

"For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?"

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PRAYER: If you need prayer, please phone or write:

Roger Decker, Pastor
83 Decrow Ave.
Newark, OH 43055

Email: pastor@church-of-god-online.com
Phone: 740-344-2543 or 1-888-730-0461
Fax: 740-344-4737
Print Shop Phone: 740-345-1312

This monthly religious journal is published for the benefit of the Church of God universally. It is our supreme purpose to reach the world for Christ through the printed page. Our burden is to reveal the truth of God's Word to all mankind, to expose sin and error, war against apostasy, and to eradicate the longstanding traditions of men that have no biblical foundations.

Brother Roger L. Decker Editor
Workers Too Numerous to Mention

THE CHURCH OF GOD BELIEVES IN:

- A personal God (John 4:24)
- A divine Christ (John 1:1, 14)
- An infallibly inspired Bible (2 Tim. 3:16-17)
- Salvation from sin (Matt. 1:21)
- The new birth (John 3:3, 5-7)
- A holy life (Luke 1:73-75; Titus 2:12)
- Sanctification (1 Thess. 5:23)
- Unity of God's people (John 17:21, Eph. 4)
- Divine, physical healing (James 5:14-16)
- The ordinances (Matt. 28:19-20; John 13:1 Cor. 11:23, 34)
- Eternal life (Matt. 25:46; Mark 9:43)
- The Trinity (1 John 5:7, 8)

**SOME SPIRITUAL FACTS
PERTAINING TO THE CHURCH**

- Jesus organized it (Matt. 16:18)
- On a good foundation (Eph. 2:20; 1 Cor. 3:11)
- Christ governs it (Eph. 1:22-23; Isa. 9:6)
- God admits members (1 Cor. 12:13-18)
- Sin puts you out of it (Rom. 11:22; Ex. 32:33)
- The saved only are members (John 15:2-6)
- Membership is offered to all (Rev. 22:17)
- Final rewards (Rev. 20:12-15; 21:3-4; 22:14)
- Bible name of the Church (Acts 20:28; Gal. 1:13; John 17:11)

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CONTENTS

"Why Sit Here Until We Die?". 3
 In Perilous Times We Need the Lord. 7
 Especially for Young People. 13
 The Good of the Land. 14
 God Wants Us to Remain Faithful. 20

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Quest
Editorial

**Cherubims and the Way of
the Tree of Life**

Part 4 of 4

Genesis 3:22 And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: 23 Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.

24 So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

For several issues we have been studying the cherubims mentioned in this Genesis account. In this issue we want to examine these cherubims a little further.

Ezekiel also received a vision and saw these cherubims. In Ezekiel 10:15 he said, "And the cherubims were lifted up. This is the living creature that I saw by the river of Chebar." He equated these cherubims with the "living creatures" that he saw by the river Chebar, which reverts right back to Ezekiel, Chapter 1, where he got a vision of what he called in Chapter 10 "cherubims." Ezekiel 1:1 states, "Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives by the river of Chebar [this is what he was referring to in Chapter 10], that the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God [he was merely saying his visions were of God, or of divine origin]."

Verses 2-12 say: "In the fifth day of the month, which was the fifth year of king Jehoiachin's captivity, The word of the LORD came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest, the

son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and the hand of the LORD was there upon him. And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the colour of amber, out of the midst of the fire. Also out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures [this is the vision to which he was referring]. And this was their appearance; they had the likeness of a man. And every one had four faces, and every one had four wings. And their feet were straight feet; and the sole of their feet was like the sole of a calf's foot: and they sparkled like the colour of burnished brass.

"And they had the hands of a man under their wings on their four sides; and they four had their faces and their wings. Their wings were joined one to another; they turned not when they went; they went every one straight forward. As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side: and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four also had the face of an eagle [you find the same description in Revelation 4:7]. Thus were their faces: and their wings were stretched upward; two wings of every one were joined one to another, and two covered their bodies. And they went every one straight forward: whither the spirit was to go, they went; and they turned not when they went."

Many truths are contained in this, but let us see if we can identify these cherubims. Verse 1 says, "I was among the captives." Here Ezekiel was in Babylonian bondage; he had been carried away. This was another dark hour in Hebrew history. (One thing about the faithfulness of God is that whenever we get in a dark hour, He will show us a brighter time as He did Ezekiel.) God let Ezekiel see a bright day when He gave him
(continued on page 24)

2 Kings 7:1 Then Elisha said, Hear ye the word of the LORD; Thus saith the LORD, To morrow about this time shall a measure of fine flour be sold for a shekel [about one dollar], and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria.

2 Then a lord on whose hand the king leaned answered the man of God, and said, Behold, if the LORD would make windows in heaven, might this thing be? And he said, Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof.

3 And there were four leprous men at the entering in of the gate: and they said one to another, Why sit we here until we die?

4 If we say, We will enter into the city, then the famine is in the city, and we shall die there: and if we sit still here, we die also. Now therefore come, and let

us fall unto the host of the Syrians: if they save us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall but die.

5 And they rose up in the twilight, to go unto the camp of the Syrians: and when they were come to the uttermost part of the camp of Syria, behold, there was no man there.

6 For the LORD had made the host of the Syrians to hear a noise of chariots, and a noise of horses, even the noise of a great host: and they said one to another, Lo, the king of Israel hath hired against us the kings of the Hittites, and the kings of the Egyptians, to come upon us.

7 Wherefore they arose and fled in the twilight, and left their tents, and their horses, and their asses, even the camp as it was, and fled for their life.

8 And when these lepers came to the uttermost part of the camp, they went into one tent, and did eat and drink, and

carried thence silver, and gold, and raiment, and went and hid it; and came again, and entered into another tent, and carried thence also, and went and hid it.

9 Then they said one to another, We do not well: this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace: if we tarry till the morning light, some mischief will come upon us: now therefore come, that we may go and tell the king's household.

10 So they came and called unto the porter of the city: and they told them, saying, We came to the camp of the Syrians, and, behold, there was no man there, neither voice of man, but horses tied, and asses tied, and the tents as they were.

11 And he called the porters; and they told it to the king's house within.

"Why Sit We Here Until We Die?"



Brother Roger L. Decker

A Bold Prophecy

The chapter previous to the Scripture text lets you know that Samaria was in the midst of a great famine and at war with Syria. The famine was due to Syria surround-

ing Samaria, cutting off their food and trade supply. It was so severe that a woman actually boiled her own son, and then she and another woman ate him. When someone told this to the king of Israel, he promptly rent his clothes and put on sack-

cloth. Then he got so bold that he spoke against the Prophet Elijah and threatened to take his life by beheading him. Elijah, no doubt, had given him advice concerning waiting on the Lord. The king could have blamed Elijah because he felt that

Elijah caused the famine. He knew that Elijah had power with God.

