

FOUR TEACHINGS That Have Shaped World History

A Prerequisite in Understanding
the Book of Revelation

B. Lising

About the Author

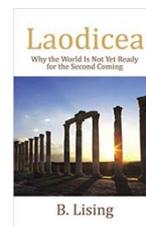
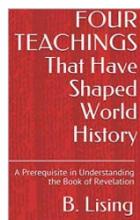
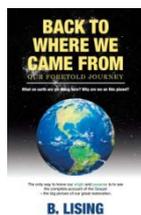
B. Lising believes in the perfect consistency of the Scripture—that all books of the Bible hold only a single message. He is also convinced that the last book is the summary of the whole Bible—the book of Revelation will connect all the dots and will reveal to us the big picture.

B. Lising got his first copy of the Bible at the age of 14. The year was 1986, and after only twelve months, he was able to read entirely the Old Testament once and the New Testament twice. He recalls that he did not understand much then, but he loves to read the Scripture.

Three decades later, he was able to write his first book *Laodicea—Why the World Is Not Yet Ready for the Second Coming*. His other books are *Four Teachings That Have Shaped World History* and *Back to Where We Came From—Our Foretold Journey*. These articulate and well-presented manuscripts will give readers a clear understanding about the origin of mankind and will provide the blueprint to prepare for the Second Coming.

B. Lising is a mechanical engineer by profession and currently living with his beloved wife and four wonderful children.

View B. Lising's books on Amazon at: [amazon.com/author/blising](https://www.amazon.com/author/blising)



Visit B. Lising's website at:



Preface

My dear reader, I want to thank you for taking time to read this book. The fact that it is now in your hands means that God divinely appointed this. It is not an accident. May you find this useful in seeking to know more about the Lord Jesus and His Second Coming, and may it be a good source of information to prepare you for that great and most-awaited event in these last days.

But just like all other books that may be considered somewhat fictional or more likely opinionated, this book is not exempt from having mistakes or errors. How then do you know the truth?

Let me share with you the Bible's golden rule in seeking answers to any questions.

We know it by the Spirit he gave us. (1 John 3:24 NIV)

But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. (John 14:26 NIV)

As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit—just as it has taught you, remain in him. (1 John 2:27 NIV)

The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. (1 Cor. 2:14 NIV)

The golden rule while we are still inside of time is the Holy Spirit is our friend, our teacher, our guide, our counsellor, and the life and power of the Church.

While inside of time, God's chosen people (whose names have been written in the Lamb's book of life) are all connected to the Father and the Lord Jesus because of the Holy Spirit.

If you find this book personally beneficial, share it with your friends. Give it as a gift to your loved ones. In doing so, you are taking part in preparing the Church for the Second Coming of our King.

The Lord Jesus says, 'Yes, I am coming soon.'

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's people. Amen.

Dedication

This book is dedicated to my beloved wife, Maria Lourdes, and to my wonderful children, Eleazar, Eleakim, Eleajoy, and Eleagem.

They are the precious companions God has given me in this temporary world.

Introduction

Jesus said to them, 'Very truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.' (John 6:53 NIV)

Why are there so many religions in the world? Why are there so many church denominations? Did God foresee that this would happen? Was this included in the deliberate plan of God?

The great number (thousands, not hundreds) of religions and church denominations is the reason for the existence of so many different teachings on the planet. There are too much inconsistencies and contradictions, no consensus in many ways. Thus any person who is looking for the truth would almost certainly be confused.

All church denominations refer to one and the same Scripture and yet still have numerous disagreements. But is this supposed to happen? The answer is a resounding yes; this is actually part of the prophecy as indicated in the book of Revelation. This is definitely included in God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge because our God is in full control.

