

July 23, 2024

Dear Brethren and Friends,

Living in Colorado, I frequently see air quality alerts in the weather app on my phone. The source of air quality problems varies throughout the year, depending on what is happening in the environment. Normally these alerts indicate that the air pollution originates from automobile emissions, pollen, ozone, or smoke, among other things. They all affect the quality of the air in ways that can make it hard for people to breathe, especially for those who are sensitive to contamination in the air.

Most of the time, the degradation of air quality is imperceptible through our senses. We cannot see or smell the problems in the air, unless there's heavy smoke from nearby forest fires. However, quality problems are there, and they affect anyone who breathes.

What the weather app does not measure is the effect on air quality that originates from Satan's influence! Rather than cause difficulty breathing, the air quality problems caused by Satan's influence result in sin. "And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience" (Ephesians 2:1–2). Satan's spirit of sin pollutes the air in a way that is much different than other types of air pollution. His emissions affect people in the world everywhere, convincing them that the way of sin is right and good, to the detriment of their spiritual health. The job of the *Church of the Eternal God* and our international affiliates is to sound the alarm, because the spiritual air quality in this day and age is utterly terrible.

We don't have to look very far to see the effects of the evil influence upon the world right now. During this presidential election year, rhetoric pollutes the media in ways that polarize the nation, pitting ideologies against each other and breeding animosity. It is not uncommon to hear commentators say that civil war is closer than it has been since Abraham Lincoln became president. Hatred as the cause for a potential civil war is not godly. It results from an evil influence.

The moral degradation we see today is reminiscent of Sodom and Gomorrah, which directly results from the lies that Satan causes people to believe. People parade their pride in lifestyles that the Bible explicitly condemns. The mass media and prominent voices applaud the abominable behavior as well. People are deceived to believe that the murder of unborn children is a human right. Holidays that have pagan origins have been assimilated into religious worship that God condemns. The list of wrong things that people are convinced of as being right is inexhaustible. All of it is a result of spiritual air pollution.

We can learn lessons for today from Lot's experience about 4,000 years ago. In his time, the society in which he lived was so corrupt in their thinking and values that God had no choice but to destroy it. Satan polluted the air with so much of his spiritual garbage that God could not even find ten righteous people (compare Genesis 18:32–33). Satan's influence upon people to love the way of sin was so strong upon the culture of Sodom and Gomorrah that even the wife of righteous Lot looked back longingly to her corrupt home environment as angels led her away to safety. This caused her ultimate demise, leaving her as a pillar of salt (compare Genesis 19:26). We cannot see or smell the subtlety of spiritual corruption in the air, nor can we detect it with any other physical sense. But it is there surrounding us. If we are not careful to respond to the spiritual air quality alerts, Satan's influence will affect us.

Knowing that we live in a spiritually polluted environment, what can we do to protect ourselves? The answer is to control our exposure! The Bible tells us to be sanctified by the Truth—to be set apart from the rest of the world. We use the Truth of God to help us distinguish the lies that surround us. Jesus Christ knew that His disciples would remain in this corrupt world, and He prayed to God the Father to equip them for success in overcoming its influence: “I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth” (John 17:15–17). This prayer applies to us today. Maintaining our love for the Truth and abiding in it helps to protect us from the influence of evil.

As God calls us to learn the Truth revealed by His Word, we become accountable to live by it. The world may be corrupt with spiritual pollution, but we work to remove ourselves from it through the practice of righteous obedience. The Bible offers this warning and instruction, “And I heard another voice from heaven saying, ‘Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities’” (Revelation 18:4–5). To avoid the detrimental effects of sin, we work to repent, detoxifying ourselves from sin. We grow to love the Truth. We protect ourselves against contamination by bearing the fruit of righteousness.

It is the earnest desire of the *Church of the Eternal God* and our international affiliates to fulfill our commission. We are responsible for warning people about the spiritually polluted environment they are in, as well as equipping them with the tools to remain protected. With our modest resources made available through your tithes and offerings, we work tirelessly to produce material to edify, inspire, and strengthen you to withstand the evil that is so ever-present in this age. Please take advantage of it! We may live within a polluted environment, but we are empowered by the Truth, staying faithful to the end.

In Christ’s Service,



Eric Rank

PS We are happy to include with this member letter new Holy Days cards for the years 2025–2031. Additional free copies are available upon request.