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## SUPERNATURAL vs. NATURAL

God created man and woman to live on the earth. In His Infinite Wisdom, He set forth the laws of nature, looked upon His creation satisfied and said, "It is good". The universe continues day by day, ordered by God's command.

From the beginning God had His PLAN and PURPOSES set forth in clear language. He did not do anything that was not clearly laid out to His creation, namely man, who inhabited this planet. What an All-Wise, All-Knowing God! He made known His Ways to the children of men!

Every prophecy given in the Old Testament concerning the coming of the Messiah was literally fulfilled in minute detail at the coming to earth of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. God's PLAN and PURPOSES were on course!

Along the course of human history, man has taken matters into his own hands - starting with Cain. God was abandoned from his thoughts and instead new gods were invented. Even to this present day, man continues to try in his own strength to replace God.

Even so, the PLAN and PURPOSES of God move steadily forward with Infinite Precision. The courses of empires are ordained by God. All things are created by HIM and for HIM. Even the heathen King Nebuchadnezzar had to come to acknowledge this fact. After his humiliation he declared, "I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" (Daniel 4: 34, 35)

Every scripture concerning Christ's return to this planet - yes - this planet earth that God loves, will be literally fulfilled. He gave His Son, His only Begotten Son to die for this sinful earth in order to fulfill His PLAN and PURPOSES. Because man was corrupt in all his ways having forfeited God's commands and reign, God in His infinite Mercy gave His only begotten Son to die for this sinful earth in order to redeem fallen man and thereby fulfill His PLAN AND PURPOSES.

God did not create man to live in the supernatural (the invisible) realm. He created him on this earth to glorify Him. Man's obedience in the natural world and faith in God's Word serves as "a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to man." (1 Cor. 4:9). The supernatural realm looks at God's creation in wonder. The angels are amazed at God's glorious plan of salvation as they see mortal man through Jesus Christ faithfully fulfill the Word that God has spoken. Yes, as believers we are being closely watched by angels and men - as the revelation of redemption unfolds as the prophets foretold (I Peter 1:12).

"To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in the heavenly aces might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:" (Eph. 3:10-11)

To live according to God's PLAN and PURPOSES takes faith! It is the faith of Hebrews 11 that trusts unquestionably in the God whose mercy endures forever. In the face of trials, whether by tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril or sword - we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us! The child of God rests in the knowledge that God is faithful!

We know from scripture that the supernatural realm suffered a terrible rebellion as a result of Lucifer's bid to godhood. But God in His Infinite Wisdom created the heavens and earth and sent His ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, born of a woman, to bring forth His ultimate PLAN and PURPOSES - in obedience to His commands.

The angels know that at the appointed time when the last trumpet sounds at the return of Jesus Christ, the saints will put on immortality, cross the supernatural barriers and judge angels. (I Cor. 6:3).

However, today we are seeing a strange trend as again man by his own endeavors, experientially and philosophically tries to relate to the "supernatural realm" and walk in a sense of godhood - the nature of which clearly characterizes "New Age" philosophy. Regretfully, a great part of the church has latched on to this trend. By all appearances, Christians are knowingly or unknowingly dabbling in eastern mysticism and the spirit world and as a result are falling prey to Satan's control. Deeper spiritual depth seems to be the motivation behind it all. The problem is that Christians are not satisfied with the literal Word of God. They are looking for experiences "beyond the sacred page". The Old Gospel, i.e. the gospel of Christ has become insipid to many. Instead, a different gospel is being received, the central message of which is "we are gods" (able to penetrate and vanquish the spirit realm). This "new" gospel of making "self" a god and waging a warfare apart from the cross of Christ is gnosticism in essence. Whatever happened to the Gospel of "dying to self", the world, and the devil by the "Way of the Cross."

Yes, participation in the supernatural realm is ours to be had. However, only at the right Biblical time - at the literal return of Jesus Christ. Anything apart from this is treading on the same path that Lucifer walked in pursuit of going beyond his limits. In the meantime, the saints live and rest in the Word of God. They live by faith, keep God's commandments and with a passion resist dabbling in the spirit world.

### **To Believe or Not to Believe**

With the variety available in the "gospel" menu today, how does the ordinary person discern what is Truth and what is Error? We are hearing tales from those who are preaching on "spiritual warfare" that make the toes curl. Their so called experiences and encounters with the spirit world not only renders the cross of Christ of no effect, but clearly manifests spiritual deception and a departure from the Holy scriptures. Prophets are proclaiming that God is now "birthing" the supernatural and new revelations based on dreams, visions and personal experience. Mysticism is on the increase. Yet we are told very blithely, it must be real because they have an intuitive witness that is true, whether or not it scriptural. Be on your guard whenever you hear this defense. It is not a defense; it is an excuse for deception!