One of the utmost misconceptions in the Church today is the way God's people think about the last book of the Bible. The book of Revelation has long been regarded as the most divisive part of the New Testament (or of the Bible as a whole). It is considered a controversial text containing apocalyptic imagery and mysterious symbolism that many say predict the end of the world (doomsday). For this reason, many do not even take time to read this important part of the Scripture (the end part). Yes, the end part is the most significant part. It is placed intentionally and strategically at the ending. In fact, the first generation of believers had waited for this final epistle in full anticipation. It is supposed to contain the final instruction of the Lord Jesus before His Second Coming. Unknown to many, the book of Revelation is actually the summary of all the books of the Bible.

Yes, the last book is the conclusion and summary of the whole Bible. This is the reason why the first disciples waited expectantly for this book. To emphasise and to make a strong statement, we would have difficulty understanding the complete message of the Bible unless we read and study the book of Revelation. This is the testimony of the Lord Jesus, and the Holy Spirit will help us understand this testimony.

The apostle John testified:

Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near. (Rev. 1:3 NIV)

There are two prerequisites in order for us to understand the book of Revelation. The first and foremost is the Holy Spirit. The Scripture states:

The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. (1 Cor. 2:14 NIV)

The second prerequisite is for us to know the four teachings. These are the teachings that have actually shaped the history of humankind.

Scripture usually refers to food as equivalent to teaching and eating as equivalent to partaking. The saying 'You are what you eat' means that new-covenant people must eat only new-covenant teaching. In order to understand the new-covenant teaching, we need knowledge about the old-covenant teaching, as well as the other two teachings.

Let us read the following passages:

Jesus answered, 'It is written: "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God."' (Matt. 4:4 NIV)

Jesus said to them, 'Very truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink.' (John 6:53–55 NIV)

Many of the Lord's disciples deserted Him when He gave to them these words: 'Eat my flesh' and 'Drink my blood.' They might have been thinking: 'We are not cannibals!' But the Scripture is very clear: He was talking about accepting His teaching, because anyone who does this is one with his teacher. And the Lord Jesus brings to us the very word that comes from the mouth of God. In fact, Jesus Himself is the Word that was from the beginning, the Word that was with God, and the Word that was God. And He is the Truth that will set us free. The word that comes from the mouth of God is the new-and-everlasting-covenant teaching.

We know the Old Testament is not the old covenant, and the New Testament is not the new covenant. Both the New and Old Testaments contain both teachings of the two covenants. This is why we need to learn how to distinguish which is which whenever we read from this Holy Book.

The book of Revelation can only be understood if we will realise that all mentioned imagery or symbolism are all referring to the four teachings, nothing more and nothing less. The Lord Jesus mentioned that we need both physical food and spiritual food in order to live. He emphasised that our spiritual food is the Word, which comes out of the mouth of God. This means that the food that comes out of God's mouth should be the only food that goes inside our mouth. We are talking about the only right kind of food that we should eat in order to have life. The food we eat becomes part of us. The Lord Jesus told His disciples (in John 6:53–55) to eat His body and drink His blood (the Word, which came out of the mouth of God) so that He would become part of us (this is being in union with God). This is how we could live, because the Lord Jesus is life.

But it seems that we have eaten other foods (teachings that did not come out of the mouth of God); thus, we have experienced death instead of life.

The apostle John wrote:

Then I saw three impure spirits that looked like frogs; they came out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet. (Rev. 16:13 NIV)

These are the other three foods (teachings) that came out from other mouths (and not from the mouth of God).

The apostle John also wrote:

And I will appoint my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth. They are the two olive trees and the two lampstands, and they stand before the Lord of the earth. (Rev. 11:3-4 NIV)

The two witnesses appointed by God hold to the testimony of the Lord Jesus. These are Israel and the Church. Now both Israel and the Church have one common historical journey. And this has something to do with Jerusalem that was conquered and enslaved by Canaan, Egypt, and Babylon.

Now when they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up from the Abyss will attack them, and overpower and kill them. Their bodies will lie in the public square of the great city—which is figuratively called Sodom and Egypt—where also their Lord was crucified. (Rev. 11:7-8 NIV)

The above passage speaks of the representation of the four teachings:

- Jerusalem (as indicated by 'where also their Lord was crucified')

- Canaan (as indicated by 'Sodom')
- Egypt
- Babylon (as indicated by 'the great city')

Thus both Israel and the Church (the two witnesses) experienced death because of the other three foods (teachings) that did not come out of the mouth of God. But God will grant them life because of New Jerusalem.