The Scripture goes on to say that Elijah was in his house in a meeting with the elders, possibly concerning the famine. Elijah was divinely warned that an executioner was on his way and that the son of the murderer had sent him to take away his head. The king was following behind the messenger; but as the king was on his way, he had a change of heart. Second Kings 6:33 says, "Behold, this evil is of the LORD; what should I wait for the LORD any longer?"

At the beginning of the Scripture lesson, you can read that Elijah made a very bold prophecy in the presence of the king. He said, "Hear ye the word of the LORD; Thus saith the LORD, [This prophecy was to let the king know that the next day the famine would end. One sign was to be that there would be plenty to eat and prices would go down.] To morrow about this time shall a measure of fine flour be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria." This was a strong prophecy by Elijah in the face of his executioner. How was this going to be possible in twenty-four hours? It would take a divine miracle, but God is a God of miracles.

In Luke 18:26-27 Jesus heard it said: "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God." When the disciples heard that a rich man would have a struggle entering the kingdom, they asked, "Who then can be saved?" Salvation is impossible with men. You cannot buy your way into the Kingdom of God. Also, you cannot live in sin all your life and then expect to come to Jesus in the last hour. I am afraid that many people are being deceived along this line, thinking that somewhere, somehow, they will get time to pray in the last hour of their lives. That could happen if a person does not have light and understanding. On the other hand, when people do have light and understanding, they may find that the heavens are brass in that hour. The only way you can

attain salvation is by way of the Cross of Jesus Christ.

The only way that the famine could lift in Samaria was if the Lord worked a miracle, because Elijah said it was all going to turn around the next day. That stopped the king in his tracks, and one of his officers got so bold that he mocked God and the man of God. He said in 2 Kings 7:2, "Behold, if the LORD would make windows in heaven, might this thing be?" Elisha said, "Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof." Well, God did not have to open the windows of Heaven. He used what was already on the earth. He took goods out of the hands of the Syrians and put them into the hands of the Israelites.

Making the Right Choice

The four lepers outside the gates were faced with three options. None of them seemed too great, but at least they chose the right one. Second Kings 7:4 says, "If we say, We will enter into the city, then the famine is in the city, and we shall die there: and if we sit still here, we die also. Now therefore come, and let us fall unto the host of the Syrians: if they save us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall but die."

They could enter the city of Samaria and die in the famine, sit where they were and die of starvation, or give up to the Syrians and be at their mercy as to whether they would be killed or allowed to live. They decided not to sit there and die but to get up and go into the Syrian camp. If the Syrians saw them, they might run a sword through them, but at least it would be instant death rather than gradually dying of starvation.

The lepers rose up in the twilight to go to the camp of the Syrians, and when they got there, no one was there. Second Kings 7:6-7 says: "For the LORD had made the host of the Syrians to hear a noise of chariots, and a noise of horses, even the noise of a great host: and they said one to another, Lo, the king of Israel

hath hired against us the kings of the Hittites, and the kings of the Egyptians, to come upon us. Wherefore they arose and fled in the twilight, and left their tents, and their horses, and their asses, even the camp as it was, and fled for their life." They thought the Israelites hired other kings to come against them in war.

Those lepers enjoyed a great feast, and they even found silver and gold and changes of raiment. They went from one tent to another enjoying the spoils. As they were eating and enjoying themselves, they began to think of their fellow Samaritans who were starving. Also, they thought that if they did not report their findings and others found that the enemy had fled, they would be punished for not reporting it. So they decided to return to Samaria to report it and proclaim the good news.

When the king heard it, at first he was suspicious and thought the Syrians had set a trap; so he sent out spies, and they found that the good news was true. Verse 16 states, "And the people went out, and spoiled the tents of the Syrians. So a measure of fine flour was sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, according to the word of the LORD." God took that which the enemy had and turned it over to the people of God to break that famine.

What about the officer who mocked Elijah and even God Himself? The Bible says in verses 17-20: "And the king appointed the lord on whose hand he leaned to have the charge of the gate [this was the same man]: and the people trode upon him in the gate, and he died, as the man of God had said, who spake when the king came down to him. And it came to pass as the man of God had spoken to the king, saying, Two measures of barley for a shekel, and a measure of fine flour for a shekel, shall be to morrow about this time in the gate of Samaria: And that lord answered the man of God, and said, Now, behold, if the LORD should make windows in heaven,

might such a thing be? And he said, Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof. And so it fell out unto him: for the people trode upon him in the gate, and he died." He got to see the spoil, but he did not get to eat of it, according to the Word of God.

Hope in a Hopeless Situation

I went into detail to give you the setting for the thoughts of the message. Let us look at the lepers' conditions. The disease of leprosy was sure death, but it was not as quick as starvation. As I said earlier, the lepers had to make a choice. They knew they were going to die of leprosy sometime, but they also knew that they would die faster of starvation. There was a possibility that if they got something to eat, the Lord would heal their bodies of the leprosy.

Leprosy is a type of sin. It has a little beginning, but gradually destroys the whole man, just as a little sin destroys the whole man. When sin begins to work in the heart, it proceeds to the man's spirit, and then it proceeds outwardly. The man starts making outward changes in his life, such as his attitude, his personality, and his character. A leper had to stay outside the camp because he was considered unclean. Likewise, the sinner is outside the camp of the saints. A sinner may be in a congregation, but he is not in the Church of God. There is a difference between the congregation and the church.

The lepers could only feed on the scraps or the leftovers from those who had mercy on them. Leprosy was a dreaded disease because it left its victims ceremonially unclean. They could not enter into worship, and their leprosy had to be diagnosed by the priest. Leviticus 13:3 says, "And the priest shall look on the plague in the skin of the flesh: and when the hair in the plague is turned white, and the plague in sight be deeper than the skin of his flesh, it is a plague of leprosy: and

the priest shall look on him, and pronounce him unclean."

As I thought about the situation that surrounded those lepers and their pitiful plight, I could not help but bring it up to date. Some who are sitting in congregations are dying spiritually, and some are already dead; however, they are in danger of the second death, which is eternal separation from God. The question is, Why sit there until you die? Even those lepers did not do that. Why try to live on a starvation diet, spiritually speaking? You must obey the Word of God to live, and you cannot live on scraps from others. You need to enjoy the supper. You cannot live on just a little understanding from God now and then, but rather you need to have a personal experience with Him. Why continue to sit there when God could drive out the enemy for you and you could enjoy the marriage supper of the Lamb?

