

THE PATHFINDER

#292.17

WHO ARE WE *OF*?



We might look at this picture and see ourselves as free and inviolable as this eagle. But let us consider and see just how free we really are. For instance, if we say, "I am of Paul," "I am of Cephas," "I am a Baptist," "I am a Catholic," "...a Buddhist," "...a Jehovah's Witness," or perhaps we say, "I am a Liberal," or "I am a Conservative," "...a Socialist," "...a Marxist," "... Communist," "...Independent," do you believe that we would still be free? Not by any means!

For whether it is in the political arena, that of the world's social stage, or it is in the halls of religion, we serve that or who we are *OF*, and whatever or whoever we are of becomes our master.

Some are as free as the money-making monkey of an organ grinder that is well cared for but is on the end of his chain, and the mystery is, the monkey pities those of his kind who are in the jungles of the world with no one to look after them and have to fend for themselves. What a marvel!

We have family members, dear friends, and acquaintances who are of all walks of life. Some are Conservative in their views, some are Liberal, and others are neither. They hold to no political views at all. They are *Of* football, beer, money, business, women, or in a nutshell they are of a carnal trinity—"*Me, Myself, and I.*"

On the religious scale, some are Protestant, some are Catholic, others are neither, and they hold to no religious belief system. There are some who are so joined in mind,

spirit, and body to these political, religious, and non-religious ideas that they are literally **OF** them. They are identified either by **Conservatism, Liberalism, Protestantism, Catholicism, or the World**. One or the other is a major part of what they are made of, and outside of a miracle, they will remain as such. Changing any one of them would be as successful as changing a Human into a Martian, or a man into a woman, which is not even a debatable subject. But we will say this about it, cutting off and rearranging parts of a male human being will neither make him a Martian nor a woman.

There are things that we say confirms what we are; but there are others things that no matter what we say will alter a thing. We are by nature that from which we are **OF**; but our conditioned minds can make us **OF** this or that, and it will be expressed in our lives. Those formed ideologies in our lives can also be declared. Listen for only a moment to those who are **OF the Liberal Party, the Conservative Party, the Jehovah's Witnesses, the Baptists, or the Mormons**, and you will know very quickly **OF** whom or what they are.

If I should say that I am of the human race, my statement identifies me with that species from which I came. If I went on to say that I am of the Roach family, this would identify me as being a member of that Irish family. Not only does my confession declare me as being of the human species, and of a certain family; but my nature and bloodline makes it so as well.

If we adhere explicitly to a certain *political party*, or we follow after one, two, or several religious *ministers*, we can be **OF** them, and if this is the case, we may not be as free as we think! We are not of ourselves but of them, and if we are *of* them, we will act like them, speak like them, and even preach like them. Jesus gave us a good example when He accused those whose father was the devil. He said, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves." **Matthew 23:15**.

Those who are brought into their fold are so consumed **OF** them that they look like their cunning captors, they talk like them, they act like them, and they are most usually are very obedient. They we will do almost anything that is even suggested to them. If they are told to move to South America and drink cyanide laced Kool-Aid, they just might do it. And I say that; for quite a number of proselytes have already done so. Perhaps you remember the 909 individuals who were **OF Jim Jones** in Guyana, South America in 1978 when they were told to take and drink their master's unholy communion. With a few it was under duress, but others voluntarily drank the deadly

concoction.

Without wavering, some might believe every word their favorite ministers speak or write, such as our friends, Preston Eby, Royce Kennedy, Bob Torango, Gary Gatlin, or even Elwin Roach. Ha! If so, the laugh is on you! You are not free! If any one of you rests on every word that Elwin speaks or writes, would you believe it? What if he told you that Satan pulled a fast one on God when he succeeded in tempting and deceiving Eve? Would you swallow it hook, line, and sinker? Some really would. For those who are **OF** Elwin would believe what Elwin says. They would by no means be free! Other than being **OF** Jesus Christ, if we are **OF** *this* or *that*, or **OF** *some man or woman*, we are far from being free.