To emphasise, the other three foods (teachings) that came out from other mouths (and not from the mouth of God) are as follows:

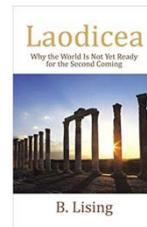
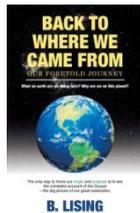
- The first impure spirit that came out of the mouth of the dragon represents the Canaan conflict (mixture of the covenant of life and the covenant of death).
- The second impure spirit that came out of the mouth of the beast represents the Egypt conflict (mixture of old-covenant teaching and human teachings).
- The third impure spirit that came out of the mouth of the false prophet represents the Babylon conflict (mixture of new-covenant teaching and old-covenant teaching).

But the Lord Jesus will triumph over them all (the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet) because of the sword that will come out of His mouth.

Coming out of his mouth is a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. 'He will rule them with an iron scepter.' He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. (Rev. 19:15–16 NIV)

This sword that would come out of His mouth is the eternal Gospel (the testimony of the Lord Jesus, the promised coming of New Jerusalem, the new-and-everlasting covenant, the covenant of life, the Gospel of grace, the good news of our salvation).

We cannot possibly discuss entirely all of the above topics (Jerusalem, Canaan, Egypt, and Babylon) in this book but we can refer to the following books if we want to go through the full details in knowing and understanding the book of Revelation:



For the meantime, let us identify the four kinds of food (teachings) mentioned in Scripture. Basically, there are only two teachings:

- The ‘tree of life’ teaching
- The ‘tree of the knowledge of good and evil’ teaching.

Why then are there four? Let us see the story that took place in the Garden of Eden:

The LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. (Gen. 2:8–9 NIV)

And the LORD God commanded the man, ‘You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.’ (Gen. 2:15–17 NIV)

Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, ‘Did God really say, “You must not eat from any tree in the garden?”’ The woman said to the serpent, ‘We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, “You must not eat fruit from the tree

that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.” (Gen. 3:1–5 NIV)

From the above passages, we derive the four teachings:

- ‘Tree of life’ teaching
- ‘Tree of the knowledge of good and evil’ teaching
- Eve’s ‘do not touch’ teaching
- The serpent’s ‘did God really say’ teaching

1. 'Tree of Life' Teaching

The 'tree of life' teaching refers to the new covenant (also called the Gospel of life, the law of the Spirit, the ministry of the Spirit, the ministry of righteousness, the good news of the kingdom, the good news of God's grace, the teaching of the apostles).

The tree of life, as the name suggests, means that this tree is the source of life eternal, while all mentions of life in the Bible are directly attributed to the new covenant.

The new covenant has brought life, and this can be clearly seen in the following passages:

This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. (2 Tim. 1:9–10 NIV)

Now if the ministry that brought death, which was engraved in letters on stone, came with glory . . . will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious? If the ministry that brought condemnation was glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness! (2 Cor. 3:7–11 NIV)

We are now under the ministry of righteousness. This means 'there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.' No more pretense, no more criticism, no more judging others, and no more need to feel guilty—all because we are under the ministry of the Holy Spirit and under grace.

To be more specific, the tree of life is none other than the Lord Jesus Himself because He is the source of life, and He wants us to eat from Him and have life as stated in the following passage:

Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day. (John 6:54 NIV)

This is called the new-Jerusalem teaching. This is the only food we should eat so that we could live. This is also our eternal inheritance.

The apostle John wrote:

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. (Rev. 21:1-2 NIV)

The apostle John saw a new heaven and a new earth because the first heaven and the first earth would disappear. Then he affirmed that he saw New Jerusalem—which means that there was actually the first Jerusalem (and it would also disappear). The name Jerusalem means ‘city of peace’, from the root word Shalom (Hebrew) or Salem (Arabic) meaning peace. It could also mean ‘safe’, ‘secure’, ‘perfect’, ‘complete’, or ‘whole’. Thus Jerusalem is a city of safety, security, perfection, completeness, and wholeness (perfect oneness with God).