When the lepers went to the camp of the Syrians, they were not expecting what they found. They expected to be at the mercy of the Syrians. If the Syrians let them live, fine. If they killed them, at least it would be a quick death with the sword. When the lepers got to the camp, they found that the Syrians were not even there. All that they needed was there, and that which they needed to share with their fellow Israelites was there. Likewise, at the marriage supper of the Lamb, there is a full meal for you to enjoy, spiritually speaking, and share with others.

Weighing Your Options

Those lepers did three things that you ought to do if you want to enjoy the blessings of God. First, they reasoned their situation and laid out their options. Their first option was to go into the city of Samaria and die of starvation with the rest of the people. Their second option was to sit where they were and die. Their third option was to go into the Syrian camp. They reasoned that they might get something to eat.

If the enemy had mercy and spared them, they would get their bellies full and regain their strength, and then the Lord might even heal them of their leprosy.

Friend, you need to reason your situation. The Prophet Isaiah said in Isaiah 1:18, "Come now, and let us reason together, with the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Why sit there and die spiritually? It does not make sense when God is so close to you. Young people are sitting around dying spiritually. They are not doing that which is reasonable.

Those lepers had death working inside them through starvation and leprosy. They knew that if they did not get something to eat, they were going to die soon. They chose to enter the Syrian camp because there was a spark of hope in that option. The other two options were sure death.

The second thing those lepers did was to make the right decision. Some young people attend the church services, but instead of paying attention to the messages, they write notes or letters to their friends. When someone new comes into the congregation, a good-looking young person, they flock to that one, to seek a boyfriend or a girlfriend without talking to God about it. Friend, God does not work that way. If you are spiritual, you want to know what God thinks about an individual. You should wait a while to see how that one walks. Some young people are so fleshly that they do what they want to do despite who tells them no. Young person, you need to watch out or you will marry the wrong person and have a fleshly marriage. You ought to pray that the Lord will direct you to the right companion.

We live in a day and age when people have three, four, or five marriages. That should not happen around the Church of God. Now, I am not saying that things in a marriage cannot go sour if one should

lose out with God, but it does not happen as often when people marry in the Lord. Sometimes a pastor has a battle on his hands as some young people flock around a new person in the congregation. What about his or her spirituality? Some seem to have the attitude, "Who cares about spirituality! Isn't he handsome?" or "Isn't she just beautiful?" That person may be good looking on the outside, but what is in his or her heart? You ought to wait on the Lord.

Look at the king. He was getting impatient, no doubt because he was starving to death. However, when the Word of the Lord came, things turned around and worked out right. Today some think, "I tried to serve God, but I had battles and the same old temptations." Our Scripture text lets you know that God drove away the enemy. When you get strong in the Word of God, then you can stand against the wiles of the devil.

Those lepers were weak where they were sitting. They knew they were dying, but they had a spark of hope. When they got to the Syrian camp, they found that God had chased away the enemy, so they partook of a feast. After they were full, they stopped thinking about themselves and started thinking about their brothers.

When God first dealt with me, I had a battle in my mind concerning whether I could overcome the tobacco habit, the going out every night, and other things. However, when I came to God, I found that the enemy had been driven away. All of those things that pursued me were drowned in the sea of wickedness, just as when Pharaoh and his mighty army chased God's people. The same sea that parted and delivered the children of God destroyed the Egyptians.

What did the prodigal son do when he came to himself? Luke 15:17-18 says: "And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to

my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee."

Friend, if you are away from God, it is time to arise and come back to your Heavenly Father and tell Him the truth. If you have sinned, tell Him that you have sinned. Do not just tell Him that you have made a mistake and then try to pray around your problem. He is looking at your heart. If you are truly repentant, you will be as the prodigal son. He said, "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee."

If you have sinned, be honest enough to admit it. I believe that the reason some individuals do not get deep experiences with God is that they are not honest. They are shady in their dealings with God, shady in their dealings with their parents, and shady with their boyfriends or girlfriends. If you are honest, as those lepers were, you will be filled with the good things of God. When those lepers reasoned their options, they did not have good choices in front of them, but there was a slight possibility in one option that they might live, so they jumped on it.

Jesus Has a Remedy

The third thing those lepers did was to share the spoil with their fellow men. They were really enjoying it and hid some treasures to go back to later, but then they began to think about their brothers and sisters in Samaria who were starving to death, and their consciences were troubled.

When you begin to enjoy the good things of God, it is not long until you want to share it with others and say, "Come to the marriage supper of the Lamb. Come and enjoy all the good things of God." The woman at the well got a revelation of the Son of God and was thrilled. The Scripture tells us what she did in John 4:28-29: "The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and with to the men,

Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?"

When you truly get saved and filled with the good things of God, you will spread the good news and share what you have found with others. Those lepers hastened to tell the king so others could enjoy the spoil.

Dear one, why sit there until you die? Why die in your sins when Jesus has a remedy for you? Are you thinking that you are going to have a good time until you become ill and then turn to God? Watch out! There is no age limit on death. When you leave this world, you may not have an opportunity to repent. All you need to do is put forth some effort, and God will rebuke the devil and all your sins will be gone. Then you can enjoy the feasting at Father's house and share it with others. If you do not stay active and share it with others, your experience will start to waste away. If you are enjoying the good things of God, you need to tell others about it.

Why sit there until you die? Why let days, weeks, months, and years go by while you get in a worse condition? The next thing you know, you will encounter a circumstance that you never fathomed would happen to you. Then when you try to find God, you may not be able to because you have hardened your heart against Him. You may laugh about it now, but the day will come when your laughter will turn to sorrow. Why sit there until you die?

You may feel, "What is the sense of even trying?" Well, those lepers could have felt that way. They had more against them than you do. They lived in the day when it was sure death to fall into the hands of the enemy, but they were willing to take that chance, because with that came a spark of hope. Friend, you can have newness of life if you will come to Jesus Christ. Why sit there until you die?

(Cassette C-4977E)

Psalm 126:2 Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, The LORD hath done great things for them.

3 The LORD hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad.

In Perilous Times, We Need the Lord



Brother Irwin Seshier

Are You Searching for Satisfaction?