Inquiring minds always tend to want to know or experience something new. It is abundantly clear in the history of the human race that humanity finds it easier to believe in mysticism rather than doubt it. In religion this is especially true. More than 2,300 years ago even the Greek philosopher Aristotle said, "the ability to doubt is rare. . ." The general response of Christians to readily accept pagan practices and Gnostic doctrines proves that many are gullible and ignorant of the Scriptures.

It is frightening to realize that beliefs can be created merely by passively accepting information without attempting to analyze it! In church circles much depends on the personality delivering the message. If it is a charismatic figure with a certain appeal, he/she can say anything they want and get away with it!

This is why the knowledge of the Word of God is so important. It is not enough to parrot off someone else's teaching and sound like a little Copelandite, Hinnite or Cainite. Any man can lead you astray - no matter how nice or how spiritual he sounds. You have to stand before God yourself! The Word of God says explicitly, "Study to show THYSELF approved, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed." (I Tim. 2:15). Listening to hours and hours of tapes or watching "Christian TV" is not a substitute for honest and earnest study of the Word of God. Be like the Bereans who checked out everything they heard to see if those things were so. (Acts 17:10-11). They were commended for doing so - not told they were divisive, critics and fault-finders.

### **Mysticism**

In listening to many tapes that are coming out of the present day "prophetic movement", the underlying current is mysticism. Funk & Wagnalls NEW ENCYCLOPEDIA defines "mysticism" as "an immediate, direct, intuitive knowledge of God or of ultimate reality attained through personal religious experience." Thomas Aquinas defined mysticism as "the knowledge of God through experience." Experiences are being set up as the criteria for truth. There are many Christians who cannot communicate spiritual knowledge without the use of

this term. The danger lies in that when experience is the basis for faith instead of the Word of God, erroneous theological ideas arise. This gives way for a deviance from the Word of God.

"The interest in mysticism grows strongly as the churches become ever emptier and the religious festivals become mere periods of recreation amid a boisterous, heedless world. It is evident that contemporary society, if it is at all interested in spiritual things demands direct experience and not merely teaching that comes from ancient texts, nor is it impressed with traditional doctrine that does not have a savour of a living force behind it." THE MISSION OF MYSTICISM, Richard Kirby, London SPCK (1979).

A lady had called in recently to a local radio talk show exuberantly declaring her belief in Inner Healing. When referring to Ruth Carter Stapleton, she just oozed with the "wonderful experiences" she had had as a result of Ruth's ministry. When questioned about some of Mrs. Stapleton's "strange" beliefs that did not accord with orthodox Christianity, the caller assured her listeners that she had been to Bible College. Yet she could not establish a basis for Mrs. Stapleton's teaching other than her own experiences.

Those associated with the "prophetic ministries" on the scene today bristle when they hear that some say they are New Age. A New Age book, "Unfinished Animal, The Aquarian Frontier and the Evolution of Consciousness" by Theodore Rosak states that "Charismatic congregations in main-line churches are entry points into the Aquarian frontier." Why would a New-Ager even try to make a claim to someone who makes a claim to be part of the blood-washed body of Christ? I believe that instead of the attention being drawn to the Cross of Christ, it is being directed to "supernatural" experiences which have become the basis of faith. This has made a subtle cross-over. Johanna Michaelson said it well, "We have ever so subtly, allowed our base to shift from the solid objective grounding of God's Word and have come instead to place our focus on our experiences as the standard for our beliefs." (MINISTRIES MAGAZINE, Spring, 1985).

The apostate church is a bearer of mysticism. Her structure and institutions are being overtaken. Ever since the second century the church has been pregnant with mysticism. And now, in these last days we are witnessing an ominous manifestation. But we are not surprised for the Scriptures foretold that "the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine. . . they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned to fables." (II Tim. 4:3-4).

"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction." (II Peter 2:1).

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;. ." (I Tim. 4:1).

The following quote is how a Gnostic looks at the Church today:

"The implication of the continuation of Christian mysticism (admittedly under the guise of spirituality, with which it is none the less almost synonymous) is simply that Christianity cannot be thought . . . to be redundant in the face of the proliferation of modern mysticism. Far from it: Christianity has always been the womb and the cradle

of western mysticism, and it welcomes rather than fears modern mysticism." **THE MISSION OF MYSTICISM**, Richard Kirby, London SPCK (1979).

This takes us back to Gnosticism. It was already manifest in John's day. It was called "the doctrines of the depths of God," while in fact it was the doctrine of the depths of Satan. (Revelation 2:24). It boils down to the fact that in Gnosticism man's redemption and justification is not by faith in God according to the Scriptures, but rather in "mystical knowledge" acquired by personal experience. This theme is intertwined in all the cults and occults.

**THOUGH THE HEAVENS DISAPPEAR IN A BURST OF FERVENT HEAT AND THE EARTH IS OBLITERATED OUT OF EXISTENCE - WHAT WILL ABIDE? YOUR EXPERIENCE - OR THE WORD OF GOD?**

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TAKE HEED PASTORS! You may not want to agree with every statement listed on the following pages, however; for the sake of your flock and the Lordship of Christ, discern every form of mysticism clearly adverse to Scripture and deal with it. By no means do I suggest a witch hunt. At this time in the history of the Church extreme caution is of the utmost importance.