New Jerusalem is the fulfillment of the new and everlasting covenant—it is all about God becoming one with His people and His people becoming one with God. And the first Jerusalem was supposed to be the Perfect City where God dwells among His people in complete unison—because God is one. If New Jerusalem is the end part, then the first Jerusalem would be the starting point. New Jerusalem is in fact the re-establishment of the first (spiritual) Jerusalem. Does this mean that something happened to the first one that there is a need for the founding of the new one? The answer is yes and it is called the Canaan conflict (this is the first conflict that happened in Eternity past and it will be discussed later in the next section).

God restoring the first Jerusalem and calling it New Jerusalem is the perfect plan of salvation. This is part of the big picture of our great restoration. The first Jerusalem was the starting point and New Jerusalem would be the last stage of our foretold journey (this would also be our new beginning).

The apostle John wrote:

He who was seated on the throne said, 'I am making everything new!' Then he said, 'Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.' (Rev. 21:5 NIV)

2. 'Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil' Teaching

The 'tree of the knowledge of good and evil' teaching refers to the old covenant (also called the teaching of Moses, the law, the commandment, the power of sin, the law of sin and death, the ministry of condemnation and death).

The first mention of death ('you will certainly die') in the Bible is directly connected to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; the one and only 'do not do this' command of God to man is in connection with this tree ('you can eat all except this one')—failure to comply will result in sure death.

All mentions of death that follow after are directly attributed to the commandment or to the law of Moses.

The old covenant has brought death, and this can be clearly seen in the following passages:

Now if the ministry that brought death, which was engraved in letters on stone, came with glory . . . will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious? If the ministry that brought condemnation was glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness! (2 Cor. 3:7–11 NIV)

Once I was alive apart from the law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died. I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death . . . So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good. (Rom. 7:9–12 NIV)

Notice that Scripture did not ever mention that this tree is evil or not good. Scripture says: 'The LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food.'

Everything that God created is good, and this includes the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

The command 'do not eat' specifically means 'do not partake', or 'have nothing to do with it', or 'this is not made for you'. Although this tree is considered perfect, holy, righteous, and good, it was not made for Adam and Eve. In the same way, the old-covenant teaching is considered perfect, holy, righteous, and good. But it was never made for God's people. This is clearly stated in the following passage:

We know that the law is good if one uses it properly. We also know that the law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers. (1 Tim. 1:8–9 NIV)

The fact that this tree (the law or the commandment) is made for lawbreakers has something to do with God's judgment of sinners wherein the penalty is death. The picture of Adam and Eve having eaten from this tree portrays that all mankind (including God's people) was actually under the old covenant and would surely face the consequence 'you will certainly die'.

The purpose of the law is for the whole world to know sin or to be conscious of sin, thus, to be held accountable to God. This is plainly stated in the following passages:

Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God's sight by the works of the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin. (Rom. 3:20–21 NIV)

What shall we say, then? Is the law sinful? Certainly not! Nevertheless, I would not have known what sin was had it not been for the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, 'You shall not covet.' But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of coveting. For apart from the law, sin was dead. (Rom. 7:7–8 NIV)

Since the purpose of the law is for us to become conscious of sin, the ministry of condemnation is at work in our lives. We tend to condemn ourselves and feel guilty whenever we break a single command. Worst of it, we tend to condemn and judge others whenever we see them committing sins. This is why there is too much pretense and criticism not only in the world but also within churches (those who think they are still under the old covenant). The Lord Jesus said: 'Do not judge before the appointed time.'

We must also emphasize that the power of sin is the law. This can be evidently seen in the following passages:

The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. (1 Cor. 15:56 NIV)

What shall we conclude then? Do we have any advantage? Not at all! For we have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under the power of sin. (Rom. 3:9–12 NIV)

This means that those under the law are powerless against sin (because sin has dominion over those who are under the law). They have no choice but to commit sin (because the law empowered them to sin) which makes the statement 'you will certainly die' stand.