Salvation is something to get excited about! No doubt, you would be excited if someone were to hand you a one-hundred-dollar bill, but you should be much more excited about salvation! I am not speaking of a ho-hum experience; I am speaking of eternal life! One songwriter described it as "joy unspeakable and full of glory." Oh, the unsearchable riches of Christ! It is wonderful to know that they are unsearchable. When you have these unsearchable riches, you can stand on the promises given to the Christian who is obedient to Christ. These promises are what the world is seeking. Some people are confused and do not

know which way to turn. I am thankful that I found the Lord, and I have found Him to be true.

People are experimenting with many things to find satisfaction. The devil is leading them down dangerous paths. Friend, the devil wants to confuse you. He does not want you to walk in the light. Sin will bring you down. It will take you down to a position as low as the animals.

Luke 15:11-17 reads: "And he said, A certain man had two sons: And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country [the devil wants to get you as far away from

the saints of God as possible], and there wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!"

As you look at this parable, you can see that one good thing about it was that the prodigal son came to himself. Sad to say, many prodigals have not come to themselves. They

are traveling down the path of life thinking that things are fine and thinking that things are just the way they have always been. They feel that as long as they have jobs, nice cars, well-built homes, and money in the bank that everything will be fine.

However, success is not related to how much material wealth you attain in this world. If that were the case, why are so many millionaires unhappy and why do so many movie stars turn to drugs and alcohol? They have all the worldly possessions they want, but they do not have salvation. They turn to material things thinking that those things will satisfy. Friend, the things of this world will not satisfy. Only one thing in this life can satisfy your soul, and that is Jesus. The devil will tempt you to dabble in many things, but you will never be satisfied with this life's worldly possessions.

Sinner friend, you will go back and forth, searching for something to satisfy, but you will not get anywhere. Before you know it, your life will be spent and your health and your money will be gone. Then your so-called friends will be gone too. When your money is gone, you will not have anything to draw them to you. A true friend will stay with you until the end. I thank the Lord for One who will stay with you, One who is closer than a brother.

When your money is gone and you have nothing else to show for your efforts, where does sin leave you? Friend, sin is a destroyer. It will destroy you faster than you realize. Sin may look good on the surface, but it will not give you any satisfaction, and it will take you down fast.

God's Way Is Always the Best Way

You may think, "Sin is not too bad on the surface." However, sin goes deeper than the surface. It is similar to the *Titanic*. The *Titanic* was a beautiful, luxury liner, but it only took a little iceberg in the North Atlantic Ocean to bring it down.

Where was most of that iceberg located? It was beneath the surface, and most of the *Titanic's* hull was underwater. Therefore, as it was traveling through the ocean, it hit that iceberg and sank, taking many people down to a watery grave. Most of the iceberg was below the surface, and that is exactly how sin operates. Sin has many underlying dangers that you cannot see. Many things happen out in sin that you cannot perceive ahead of time. Sin will ruin your reputation. You need to be careful.

In today's world many things can hinder the Christian, but the Lord will make a way. At times you may think there is no possible way out, but with God all things are possible. We need the Lord today more than ever. We are living in difficult, perilous, trying times; but I thank the Lord that we have Jesus to help us through.

You may say, "I don't think we are living in such difficult times." I have to disagree with you. What about our schools today? Being a teacher, I have seen schools go down over the period of years that I have been teaching. When discipline and God are taken out of the schools, terrible things happen. At one time the schools were one of the safest places to send children, but that is not so anymore. School violence is increasing. In April of 1999, I am sure that death was not on the minds of those students who were shot at Columbine High School in Colorado when they got up that morning. Death was probably the farthest thing from their minds that day. They were probably thinking about what they were going to do during the day and the friends with whom they were going to come in contact. Some of them probably had part-time jobs. Who knows what was going through their minds, but I can assure you that those students did not have any idea what that day held for them.

In the aftermath of the shootings, the media was asking, "Why did this happen? What was the

cause? Why did this senseless act of violence have to happen in this quiet community?" Friend, when men take God out of the schools, anything can happen. When men remove the commandments of God, anything can be exposed to children. When men take God out of the schools, we have a godless society. We do not have anything good or positive left in the schools.

We read in Proverbs 3:1-4: "My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments: For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee. Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart: So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man." Today many have forgotten the law of God. They think they have come up with a better way. They say, "Oh, that is too old-fashioned! We need to get with the times." Friend, God is always the same, and His way is always the best way.

Some theologians have come up with new ideas concerning following and serving God. Nevertheless, the old paths are still best. God's way is called "the highway of holiness." Only holy people can walk on this highway. Yet, religious people say, "I have found a better way." I always come back with the question, "Is it holy? Is it what the Lord directed you to do? Is this highway that you have found leading you in a more spiritual direction or is it sprinkled with more of what the world wants you to do?" When you start putting your wants and ideas first, it always leads to confusion.

Ask the Lord for Guidance

Too many people today are going on their feelings. They are leaning more toward fleshly desires, not really asking the Lord for His guidance. My friend, when you do that, you will become confused. John 16:13 says, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide

Beware of the Subtlety of Satan

you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come." When man starts leaning to his own understanding and reasoning, that is when confusion sets in.

There is much confusion in the religious world already. If you are not careful, confusion will slip right over into the Church of God. You must be careful to allow the Lord to direct your path. He can see that confusion and warn you. God always looks out for His own. You do not know what is out ahead on the road of life, but God knows exactly what is ahead of you.

In Psalm 71:1-5 we read: "In thee, O LORD, do I put my trust: let me never be put to confusion. Deliver me in thy righteousness, and cause me to escape: incline thine ear unto me, and save me. Be thou my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort: thou hast given commandment to save me, for thou art my rock and my fortress. Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked, out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man. For thou art my hope [how wonderful that we have hope in Christ Jesus], O Lord GOD: thou art my trust from my youth." Today many people are placing their trust and hope in things that will not endure. Awhile back a man had placed his hope and trust in bank securities. When he lost his money, he took a gun and killed his wife, his children, and several securities employees, and then the man turned the gun on himself. He was a relatively young man and had much going for him, but he did not have God in his life. What a sad situation!

Friend, this could happen to you if you do not have God in your life. I have heard people say, "Well, he just snapped." No, he had the devil in his life. The devil was leading him, and that was the reason he acted that way. We are not immune to the devil. The devil can come upon us; therefore, we have to be ready. When that man killed his

family and others, people were shocked. People were asking the question, "Why would he do such a thing?"

