND EVIL GOOD:** *Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.* Isaiah 5:20 This is the main characteristic of our day RIGHT NOW. Christians have been bullied, and there has been an intentional move to psychologically sway believers to accept the abortion of one million babies a year because it is a "Woman's Right" to her own body, to accept homosexual marriage (God made them that way!), and to approve all kinds of sexual deviance and the flaunting of sensual acts and nudity on prime time. This goes back all the way to the Garden of Eden. When Adam and Eve ate the fruit from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, they opened up mankind, instead of God, to decide what was good and what was evil. Genesis 3:6-7 reads: *So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one*

wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. John the Apostle wrote about this 2000 years later: *Do not love the world or the things of the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world-the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life-is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever* (1st John 2:15-17).

TREE WAS GOOD FOR FOOD=LUST OF THE FLESH (IMMORALITY)
TREE WAS PLEASANT TO THE EYES=LUST OF THE EYES (GREED)
TREE MADE ONE WISE=PRIDE OF LIFE (BITTERNESS)

Scripture teaches that *"only by pride cometh contention…"*(Proverbs 13:10). Thus pride is the root sin of bitterness, "…*and thereby many be defiled"* (Hebrews 12:15). Satan was cast out of Heaven because of pride. Adam and Eve fell through pride. Because of this sin, death entered into the human race (Romans 5:12-14).

Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings. And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, "Where are you?" So he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself." And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?" Then the man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate." And the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

Notice how Adam and Eve blame others for their sin. Adam blames Eve and ultimately God because God gave him Eve. Eve blames the serpent. The blame game has gone on ever since. We must not blame others for our own sin but must take responsibility for our actions. None of these excuses worked. God cursed them all.

A. THE SERPENT: Great physical changes took place in the serpent. He was the most desirable animal of the animal creation and walked upright. Now he must go on his belly, and he became the most hated member of the animal creation. Satan,

who was indwelling the serpent, will have limited success (*you will bruise His heel*-Genesis 3:15), but ultimately he will be judged (*Her SEED will bruise His head*-Genesis 3:15).

B. THE WOMAN: The woman will have multiplied sorrow and pain in childbearing (Genesis 3:16), and the relationship between the wife and her husband will change (Genesis 3:16-The husband will rule over the wife).

C. ADAM: The ground will be cursed and full of weeds among the food, causing the man to have to toil in frustration all of his days. The creation resists man's dominion over it (Genesis 3:19). The man immediately died spiritually and his relationship with the LORD God was cut off. He was kicked out of the Garden of Eden. He ultimately died physically at the age of 929. His flesh decayed until it returned to dust from which it was originally taken (Genesis 3:17-19).

2. **SEXUAL ANARCHY HAS INVADED AMERICA AND THE REST OF THE WORLD.** Sex was considered sacred and acceptable only in the confines of marriage until the sexual revolution of the 1960s. Now anything goes. To give just a few examples:

Dozens of Arizona Teachers Accused of Having Inappropriate or Illegal Relationships with Students.
CBS Affiliate KPHO.com
May 21st, 2009

Outrage Follows Ruling that Teachers Can Have Sex with 18-Year-Old Students
Fox News.Com
January 15, 2009

News Reports today showcase homosexual marriages, teen "sexting," and middle school hookups, transgenders marching in parades proudly displaying their surgically mutilated bodies, and ever-increasing tolerance of adult-child sex.

In one study of 225 cases of teacher sex abuse in New York State, although all the accused had admitted to sexually abusing a student, not one was reported to the police and only 1 percent lost their license to teach.

David Kupelian in *How Evil Works*

We have defiantly forsaken God's law and Biblical morals becoming an *anything goes* sexual society in America and export billions of dollars worth of pornography each year from the United States to all over the world.

FORN1CATION: Sex outside of marriage

ADULTERY: Sex with a married person who is not your spouse

1 Corinthians 6:18 ESV

Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body.

1 Thessalonians 4:3-5 ESV

For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God;

Matthew 5:28 ESV

But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

1 Corinthians 6:9-10 ESV

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

Leviticus 18:22 ESV

You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination.

Mark 7:20-23 ESV

And he said, "What comes out of a person is what defiles him. For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person."

1 Corinthians 6:13 ESV

"Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food"—and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord

for the body.

Romans 1:25-28 ESV

Because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen. For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error. And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done.

Leviticus 20:13 ESV

If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon them.

1 Corinthians 10:8 ESV

We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day.

Jude 1:7 ESV

Just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11 ESV

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such *were* some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Exodus 20:14 ESV

“You shall not commit adultery.

Proverbs 6:27-29 ESV

Can a man carry fire next to his chest and his clothes not be burned? Or can one walk on hot coals and his feet not be

scorched? So is he who goes in to his neighbor's wife; none who touches her will go unpunished.