Scripture is very positive in stating that all have sinned:

Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned. (Rom. 5:12–14 NIV)

This is the bad news: all have eaten from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, all are under the old covenant, all are empowered to commit sin, all have sinned, and all therefore will die.

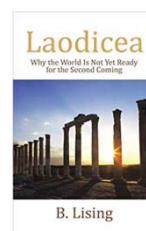
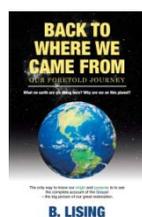
The good news is: 'Through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death.' (Romans 8:2 NIV)

We must notice that before Scripture mentioned the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the tree of life was mentioned first. It is the Lord's intention for man to partake of the new covenant to have eternal life and not of the old covenant to end up in death.

This is the Canaan conflict, which is the first conflict. This represents that while it was God's promise to the people of Israel that this land was their inheritance, they still could not possess it because the Canaanites were still living there. In the same way, the tree of life is our real inheritance, but somehow the tree of the knowledge of good and evil came to the picture thus delaying our inheritance.

We may be asking: Does God still need to put the tree of the knowledge of good and evil or the old covenant in the picture if His intention is for man to have life? Why would He put something there that would cause death? We need to see the whole picture in order to see God's purpose for this.

We can refer to the following books if we want to see the big picture of our great restoration:



3. Eve's 'Do Not Touch' Teaching

Eve's 'do not touch' teaching refers to combining old-covenant teaching with human traditions (also called the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees, no-authority teaching, lowered standard of God's law, or world religions).

Let us read the following passage:

Since you died with Christ to the elemental spiritual forces of this world, why, as though you still belonged to the world, do you submit to its rules: 'Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!?' These rules, which have to do with things that are all destined to perish with use, are based on merely human commands and teachings. (Col. 2:20–23 NIV)

Scripture states that we will be declared righteous if we obey the law as mentioned in this passage:

For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous. (Rom. 2:13 NIV)

But the problem is that Scripture also states that no one can actually obey this law, thus no one will be declared righteous. In fact, this law is with perfect standard so that there is no way that anyone can fully obey it.

Let us read the following passages:

For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. (James 2:10–11 NIV)

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. (Rom. 3:23 NIV)

‘All have sinned’ means all have failed to keep or follow the whole law. However, it seems that man was able to find a way and convinced himself that he could fully obey this law and be declared righteous—he combined it with human commands and teachings—so that he would not fall short of it.

Remember the story of a certain rich ruler?

A certain ruler asked him, ‘Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?’ . . . You know the commandments: ‘You shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, honor your father and mother.’ ‘All these I have kept since I was a boy,’ he said. When Jesus heard this, he said to him, ‘You still lack one thing.’ (Luke 18:18–27 NIV)

This man was very much sure and proud to say that he was able to keep the whole law. Little did he know that the law he kept was already contaminated with human commands and traditions that made its standard low so it could become possible for man to follow.

These contaminations of the law had always been ascribed as the doings of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law. The Lord Jesus proceeded to bring back the high and perfect standard of the law by giving these statements:

You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’ But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. (Mat. 5:20–22 NIV)

You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away . . . And if

your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. (Mat. 5:27–30 NIV)

For a man just to be angry with his brother or sister already makes him a murderer. For a man just to look with lust at a woman already makes him an adulterer. To gouge out our right eye and to cut off our right hand if these cause us to stumble—these are all so hard and impossible to follow. With these set standards, everyone is sure to falter.

With regards to the Pharisees and Sadducees, the Lord Jesus gave this warning to His disciples:

Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees . . . Then they understood that he was not telling them to guard against the yeast used in bread, but against the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees. (Mat. 16:5–12 NIV)

The yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees contaminated the law with human commands and teachings thus lowering the standard and rendering it without authority as stated by this passage:

The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law. (Mark 1:21–22 NIV)

With this lowered standard and no-authority teaching, man began to think that he could obey the whole law and could become righteous with his own effort. He did not then see his real need—the need for the Saviour.