When God is not the center of your life, this is exactly what can happen. What people are doing today does not surprise me at all. People have tried to kick God out of our country, our businesses, and our schools. Friend, when you do not allow God to lead you, the devil will lead you to death and destruction. Many people are putting their faith, trust, and confidence into material gain, and it is leading them down the road to destruction. Dear one, we are living in difficult, perilous, and trying times. We need the Lord. Do not let anyone try to sell you a substitute when it comes to God. Many people buy the generic brands when they need to buy a prescription. You should go 100 percent with God! Do not say, "Well, just any religion will do." No, just any religion will not do! Too many people have thought that, and you can see what has happened to their lives. Their attitude is, "If I just become a little religious, I will be fine." That is not true, dear one. God's people do not want to be a little religious. Too many people today are doing that, and they are getting confused.

Too often people go on feelings or on what someone has told them. You cannot do that. You must depend on what God has told you and make sure that He is guiding your pathway. You need to lend your ear to what God is saying to you. On that final day at the Judgment, you will not be able to offer any excuses and say, "Well, I believed what So-and-so told me. I made my decisions based on what I felt he was going to do." You cannot do that. You must do what God has told you to do. Of the person that you tried to model your life after, you might say, "Well, he appeared to be a good person. He talked and acted as if he were a good person." If he was not following God, then you will be in trouble.

The Lord is faithful. Throughout the Bible, you can read of how faithful the Lord was in His dealings with man. You cannot read any instance where God was unfaithful to man. Too many people have the idea that they are wiser than God is. Heaven help us not to get that idea! It is a delusion to think that you know more than God knows. Sometimes your own human thinking and reasoning give you the impression that you know what is better for you than God does. That is a very foolish idea.

Genesis 3:1-3 states: "Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? [The devil asked Eve a question to get her to doubt God's Word. He often tries to get one to start questioning God.] And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die." That should have been enough to alarm Eve, and that should have been the end of the discussion. She should not have gone any further with it. However, that was not the end of it. When God said, "Do not eat thereof," that should have been enough for Eve, but she listened to the serpent. She did just as some today who lend an ear to people who are saying, "Oh, you don't have to listen to what he is preaching. You don't have to go that straight and narrow way. He has hit that part of the standard so many times; that does not apply to you." This exactly how the devil works today. He has not changed since the Garden of Eden.

While the pastor is preaching, the thought may come to your mind, "He is preaching to them. I don't have to listen to that part of the message. It's okay for me to do what I want to do." Does that sound like

the devil? That is the enemy speaking. It is not what God wants you to do. He wants you to draw closer to Him, and He will cause you to look at yourself, not other people. The devil wants you to get your eyes off yourself. He wants you to think, "Oh, it is he who needs help. I'm fine. I'm doing everything I should. I go to church, I attend the camp meetings, and I take part in the services. I'm doing fine."

Verses 4-5 read: "And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." In other words, the devil was saying, "Go ahead; you can handle it." If you listen to that voice, dear one, you are going to become confused and end up in big trouble. If you listen to Satan, before long you will give in to Him, and then you will fall into sin. Friend, do not give in to the devil and his devices. He is not going to offer you things that will cause you to become more spiritual or draw closer to God. He is attempting to drive you further away from God. That is his job.

God's Promises Are Always True

We read in Galatians 3:22, "But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe." Aren't you glad that we have that promise? Too many people are using man-made religion and trusting in broken promises. They are good people who give their time, their money, and their energy to something false. Sad to say, you cannot talk to them. They are so convinced that they are right that they will not listen to anyone. False prophets are leading people astray, not telling them the Truth of God's Word. That is so sad. I thank the Lord that I have a godly pastor who preaches the Truth. The Truth is not preached in many places today. I thank the Lord for the Church of God, because in the true

Church of God, you will hear the Truth.

Many people are more concerned about other things where they attend church: "Are we going to have enough for the rummage sale?" "We had better put a little bit more water in the soup for our soup supper." "Let's make sure that we get all these programs together so that we can raise enough money." However, they lack having a concern for men's and women's souls. What about the salvation of souls? Saint, you need to make sure that your number one concern is to help souls. To do that, you need true, spiritual worship. Where does a soul burden rate in the denominational world today? By the looks of things, it does not rate too high. As far as they are concerned, if you are a good, moral person and you attend church regularly or as long as you have signed a pledge card or have shaken the preacher's hand, you will be fine. Friend, that is not the way it is when you become a true, born-again Christian.

In John 10:1-2 we read: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep." Sad to say, some are trying to enter through the door by using human reasoning and by giving excuses concerning why they will not go all the way with God. They try to plead their case by saying, "God, I would serve You, but . . ." or "You know that I would do this for You; however . . ." The Scripture says, "He that climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber"; he did not say, "the same is like a thief." We all know where thieves are when it comes to the Kingdom of Heaven.

Dear one, since we are living in perilous, trying, and difficult times, we need the Lord. Do you have the Lord? You may say, "There is nothing I can do in this ungodly world." I ran across a poem that fits well here:

*One song can spark a moment.
One flower can wake the dream.
One tree can start a forest.
One bird can herald Spring.
One smile begins a friendship.
One handclasp lifts a soul.
One star can guide a ship at sea.
One word can frame the goal.
One vote can change a nation.
One sunbeam lights a room.
One candle wipes out darkness.
One laugh will conquer gloom.
One step must start each journey.
One word must start a prayer.
One hope will raise our spirits.
One touch can show you care.
One voice can speak with wisdom.
One heart can know what is true.
One life can make a difference.*

We Have a Hope

You need to look at what one can do. One man and God are in majority. We must use the time that God has given us, because we are only on this earth for a very short time. Alexander Woolcott once wrote, "There is no such thing in anyone's life as an unimportant day." That is so true. Although we are living in perilous, trying, difficult times, we have a hope. I thank the Lord for that hope! When we were in sin, we were hopeless. We had no escape and nowhere to go. We were doomed for a devil's hell. Psalm 71:5 tells us, "For thou art my hope, O Lord GOD: thou art my trust from my youth." The Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 5:1-2: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." He stated in Romans 15:4, "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." Paul said we have hope. Since it says that in the Bible, you need to believe it!

When I was floundering around in the waters of sin, not knowing if I was going down for the last time, I

did not know what was going to happen. Then God threw out the lifeline. Now, that lifeline would not have done me any good had I not reached out and taken hold of it. I thank the Lord that I did, because I was sick of sin. Friend, you are ready to do just about anything to change when you are truly sick of something. I was sick of sin. Child of God, do you remember when you became sick of sin? You need to remember that occasionally. You need to remember how sick you were of sin, and then you will not be so willing to go back to it.