For example, there are multimillionaire TV evangelists who are accomplished artists at making people feel good. They are masters at conditioning people to be one **OF** them. By doing so, their followers send millions year in and year out to those money pits that are never full. Sadly, they are deceived servants to those hucksters and are not free.

Please do not mistake what is being said. It is honorable to be one with those who minister the word God, to those of the same Spirit and vision. It is good to be able to share with and receive from them, to encourage and strengthen one another; but being **OF** them is another matter. And that applies, of course, to those of the world's social and political structures as well. There are so many things with which we can be involved and interact with, and not be **OF** them. It's just a part of life, unless we are absorbed by them.

Like the eagle, we all want to be free, and just about everyone will say that they are, that they are *free moral agents*; with *free will*s; but their heart beat says that they want someone greater than them to rule over them. They have been led to believe that they need protection from deception, and especially protection from the devil. It is ingrained in them that they must be covered by someone who is much more spiritual than themselves, someone who hears the voice of God that is imperceptible to them. It is also believed that there is safety in numbers, and if they leave their church, they will be easy prey for heretical deception or worldly temptations. Margit and I know this by experience. We were warned of this after we heard the call to "*come out of her My people*," and I told the pastor we would be leaving and not joining another church.

As I sat in his office with his ordination certificate hanging on the wall behind him, he told me that I needed the checks and balance from someone who had been trained in the "word," and without having a shepherd over us, we would mistake false teachings of the devil as that of Jesus Christ. Without him and the church, I was sure

to hear that lying spirit rather than the spirit of truth from the Lord. With strong emphasis he said that God would not approve of our leaving by *forsaking the assembling of ourselves together with them*, and His Spirit would be withdrawn as we made our abode in the wilderness of the world. He delivered a frightful warning; but I knew the voice of the true Shepherd. I was **OF** Him, and another I would not follow.

I could fellowship and be one in Christ's Spirit with all the saints, but I could only be **OF** the One who saved and called me into His life and service. Jesus was, and is, my Shepherd, my Pastor, the one who teaches me His truth from within. Whether I hear it firsthand by revelation, or whether I hear it by His Spirit as another is ministering it, that truth is taught to me by the Spirit that abides in me, and it is the same with you.

The plain truth is that the Kingdom of God cannot be built by or upon that which is of man. Such foundations and buildings will crumble when the heavens and earth are shaken. For that matter, the shaking has already begun, so expect a great fall of man's church system and governments of the world, as well as the one wherein we presently live.

A number of our Shepherd's sheep have been gathered back to Him; but there are untold numbers that are still scattered. Some are alone in the world and without any religious structures, while just as many, or more, are confined in men's churches. But the Shepherd will not let them stay scattered. He loves them too much to be forever without them. His sheep will be found and brought back home. His voice is being sent forth into the whole world, and He is bringing them back to the abode of truth and righteousness. When His displeasure with religious taskmasters has come to a head, and His elect have been proven, He will do something about it. As His smith blows upon the coals, they will find their place in the lake of *Godfire*:

"My sheep wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. They were scattered over the whole earth, and no one searched or looked for them. Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the Lord: As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, because my flock lacks a shepherd and so has been plundered and has become food for all the wild animals, and because my shepherds did not search for my flock but cared for themselves rather than for my flock, therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the Lord: This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I am against the shepherds and will hold them accountable for my flock. I will remove them from tending the flock so that the shepherds can no longer feed themselves. I will rescue my flock from their mouths, and it will no longer be food for them." **Ezekiel 34:6-10 NIV**.

He went on to say:

"For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country. I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be: there shall they lie in a good fold, and in a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel. I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord GOD. I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick: but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment." **Ezekiel 34:11-16.**

Please note that it is only He who is the true Shepherd, and that Shepherd cares deeply for His sheep. When we understand that He is the true Shepherd of the sheep, then we will know that the true under-shepherds walk in the ways of the true Shepherd. They speak the words of the true Shepherd. They work the works of the true Shepherd. Rather than to themselves, the under-shepherds always direct the sheep toward the true Shepherd. They always herd the sheep in the direction of their Master. They never think of themselves as being chief shepherds in their own special right that some office has conferred upon them by God or by man.