This is the reason why the Lord Jesus spoke so harshly against the Pharisees and the teachers of the law. Let us see the seven woes that were (repeatedly) spoken against them:

- **First woe:** ‘Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites!’ (Mat. 23:13)
- Reason: They shut the door of the kingdom of heaven in people’s faces. They themselves do not enter, nor will they let those enter who are trying to.

- **Second woe:** ‘Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites!’ (Mat. 23:15)
- Reason: They travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when they have succeeded, they make them twice as much a child of hell as they are.

- **Third woe:** ‘Woe to you, blind guides!’ (Mat. 23:16)
- Reason: They say, ‘If anyone swears by the temple, it means nothing; but anyone who swears by the gold of the temple is bound by that oath.’ They also say, ‘If anyone swears by the altar, it means nothing; but anyone who swears by the gift on the altar is bound by that oath.’

- **Fourth woe:** ‘Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites!’ (Mat. 23:23)
- Reason: They give a tenth of their spices—mint, dill and cumin. But they have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness.

- **Fifth woe:** ‘Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites!’ (Mat. 23:25)
- Reason: They clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence.

- **Sixth woe:** ‘Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites!’ (Mat. 23:27)
- Reason: They are like whitewashed tombs which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of the bones of the dead and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside they

appear to people as righteous but on the inside they are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.

- **Seventh woe:** 'Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites!' (Mat. 23:29)
- Reason: They build tombs for the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous. So they testify against themselves that they are the descendants of those who murdered the prophets.

The seven woes spoken again and again against the Pharisees and teachers of the law prove that mixing the old covenant with human traditions is really a great deal to the Lord Jesus. It was a great deal when the serpent succeeded in tempting Eve to partake of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil upon hearing her add 'you must not touch' to the words 'you must not eat'. It was a great deal that the Pharisees and teachers of the law (who were entrusted with the law) added human commands and teachings to it.

The Pharisees and teachers of the law were actually doing the work of Satan (the serpent)—the very reason why the Lord Jesus, after pronouncing the seven woes, proceeded to say: 'You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell?'

All peoples and religions of every nation are guilty of holding to the 'do not touch' teaching. The whole world, from the very beginning of time, is actually under the old covenant (God's law, with highest standard) but combined with human commands and teachings (lowering the standard) thus giving birth to all kinds of world religions. Take note that all religions teach their members to be kind and righteous, to be better persons, to be perfect in good deeds, to avoid wrongdoing, and to abhor evil (using human effort). No religion will ever teach anyone to be sinful or to be wayward.

This may sound good, but we do not perceive the problem, because people tend to be self-righteous and miss the very purpose of the law.

Through the law, we discover that we cannot, in any way, obey the commandments, thus we see the need for the Saviour.

But if we think we can obey the law (religion with low standard), then we will no longer see the need for the new-and-everlasting covenant to be saved.

This is the Egypt conflict, which is the second conflict. This represents that while it was God's intention for Israel to enter the land of its inheritance, it still needed to pass through the wilderness, because in the people's hearts, they were still slaves of Egypt. In the wilderness majority of them (if not all) died because they were not able to see the purpose of the old covenant (the law). Their hearts were inclined to go back to Egypt. In the same way, we were not able to see the purpose of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil because of Eve's 'do not touch' teaching (slavery to worldliness and human traditions) thus delaying us from our real inheritance—the tree of life.

Just like the Pharisees and teachers of the law, they were experts on the law and had known from the law that the Saviour would be coming to save the nation Israel. But when the Saviour came, right in front of them, of all people they were not able to recognise Him. In the same way, in the last days, there will be religious leaders and teachers who are zealous for God and expert on their own self-righteousness teachings but will fail to recognize the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus (and the Lord will tell them plainly: 'I never knew you!').