The reason many people are not getting the help they desperately need is that they are not sick enough of sin. You have to be sick of something before you can get rid of it. For example, some people like spinach, but I do not. My parents made me eat spinach when I was a young boy, but I never did learn to like it. I learned a long time ago that spinach was not for me. Now when I go into a restaurant to order a meal, if they tell me that the vegetable of the day is spinach, I do not order it. The flavor of spinach has not changed. Similarly, sin has not changed. Sin is still sin, no matter how you try to dress it up or clean it up. The Lord still feels the same way today about sin as He did back then. Man may try to change their explanation of it and tell you that it is not the same, but to God it is still sin.

Dear one, if you do not have the Lord in your heart and life today, these difficult times will escalate and become as a huge mountain. Then the devil will move in and make you feel there is no hope. He will tell you, "Why try to go to church?" When people desperately need help in their souls, I cannot understand why they want to avoid church. When people need help, that is the last thing they should do. Attending the church services is where you are going to receive help. Some people say, "Well, I will get my help somewhere else. The world will give me the help I need." Now, you know the world is not going to give you spiri-

tual help or guidance. The world is against God and godly principles.

Be Steadfast

Child of God, when you try to live the Christian life in your work place and witness for God, people are going to start putting the heat on you. Some may ask you questions, but others may call you a few names. The world is not going to give you the lift you need to help you through the week. Some people give every excuse in the book concerning why they have not been to church.

At one time, organizations, schools, and sports programs would never think about scheduling meetings Wednesday nights or Sundays because people went to church, but today they willingly schedule activities during these times. Why? I believe that in some cases they do it just to get the people away from church.

When I was growing up at home with my mom and dad and company came to the house on Sunday, my parents did not say to each other, "Oh, we have company. We had better not go to church tonight." No, my dad said, "Well, it's time for church. Do you folks want to go with us?" Needless to say, we did not have much company during those times, because people did not want to go to church with us.

Dear one, though we are living in this evil day, it is no time to give up on the Lord. We have too many miles behind us, and we are too near home to give up on God. Some people have given up on God just because someone did not look at them right. People say, "Well, the pastor didn't speak to me. He acted as if he did not want me around." Have you ever thought that the pastor might be praying for you? Have you thought that the pastor is concerned about your soul and that he might have been meditating about you? More than likely you never thought about that. Church, you need to give your pastor more consideration

when it comes to things like that. Often people want to wear their feelings on their shirt sleeves, so to speak. As the people of God, we cannot do that. We do not know the pastor's schedule. Pastoring is not an easy job. Child of God, too many miles are behind you. You should not give up on the Lord when He has done so much for you. You need to think about that when the thought comes to your mind about giving up on God. When you need someone to talk to, He is there. You will not get a busy signal or be put on hold. Have you ever called someone and gotten put on hold? With God you will not be put on hold. That connection is always true.

Sadly, many have lost their connection with the Lord. They have let little things sever their connection with God. I call them "little mice." Little mice have climbed into the connector box and chewed on the lines, spiritually speaking. In talking to a phone man once, he said that people were having trouble with their phones, so he climbed up on the pole to work on a box with several wires in it. When he opened the box, he saw that some mice had gotten in there and built a nest. Those little mice were chewing on those connections in that box, and that was the reason people were having bad phone service.

Things That Can Sever Your Connection With God

Little things can eat away and sever one's connection with God. One thing is discontentment, or not being satisfied. The devil will tell you, "Nothing is good. Why should you follow Jesus? Look at those people. They are not following Him, and they are doing just fine." You have to watch out for discontentment. I am satisfied with Jesus, aren't you? When you buy a product, do you like getting those little warranty cards that say, "Satisfaction guaranteed or your money back"? When you have Jesus, your satisfaction is guaranteed. You do

not have to worry about it.

Isaiah 58:11 tells us, "And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not." When we do not have any rain, what happens to the soil, the vegetation, and the trees? Things shrivel up because they lack the water that they so desperately need. Spiritually, I am thankful for the water of the Word that keeps me where I need to be. God never fails.

Another thing that you have to be careful of is faultfinding. It causes people to say, "I cannot believe they are singing that song again" or "I cannot believe the pastor is going to let him do that" or "If I were in charge, I would show you how to run a camp meeting." Well, you are not in charge. The Lord is. If that is your attitude, I am glad that you are not in charge. There are too many so-called "armchair quarterbacks" sitting around thinking that they have a better way. Some say, "I could do this better" or "I can sing better" or "I can preach better" or "I could lead the singing better," and on they go. If things do not go their way, they think things are not right. Dear one, the Lord is in control. He knows exactly what you need.

The Holy Spirit directs our services. That is the reason we do not hand out printed programs in the Church of God, and I like it that way. It is just like putting your hand down in a doughnut bag. You do not know what you are going to pull out, but they all are good. You know that you are going to eat a good doughnut. Many churches today have scheduled programs because the Holy Spirit is not leading their services.

Another thing that can sever your connection with God is pride. It can cause you to say, "Look at me. You do not know who I am." Well, God knows who you are, and He is the One who matters the most. Proverbs 8:13 states, "The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and

arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate." We read in Proverbs 16:18, "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall." Mark 7:20-23 says: "And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man." Where do all these things come from? They come from within. When the heart is not right, it is exposed on the outside.

If you look at verse 22, you will see that the word *pride* is listed with some serious vocabulary. Pride can destroy a man or a woman. Dear one, you need to watch that very carefully. The devil can use pride to destroy you quickly. You need to remember that God made you, and He gives you the right use of your mind. Therefore, you should give God the glory. To God be the glory for all He has done!

The last thing that we want to consider that can sever your connection with God is self-pity. Self-pity will cause you to say, "Oh, you don't know my situation. If you only knew what I had to put up with." Friend, God knows all about you. If you were to talk to a manufacturer of washing machines, refrigerators, or dishwashers, he could tell you all there is to know about that appliance. He could probably take one apart and put it back together. If you were to say, "You are good at that," no doubt he would say, "Well, I make these." When someone makes a product, he knows the operation of it. Likewise, God knows all about each of us because He made us. You need to watch self-pity. The devil will try to get you to dwell on your own little problems rather than seeing the needs of others.