**SIGNS AND ENTRY POINTS TO MYSTICISM**

1. The Cross of Christ is not the sole basis for redemption,
2. The Holy Scriptures are not the complete single revelation of God to man
3. Experience is the way to perfection and knowledge.
4. Experience takes the precedence over the Scriptures.
5. Intuition is given preference to Scripture sometimes a substitute for the Holy Spirit.
6. Faith in the Word of God is defected to faith in the Church, man, self, experience, etc.
7. Transubstantiation of the Eucharist becomes Christ in you - i.e. symbols of Holy Communion namely the bread and the wine are transformed into the literal flesh and blood of Jesus Christ.
8. Mediators other than Jesus Christ are acknowledged and believed on.
9. Self is deified.
10. The allegorical method of interpretation replaces the literal.
11. Salvation is based on experience and not the Word of God

12. The coming of Christ for His Church is spiritualized.
13. The presence of God is sought in a mystical sense.
14. Astrology (the Zodiac) is seen as an accessory to the Gospel - a source of enlightenment.
15. The Church is the ongoing incarnation of the literal presence of Christ
16. Inner Healing, imagery, centering and "psychology" are substituted for the power of the gospel.
17. Personal revelations, dreams and visions are given priority to Scripture as final reference in judgments, decisions and guidance.
18. Experiences are sought rather than God's will and His righteousness
19. A euphoric form of love and unity with little or no regard for Scripture or sound doctrine.
20. Like Simon the sorcerer, signs and wonders are sought instead of true repentance and a right heart before God.
21. Hyper faith, positive thinking, self-potential, and self-deification are taught as gospel truths.
22. Finding Christ or forming Christ within according to Eastern mysticism or New Age philosophy.
23. Meditation void of the Scriptures and reality.
24. The obsession of "spiritual warfare" with a Gnostic and "New Age" slant - allegedly doing battle in the supernatural realm to free cities and areas from the control of spirit beings before the gospel can be preached effectively or have power to save sinners in the natural world.

The Christian's battle (spiritual warfare) is not a feeling, an intuition or an imaginative experience in the spirit realm - however real it might seem. On the contrary, the warfare is against every form of mysticism that ties the feelings, intuition and imagination into the spirit world which God strictly forbids. (Deut. 18:10-12).

As Christians we war against the strongholds of spirit mysticism that war against our minds, feelings and intuitions. By the power of the Gospel of Christ and Him crucified we cast down: (i) reasonings, pagan philosophies, Gnostic concepts and carnal dogmas that nullify the Word of God; (ii) imaginations, theories, religion, fables, metaphysics, theosophy and meditations that defy the knowledge of God; and (iii) every thought, form of godliness and spiritual intent or practice opposed to the Gospel of Christ.

"For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds: Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; . ." (II Cor. 10:4-5).

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## OF INTEREST - (further influence of Mysticism)

At Thomas Jefferson's home MONTICELLO there hang portraits of the men who most influenced Jefferson. Those who are familiar with history will recognize the names of: John Locke, Francis Bacon and Isaac Newton. The following article is from: THE FLINT JOURNAL 10/14/91

### Group wants to dig up cure for world ills

WILLIAMSBURG, Va. (AP) – A New Age group wants to dig up a historic church graveyard in hopes of finding a vault it claims contains writings that can save the world and prove that Sir Francis Bacon wrote the plays of Shakespeare. The Ministry for the Children, based in Santa Fe, N.M., contends that if the writings thought to be buried at Bruton Parish Church aren't found by the year 2000, world order will collapse.

"I was born with a mission, and I believe this is it," said the Rev. Marsha Middleton, leader of the small, loose-knit group.

The Episcopal church where George Washington and Thomas Jefferson worshiped obtained a restraining order against the group after members entered the cemetery at night Sept. 9 and dug a big hole to look for the vault.

Members were not prosecuted, and a judge set a hearing Oct. 29 to consider extending the order.

The New Age group - Christians who espouse such things as clairvoyance and reincarnation - believes Bacon's lost writings were buried at the church along with such treasures as the original translation of the King James Bible.

The group says the writings outline Bacon's plan for a perfect society, a world united and at peace. The writings also will prove Bacon was the real author of Shakespeare's plays, the group says.

"We're really innocent by standers in the way of this controversy," said the Rev. Richard L. May, whose 1,500-member church was founded in the 1670s. "It's taking an awful lot of time and energy."

The church's governing board is considering paying for a professional archaeological excavation to put an end to the claims it says are based on mystical calculations without scientific or historical basis.

"I think it's unlikely that anything of value is there. Still, who can say?" said Thaddeus Tate, a parish member and director of the Commonwealth Center for the Study of American History and Culture at the College of William and Mary.