Let us read the following passage:

Brothers and sisters, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved. For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. Since they did not know the righteousness of God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. (Rom. 10:1–4 NIV)

4. The Serpent's 'Did God Really Say' Teaching

The serpent's 'did God really say' teaching refers to combining the new-covenant teaching with the old-covenant teaching (also called the serpent's deception, food sacrificed to idols, or the teaching of demons). This is also the mixture or combination of all the first three teachings.

God's chosen people are the only people who can be guilty of holding to this kind of teaching. We are under the new covenant, but the serpent has managed to deceive us to combine it with the old covenant or with human commands and teachings.

This is the skillful work of Satan from the very start until the end of time—to deceive God's people who belong to the tree of life and to partake of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and die.

Notice that after Adam and Eve ate from the forbidden tree, God immediately took a necessary step.

Let us read the following passage:

And the LORD God said, 'The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever' . . . After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life. (Gen. 3:22–24 NIV)

There are so many things we know in this life that exist together but cannot mix together. In the same way, the new covenant must not be contaminated with the old covenant, because life and death exist together but cannot combine or mix together. Once man partakes of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he will not be allowed to partake

of the tree of life. A flaming sword flashing back and forth represents how hopeless and impossible the situation of man has become.

But because of the grace and love of our God, He made the supreme sacrifice so that His people could be free from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and partake of the tree of life and live.

Our God has become not only our Creator but also our Saviour. But this is no easy matter—like passing through the flaming sword that flashes back and forth. We must note that it required a very high price in order to accomplish this—the precious blood of our Lord Jesus (the Sacrificial Lamb).

Let us read the following passages:

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, 'Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!' (John 1:29 NIV)

Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. (Mat. 26:26–28 NIV)

The Lord Jesus, knowing beforehand of how much He would suffer, was heard saying, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' Afterward, His body was beaten beyond recognition, and His blood filled the streets while He carried a wooden cross—a picture of great suffering while marching toward His death. He suffered physically and experienced the torments of hell for three days and three nights—the price He needed to pay just for us to be free from the old covenant and be part of the new covenant. The old covenant required an unusual ransom (the righteous blood of the Lamb) for us to be free from it as stated in the following passage:

For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal

inheritance—now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant. (Heb. 9:15 NIV)

Knowing this fact, the Church still did not understand and was continuously being deceived by the serpent. The Gospel being preached is no longer pure but contaminated—there is a mixture of the new-covenant teaching and the old-covenant teaching. We combine faith and human effort; we mix grace and works, giving birth to all kinds of church denominations.

This is the Babylon conflict, which is the third and final conflict in the Church before the Second Coming.

The Spirit said to John the Beloved:

Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea. (Rev. 1:11 NIV)

To understand more about the deceiver's deception that is represented by Canaan, Egypt, and Babylon, we need first to unveil the messages given to the seven churches. Five out of seven churches mentioned in the book of Revelation were given negative comments. Let us look at these negative comments and see if they are connected to each other.

- To the church in Ephesus: 'You have forsaken your first love.' (Rev. 2:1–7)
- To the church in Pergamum: 'You have people there who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols and by committing sexual immorality. Likewise you also have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans.' (Rev. 2:12–17)
- To the church in Thyatira: 'You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols.' (Rev. 2:18–29)

- To the church in Sardis: ‘You have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead.’ (Rev. 3:1–6)
- To the church in Laodicea: ‘You are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth.’ (Rev. 3:14–22)

To summarise, the negative comments are as follows:

- You have forsaken your first love.
- You hold to the teaching of Balaam.
- You hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans.
- You hold to the teaching of Jezebel.
- You have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead.
- You are neither hot nor cold.

The teaching of Balaam, the teaching of the Nicolaitans, and the teaching of Jezebel have two things in common—these are all about eating food sacrificed to idols and committing sexual immorality. Thus, the above list will become as follows.

- Forsaking first love
- Eating food sacrificed to idols
- Committing sexual immorality
- Reputation of being alive but being dead
- Neither hot nor cold

Let us now see the simple definition of each phrase.