You may ask, "How can I get rid of these little things that can ruin the connection between God and me?" Well, when you stop and think

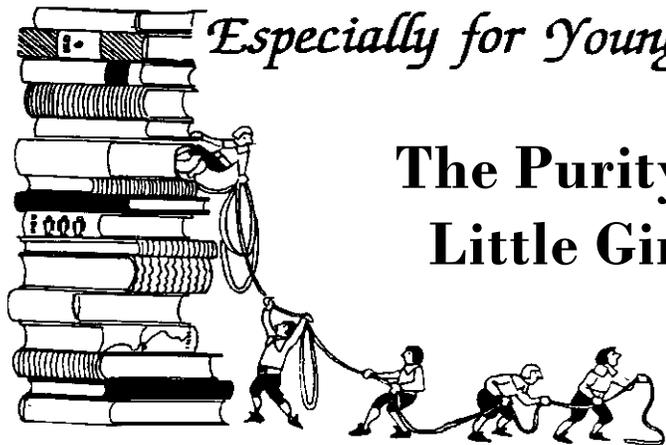
about it, there is usually an underlying cause for those conditions. Do you have anything in your life that you need to get rid of, to clean up your act, so to speak? If so, you need to drive it out. How? You can do that by getting more of God in your heart. You must do things that will help you to become more spiritual. You need to get in the church services and get involved. You have to do the things that God wants you to do. When you do that, the things that sever your connection with God will have to go.

Dear one, we are living in difficult times. I do not know about you, but I need the Lord in everything I do. He is my Rock, my strong high tower, and my fortress. Is He your Rock? Is He your strong high tower? Friend, you need to realize that you cannot make it without God. The enemy will try to convince you that you can, but it is impossible. You need God. As a Christian, you are going to have battles, but the Lord is mighty in battle. You just need to stay in the fight. Do not be so willing to give up. The Lord will direct you and help you. Do not think, "I can't do it." With God's help you can. The Lord will help you. More of God in your life will help you to fight the fiercest battles. Though you cannot do it in your own strength, the Lord will help you.

The battles that Christians have are more heated than ever. They are hotter today than they were last week or last month. If you do not have God as your leader, you will be overcome. Dear one, you can be an overcomer. Do not be overcome, but let God lead your life. He is the One you must please. When you try to please people, you are going to get in trouble. You cannot please people. Someone will always try to find fault with you though you try to do the very best you can. Many people are just spinning their wheels, trying this and that to please others. Are you an overcomer? Let God direct your life. He will if you let Him. If you let the Lord lead you and do everything He wants you to do, He will lead you the right way.

(Cassette C-4193A)

Especially for Young People



The Purity of Little Girls



"Listen, Mrs. Burnett," said Annie, "you know that I have a little fatherless child at the Home. However, you do not know any of the particulars of my story. Painful as it is, I am going to tell you that story, hoping that it will put you on your guard about your own little girls. My mother was a good woman, but she did not see that, from the time a girl begins to play with other children, every year of her life is a critical one. No, like you, she thought that the very innocence of childhood would see me safely through those early years, and then, with the dawning of young womanhood, she became tenderly solicitous and on her guard, but it was too late. I had started wrong when I was eight years old."

"How terrible," cried the woman.

"It is not necessary to conclude that I was an unusually depraved child. I wasn't, but I did have the intense curiosity about life's mysteries that other children have, and since I was allowed to play freely and for long hours at a time with little neighbor boys and girls in the orchard, the wood lot, and the large barn on my father's place, we children had ample opportunity to say and do a great many things our parents never dreamed. Yet," said the girl, with a bitter smile, "I have heard the mothers in our neighborhood congratulate themselves that we children had such a safe place to play as Father's big, old barn, with its many stalls and loft full of sweet,

clean hay."

Here Mrs. Burnett made a sudden motion as if to rise from her chair, and her eyes glanced uneasily out the back window toward the garage, a favorite play place for the children and their friends. Yet, she sank back again as Annie continued her story.

"Of course, we knew we were being very bad children, but the devil whispered that it did not make much difference what children did when they were so young; that we would not even think of such naughty things when we were older, but would be sweet and pretty and good like the grown young ladies we knew. This went on, now and then, for several years.

"By the time I was twelve years old, I began to realize it was not so easy to be a sweet, pure young girl as I had thought. I truly wanted to be, but the memory of those ugly things back there beat me down. I felt that I could never be like girls whose childhood had no black spots because they had been better cared for. 'What's the use of trying to be sweet and pure now?' I asked myself. 'I am different and nothing can alter the fact.' I grew reckless, and you know the rest of the story."

The girl was weeping by this time, and as she wiped the tears from her eyes, she cried out, "Oh, that mothers would realize how priceless is the modesty and purity of little girlhood! If they did, they would not be so careless of it or take so much for granted. They

seem to think that the child's chastity is a question of the future. But it isn't true; it is a question of now, and because parents do not see this, children are left together in the most unguarded way, and sin is much more common among them than you have any idea."

A silence fell between the two women. Mrs. Burnett was grave and thoughtful, and the excitement had died out of Annie's face. At last she said quietly, "The time will come, I suppose, when my little girl will learn from someone that her mother has not always been a good woman. But, by the grace of God, she will never be able to say that I was a careless mother, for I will guard her purity as the most priceless thing on earth; not only the purity of her young womanhood, but of her childhood as well. Also, because I want her to be a modest as well as a virtuous child, I will not put dresses on her which only half cover her little body."

Selected

Forethought
is better
than
repentance

Isaiah 1:4 Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward.

5 Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.

6 From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.

7 Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers.

8 And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a

garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city.

9 Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah.

10 Hear the word of the LORD, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah.

11 To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats.

12 When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts?

13 Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting.

14 Your new moons and your ap-

pointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them.

15 And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.

16 Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil;

17 Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.

18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

19 If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land:

20 But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.

The Good of the Land



Brother Allen Polston

Consider Your Latter End

I want you to consider verse 19, which says, "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land." The people of God need to consider the days that lie ahead.

God stressed throughout His Word for man to have his mind not only on present things but also on what lies ahead. Child of God, you have to make many decisions each day, and it is very important that you consider the end results of those

decisions. Often when you make decisions, it might be days, weeks, or months down the road before you can see the effects of those decisions. At the time you make a decision, it may seem fine. You may think, "I don't see anything wrong with this.

It's a very common thing"; so you make that decision with little thought. It may be a few weeks or it may be a few years before you see the effects of that decision. Often the results are not as pleasing as when you first made the decision.

Many times the long-term effects are much different from the short-term effects, though this is not true in every situation. You can see the outcome of some decisions right away. If you picked up a hot pot of coffee without using the handle, you are going to feel and see the effect of that decision immediately.