When Jesus came forth from God, He was God's answer to the needs of the scattered sheep. He was the One that the prophets spoke about, who would come and gather the scattered sheep and cause them to lie down in quiet pastures. He had the heart of God, and, therefore, had compassion for the people and healed their infirmities.

Moreover, Jesus knew all that the Father had given Him would come to Him. They would come and hear His voice. The voice of others had a foreign sound. It was not quite right, and there were no strangers that they would follow.

But even in that day there were sects and divisions among the people. There were scribes and Pharisees, Sadducees and Herodians, as well as the Zealots. They all wanted to be heard and have a following, but the true sheep would not hear them. Jesus spoke of those who listened to other voices when He said that He had many other sheep that did not belong to their fold; but that He would bring them also, so that there

would be one fold and One Shepherd. By the time His work was done and He finished what He was sent to do, not one would be lost.

At first, the Church was filled with truth and spiritual power. The book of Acts gives an account of those wonder-working days. Innumerable multitudes of men and women have experienced supernatural encounters with God since that day long ago. It started when the first one hundred and twenty were assembled in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost.

This little band of believers, along with those brought into the fold, were filled with the Holy Spirit. They entered such undefinable glory. There had never been such awe, wonder, holiness, reverence, and godly power in the world. It had never entered the minds of men that a Kingdom like this with Jesus Christ as the Lord of lords would be born when He returned to them in mighty Spirit and power. They could not imagine that He would literally dwell in them and transform their hearts. Even they were amazed that He came and reigned upon the throne of their lives. How they sang the songs of Moses, the song of deliverance! How the praises of God echoed down the corridors of their souls and reverberated upon the citadels and battlefields of celestial realms! The wonder-working signs, miracles, and power that bore witness to the returned presence of God's Christ were indisputable!

They turned the world upside down as theological minds spun in circles. People had seen wildfires in the world, but never a Godfire that swept over souls that consumed men and melted their religious heavens while standing on their feet. It was like a worldwide prairie fire that the called ones could not escape, and they did not want to escape it. Kings and despots trembled in fear, as those holy flames scaled the mountains and crossed the seas.

They were severely persecuted due to the threat of their powerful word; but their numbers grew exponentially; for God was mighty in the midst of them. As the prophet had previously said, "...The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea." **Habakkuk 2:14**.

This heavenly wonder from the throne of God could not be stopped. Untold thousands were drawn to God's consuming fire and drank of our Lord's river of life. Many thought the glorious Kingdom of God that had come into the world could never dim. They believed that every mountain (kingdom), small and great, would crumble and be made flat while every servant of low places would be made high. But it was not to be, not at that time.

It was not long before the true under-shepherds were pushed out to make room for the age-old hirelings, the self-serving shepherds of darkness. And it was not the result

of persecution that brought this about. It came subtly, and from within. Men promoted that which appealed to man's psyche, the flash of the eye, those things that looked good, such as the same impressive attire of the fan-fair pagan religions of the day—special robes, stiff collars and head gear that made the religious leaders stand out from the crowd. It was then that man's religious kingdom began to grow exponentially. It served people's basic mental images of what holy men must be. Surely, they could not dress and appear like common people. And rather than Rome persecuting the true believers of Jesus, it was man's counterfeit religious kingdom that usurped His name, and they eventually burned at the stake members of His body. Socialistic Communism has not changed since its inception, which it seems to me started with the *church*, so called. Not the true church, of course, but that which came from the heart and soul of carnal man.

Those men began their pursuit of power, their drive to take over and rule the world. Not many women were involved except by their influence behind the scene of their husbands. Notwithstanding, even before the apostles were martyred, religious Babylon began to raise her sanctimonious head to seduce the masses. Karl Marx once noted, and rightly so, that religion is the opium of the people.