- Forsaking first love: this is for married couples, one of whom forsakes the other by having an affair—having two covenants.
- Eating food sacrificed to idols: Scripture usually refers to food as equivalent to teaching and eating as equivalent to partaking; thus, one partakes of the teaching of God and, at the same time, partakes of the teaching of demons—having two covenants.

- Committing sexual immorality: this is again for married couples, one of whom forsakes the other by having an affair—having two covenants.
- Reputation of being alive but being dead: Scripture refers to those who eat of the fruit of the tree of life as being alive and those who eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil as dead, but the phrase refers to those who eat both fruits—having two covenants.
- Neither hot nor cold—this simply means having two covenants.

To summarise, each item on the above list indicates having two covenants. What the Church did not know and understand until now is that this mixture or contamination of the Gospel is actually a fulfillment of the prophecy. That same prophecy declared that the Church would eventually come to realize this deception and soon preach the pure Gospel. This will mark the end of time as revealed by this passage:

And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.
(Mat. 24:14 NIV)

Conclusion

To summarize and to conclude, the four teachings that have shaped world history are as follows:

1. The ‘tree of life’ teaching—representing *Jerusalem, our eternal inheritance*

- The new-covenant teaching
- The Gospel of life
- The law of the Spirit
- The ministry of the Spirit
- The ministry of righteousness
- The good news of the kingdom
- The good news of God’s grace
- The teaching of the apostles

2. The ‘tree of the knowledge of good and evil’ teaching—representing *Canaan, the first conflict*

- The old-covenant teaching
- The teaching of Moses
- The law (holy, righteous, and good)
- The commandment
- The power of sin
- The law of sin and death
- The ministry of condemnation and death

3. Eve’s ‘do not touch’ teaching—representing *Egypt, the second conflict*

- Combining the law with human traditions
- Yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees
- No-authority teaching
- Lowered standard of the law
- Result: **numerous world religions**

4. The serpent's 'did God really say' teaching—representing *Babylon, the third and final conflict*

- Combining new-covenant with old-covenant teaching (or mixture of the first three teachings)
- The serpent's deception
- Food sacrificed to idols
- The teaching of demons
- Result: **numerous church denominations**

The Lord Jesus' warning to the seven churches mentioned these statements: 'I hold this against you—you hold to the teaching of Balaam; you hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans; and you hold to the teaching of Jezebel.' This means that the Church (in earlier times and until the end of time) is in a condition where we actually hold to these teachings (but without even noticing it).

The book of Revelation was given to us so that we can know and understand the condition of the Church. This would help us to prepare for the Second Coming. Also, the last book of the Bible was intended to prove that the Gospel is a single message. This means that all books of the Bible carry only one vital message—the testimony of the Lord Jesus. The book of Revelation will connect all the dots and will show to us the perfect consistency of the Scripture. The last book of the Bible will not confuse but will reveal to us the big picture.

The book of Revelation, as the name suggests, means that this book has been given not to confuse the Church but to reveal the full Gospel message. The word *revelation* means the act of making something known that was secret; an enlightening or astonishing disclosure. The last book of the Bible is meant not to baffle us but to enlighten us.

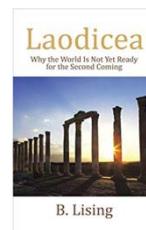
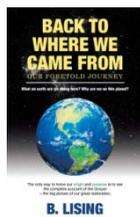
Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things. For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. (2 Pet. 1:20-21 NIV)

The book of Revelation can be better understood if we will realise that all mentioned imagery or symbolism refer to the following:

- One deception (confusion/mixture)
- Two powers (old covenant, new covenant)
- Three conflicts (Canaan, Egypt, Babylon)
- Four teachings (new-covenant teaching, old-covenant teaching, world religions, church denominations)

This will show that this controversial book was never written to confuse the Church—it is the testimony of the Lord Jesus, so it was designed to provide clearness.

We can refer to the following books if we want to go through the full details in understanding the book of Revelation:



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