1 Timothy 1:9-10 ESV

Understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine....

What is wrong with transgender? God created us. To change gender is to say that God did not know what he was doing and made a mistake. The Word says, *"I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well. My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed; and in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there was none of them."* Psalm 139:14-16

3. ONE MILLION BABIES ARE ABORTED EACH YEAR IN AMERICA (Hundreds of millions worldwide) .

A BIBLICAL LOOK AT ABORTION

Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.

Jeremiah 1:5

A woman should have the right to choose what to do with her own body. Really? Let's see what the Bible says:

1st Corinthians 6:20 *For ye are bought with a price; therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.*

1st Corinthians 7:23 *Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servant of men.*

2nd Peter 2:1 *But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who secretly shall bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.*

There is no distinction in the Biblical language between the unborn and the born child. The same word applies to both the fetus of John the Baptist within Elizabeth's womb, who leaped when Mary greeted Elizabeth, her cousin and to the babe Jesus wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. This Greek word is *brephos* and applies to both a fetus and a baby. The word in Hebrew is *yeled* and is used scripturally for the unborn, for young children, and even occasionally for teens or even young adults. The Hebrews did not have a separate word for an unborn child because they considered fetuses as just like any other child, except younger. Job 10:8-12 tells us that the person in the womb was not something that might become Job but someone who was Job, just a younger version. In the first century and in every century to be pregnant is to be *with child,* not with what might become a child. The idea that one becomes "human" or receives a soul at any stage later than conception is not biblical.

"…we must begin by acknowledging that the Bible doesn't say anything about abortion directly. Why the silence of the Bible on abortion? The answer is simple. Abortion was so unthinkable to an Israelite woman that there was no need to even mention it in the criminal code. Why was abortion an unthinkable act? First, children were viewed as a gift or heritage from the Lord. Second, the Scriptures state-and the Jews concurred-that God opens and closes the womb and is sovereign over conception. Third, childlessness was seen as a curse." Kirby Anderson

Scriptures relating to abortion:
Psalm 139:13-14 *For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful. I know that full well.*
Psalm 51:5 *Surely I have been a sinner from birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.*

The early Church Fathers, as far as I can tell, wrote universally against abortion. Some examples:

Do not murder a child by abortion or kill a newborn infant. The Didache, a second-century catechism for young converts

It does not matter whether you take away a life that is born or destroy one that is coming to the birth. In both instances, destruction is murder. Tertullian

The fetus, though enclosed in the womb of the mother, is already a human being, and it is a most monstrous crime to rob it of the life which it has not yet begun to enjoy. John Calvin

Augustine warned against the terrible crime of "*the murder of an unborn child."*

No matter what you have done, there is forgiveness in Christ. (The only unpardonable sin is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit which really means never accepting Christ.) *Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of god.* ***And such were some of you,*** *but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.* 1st Corinthians 6:9-11 KJV

Prayer from Neil Anderson's *The Steps to Freedom in Christ*

Lord Jesus, I confess that I was not a proper guardian and keeper of the life You entrusted to me, and I confess that I have sinned. Thank You that because of Your forgiveness, I can forgive myself. I commit the child to You for all eternity and believe that he or she is in Your caring hands. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

4.THE GOD OF THIS AGE (SATAN) HAS BLINDED THE UNBELIEVERS BUT THE TRUE BELIEVERS ARE GOING FROM GLORY TO GLORY: *Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we do not lose heart. But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the Word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake. For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God not of us. We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed-*

always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh (2nd Corinthians 4:1-11). *Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as the Spirit of the Lord* (2nd Corinthians 3:16-18).

It is time, as one Christian writer said, for the Believers to get off Christian cruise ships and get on Christian battle ships with the attitude "Don't get in my way, devil, because I'll run over you." We have power in the Name, through the Blood, and with the Word over the power of the enemy, but we must fight. We must not get discouraged and give up. The worst is yet to come, and it will get worse and worse before He comes. Jesus is not coming back until the Babylonia World System completely collapses. Luke 13:34-35 tells us: *"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you were not willing! See! Your house is left to you desolate, and assuredly, I say to you, you shall not see Me until the time comes when you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!'"*

<u>THE BELIEVER'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE SECOND COMING</u>

1. We are to wait for His coming: 1st Corinthians 1:7-*so that you come short in no gift, eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ.*
2. We are to look for His coming: Titus 2:13-*looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.*
3. We are to be ready for His coming: Matthew 24:42-44-***Watch therefore for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.***
4. We are to love His coming: 2nd Timothy 4:8-*Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous*

Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

5. We are to be busy until He comes: Luke 19:13-***"So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas, and said to them, 'Do business till I come.'"***
6. We are to pray for His coming: Revelation 22:20-*He who testifies to these things says,* ***"Surely I am coming quickly."*** *Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!*