Like fig leaves, those religious adornments have continued to this day: rules and regulations, creeds, catechisms and dogmas, the liturgical observance of "holy days," ritualistic sacraments, traditions and ordinances, elevating these "*men of God*" over all others. This unholy rabble of men, masquerading as the body of Christ, became revered as lords. They were given the highest recognition and place of honor in the courts of kings all the way down to homeless street paupers. Today they are given austere titles to insure their stature of righteous honor over the common man is preserved: Pastor, Reverend, the Most Reverend, Father, Monsignor, Bishop, Cardinal, Your Holiness; and certainly the most blasphemous of all, "Holy Father," the POPE. I have but one Holy Father, and he does not reside at the Vatican!

Of course, they and the people enslaved to their religion may claim that Jesus is Lord, but much of the time it is only lip service; that to which they are confessing as the Lord is a figure they have of Him in their minds of what they imagine Him to be. In this sense, Jesus might only be a statue on a cross in the cold corridors or stone buildings that are called churches and cathedrals. He could also be nothing more than a figurehead, part of their religious ideology and mental enigmas akin to what Buddhists, Hindus, Jews and other religions have of their gods and lords. When there is no living reality of a higher entity, they cannot be worshiped in spirit and truth, only in the imaginations of religious minds; and men are masters in creating their gods in their own image and after their likeness. This is why there are so many mean, angry,

unforgiving, diabolic gods that are elevated and worshiped in the world. Men have created them according to their own nature and evil imaginations. It is unconscionable that people bow to such imaginary despots and are even willing to die for them.

It was such religious nonsense that began to take the place in the early church, and the saints of the Lord found no place to express the power and glory of the Spirit. They became subservient to the *lordship* of *church* leaders who claimed to have a direct line from the throne of God, and He chose each them for those exalted positions because they were so special. The masses began to believe the colossal lie. They really believed that only those with prestigious titles knew the mind and word of the Lord, which is largely still believed to this day.

The phenomena that had once turned the world upside down was reversed. The beauty of holiness and victory over sin, sickness, and death that swept over a dark world was derailed. Any similitude of spiritual truth became a grievous threat to some and a laughing-stock to others. It was certainly despised by the elite of man's religion at that time. As these hirelings gained recognition and took the place of the Lord's true under-shepherds, His Spirit, like the doves of Samaria, flew over the walls of men's religious kingdom, leaving them with a diet of asses' heads, doves' dung, and their own babies. Although they had indisputable power, filled their coffers, and amassed great wealth, their kingdom was spiritually bankrupt. This hasn't changed!

Perhaps it is unknown by most that the word for *shepherd* and *pastor* is the same in the Hebrew and the Greek texts. The words mean the same whether it has to do with natural matters or that of the spirit. The heartbeat of the true shepherd/pastor, those called into service by the head Shepherd/Pastor, is to feed, nurture, care for, and protect the flock. Not to fleece them for their own gain or butcher them to sate their hunger, but to lay down their lives for them.

Frankly, it would be good if the word "**PASTOR**" was stricken from the language and mind-set of Christians today. If such an office was so important in the kingdom of God, one that is to lord it over the sheep of Jesus Christ, you would think the word, the title, would be prevalent throughout the scriptures, especially in the New Testament scriptures, but not so. The word is found only once, and that one time is in reference to *ministering pastors/shepherds* who lay down their lives for the infinitum.

In spite of what has been shared concerning the role of true under-pastors in the Church, without thinking or out of habit, many will continue talking about *their pastor*, as if he or she is high and lifted up by God's special calling. Contrary to common belief, *the pastor* is not one of the most highly acclaimed offices in the Church. As it is used, it's a position concocted by men to gain control over others and to be

recognized as someone extraordinarily special in the world. If it was such an austere place among others and honored title, we might wonder why it is alien to the written word? Moreover, it was not to be found in the early church. The titles, *Father* and *pastor*, were inventions of self-aggrandized men who craved power over others.

Please check to see if this is true or not; but we could find no place where any of the churches that were raised up by the apostles had overseers called *the pastor*. Of course, there was one place in Ephesians that spoke of *pastors* in the plural form, which is in *Ephesians 4:11*, but there is no indication that one person was over a congregation with the title of *the pastor*. There is simply no record in the New Testament where men were elevated to the position of *pastors* that ruled over others. If such was a cardinal statute in the church, then certain ones would have been justified in saying, "I am *OF* Paul", or I am *OF* Cephas." But without that being one of the statutes, the true believers either said, "**I am *OF* JESUS CHRIST," or "I am *OF* MY HEAVENLY FATHER and ELDER BROTHER, THE LORD JESUS CHRIST"**! Period!

Surely we can see that anyone who takes to themselves the title of *the pastor* transgresses and usurps the place of *the true Pastor, the Lord Jesus Christ*. This fact does not stop churches from that practice, some even have more than one "*pastor*" so called. They have an elected, or self-appointed "*senior pastor,*" "*associate pastor,*" "*assistant pastor,*" "*co-pastor,*" of course, there are also "*overseers,*" "*elders*" "*the head elder,*" ad infinitum. And when you think it could not get worse, it does. Some take on an even more blasphemous position and proudly allow themselves to be called "*the Chief Shepherd.*"

There was a time when we often drove 90 miles south to El Paso where a small group was meeting in the borrowed basement of a church on Morehead Avenue. That is where we became friends with Preston and Lorain Eby and the others. He was the one who primarily shared the rich word from on high. For a time he was considered the group's *pastor*.

We had not known them long before he announced that he would no longer be their pastor, saying that he and his family would continue attending the meetings, but not as the figurehead of being their overseer. I can remember him saying, "There is only one Pastor, and you should look to Him for guidance and care rather than to me." He made it clear that Jesus was their Pastor. He let them know that if he had something by the Spirit to share, he would share it, and everyone else should do the same. The small body of saints were told that our Lord's way is to have a body ministry, not a one man or woman production.

One thing, even back then in the early 1970s, he would not allow anyone to call him "*the pastor*" of their group. I also remember him having written about this, saying: "I instructed the brethren among whom I labored in years past that they should never call me 'the pastor' or 'their pastor' because the Lord alone **IS THE PASTOR**. I may be 'a pastor,' but never 'THE pastor.' If anyone comes inquiring about 'the pastor' they should be told that the pastor is the Lord.

"Should the inquirer pursue the point they could then explain that Bro. Eby is one of the servants, an under-shepherd, along with elders and ministries; but **THE LORD IS T-H-E P-A-S-T-O-R**. We have been so completely saturated, so thoroughly brain-washed in the errors of the religious systems that we do by rote and speak by habit the ridiculous absurdities imbibed in the pews of Babylon. How astounded we are when once we learn the truth and discover that the cherished teaching or hallowed practice we have unwittingly assumed to be godly and spiritual is not only unfounded in the Word of God, but is actually an abomination in the sight of God! And should any who read these lines doubt what I say about the absence of the ministry of 'the pastor' from the New Testament church, I invite him or her to look up the term in Strong's Concordance." — End quote.

So now, who is our shepherd, our pastor? From where or whom do we come? In what church were we born? Who or what exactly is it that we are **OF**? Is it someone or something in the great metropolis **OF** man's religion? **OF** football? **OF** Hollywood? **OF** politics? **OF** self? All of these are engaged in the spirit of war causing them to perpetually contend for supremacy over the Lord in one way or the other.

Lastly, does our life, perhaps, revolve around and subsist on multimillionaire religious motivators, or is it **Jesus Christ**, the one who said, "**I AM the way THE TRUTH and the life, and THE TRUTH WILL MAKE OUR FREE?**" So, if you don't mind me also asking, what is our origin, what is our makeup? Is it the world of the first Adam, or the heavens of **the Last Adam**? Did the religious orders of the Baptists, the Assemblies of God, or the Catholic Church bring us forth, or was it **New Jerusalem, the mother of us all**? The answer should be very clear.

Now, **WHO or WHAT are we OF?**

Please fill in the blank: "I am **OF** _____!"

Elwin R. Roach

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