When I come home from work dirty and take a hot shower, the results are immediate. God has given you the mind to make good decisions, and He expects you to use good judgment and take care of yourself. We make many minor decisions every day. We do not have to seek God about such things. However, what happens in too many cases is that people become too confident in themselves. They seem to do well in the little things in their lives, so they begin to decide serious issues without seeking God's counsel. They do not look into the Book to find out what God thinks, and they start making decisions without the help of the good Lord. This is the reason many people get into trouble.

Deuteronomy 32:29 says, "O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!" God wants you to consider what lies ahead of you; He wants you to consider your latter end. Throughout the Bible, God has admonished people to look past temporary situations and temporary pleasures, things that thrill the flesh but cost much heartache down the road. God admonishes you to think about what is down the road. You may enjoy yourself in sin for a little while, but God wants you to consider what lies ahead of you. Later you are going to feel effects that you may not think about now.

The devil is going to do his best to get your mind turned so that you

do not think about your latter end. That is the reason so many young people go against the warnings they have heard repeatedly. They know, without a doubt, that there is a God in Heaven who will bring judgment upon them one of these days. However, the devil causes them not to think about what will happen if they turn against God's Word. Often young people back away from the truths that the pastor is upholding in the congregation. They let down on the standard of God's Word little by little, because they do not consider that a little leaven leavens the whole lump. They fail to consider their latter end.

The Folly of Trying to Satisfy the Flesh

Let us look at the story of the rich man in Luke. Luke 12:16-20 tells us: "And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?"

This man thought he was doing well in this life. As for this world, he was getting along well. The Scripture says that his ground brought forth plentifully. He had more than he could possibly use. However, this rich man did not consider his latter end, and he failed to stop and look into God's Word. He did not pray or seek God's will for his life. Instead of seeking God's will for his life and considering what would happen down the road, he wanted to do something for the flesh. He was aware that he had a soul, because he

said, "Soul, thou has much goods laid up for many years." He realized that he was responsible for his soul, yet he decided to gratify the flesh. That is how the devil deceives people. He says, "Don't think about what is down the road. Don't think about what God said about eternity and Heaven and hell. You're young! You have a long life ahead of you."

The devil uses different approaches for each age group. One way the devil comes at me is to say, "Look how beautiful it is outside. Quit studying the Bible. You can do it later. Why don't you get your fishing pole and go fishing." Now, there is nothing wrong with fishing occasionally, but the devil tries to get people bound with the things of this old world. He will try to get you so busy that you do not consider the things of God and only think about pleasing the flesh. Satan does not want you to think, "If I don't study the Bible or pray today, I will not have the power with God that I need or the wisdom from God that I need. I am not going to get my soul fed." God still says that you need to take care of your soul. You need to think about your soul's condition.

To the young people, the devil says, "You are young; you have to go to college. You need to get a job and find a companion. You have so many things to do that you don't have time for the things of God." However, God wants you to consider Him first. He wants you to think about the consequences of the decisions you make. If you get God in your soul, He will help you to make the right decisions.

When people first start smoking cigarettes, they do not think about what could happen, such as the suffering that lung cancer will cause. I remember when I first started smoking (I thank God that He delivered me from that habit). The devil would not let me think about what could happen down the road. He wanted me to think about being cool. The drunkard who spends many hours suffering a slow and painful death from cirrhosis of the

liver never imagined that would happen to him when he first began to drink. He was just partying a little with his buddies. That is how the devil ensnares people. He says, "Just party a little. Why not take a few drinks. Why don't you lighten up and try to fit in with the crowd?"

Stand Against Compromising Spirits

To a Christian young person, the devil says, "You are so different. You've been so good all your life. Loosen up a little." The devil will tell you many things. He does not want you to consider how something will affect you down the road when it has destroyed your health. The devil does not want you to consider the possibility of sitting behind iron bars in jail someday, thinking, "Why did I get into this position?" He wants you to think about being the life of the party, how to make yourself feel better, and how you can become popular with your friends by drinking a few beers with them. The devil is out to get you to live for this day and not consider the rest of your life.

Friend, you need to consider what God wants you to do. God uses His Word and His Spirit to warn you to be careful and to be wise concerning your life. On the other hand, the devil has introduced the slogan, "If it feels good, do it." He does not want you to think about what the latter end of telling one little "white lie" would be. He wants you to think, "If I tell the truth, it's going to make me look bad and I am going to be shamed." The devil will say, "Why not change your story just a little. Don't tell it exactly how it is." He does not let you consider that when you tell one lie, you will have to tell another one to prop up that one, and then you will have to tell an even bigger one yet. Before long you will get in such a mess that you will say, "I can't live for God anymore."

Saint of God, the devil does not want you to consider what a little compromise will do. He would like

for you to let down on a few little things and quit being so old-fashioned. The devil does not want you to consider what is going to happen in a few years if you start letting down on little things. You will become just like all the other sectarian denominations, places where they do not have an ounce of the Spirit of God. They do not have God in their services or in their souls. Saint of God, you must stand against compromise. I want to stand against compromising spirits that the devil is putting out today! He is trying to get people to compromise, and some are giving in to him. Saint, you need to dig right into the things of God. You need to take your stand with God. No matter what kind of persecution or tribulation it causes, you need to say, "I am going with God. I am not compromising. I am not changing." God's Word is Truth; it is what set you free. You need to determine, "I am going to stay with Truth. I am not going with the world. Let people go if they want to go. I will pray for them, but I am not going to go with them. I want to stay with the Truth." Only Truth can set you free and keep you free.

Young person, you need to consider what is down the road if you leave Truth. If you go out into sin, you need to consider what is going to happen. Galatians 5:9 says, "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." The devil knows that if he can get you to let down a little now, he can get you to let down more later.

In light of our Scripture text, we each are responsible for the actions that we take. Through these verses in Isaiah, God told what a terrible condition men had gotten into. Many of those who professed to be God's people were getting into a terrible condition. Verse 5 tells us that "the whole head is sick." Verse 4 tells us why. It says, "They have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward." They had turned away from the truths that God had given them and turned to the things from

which God had set them free. We read in verses 9-10: "Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah. Hear the word of the LORD, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah." Through the Prophet Isaiah, the Lord was telling them, "I am sick of your making sacrifices when you really do not mean it." In other words, He was saying, "I am sick of dead religion, of your professions without possessions."

In verse 18 God said, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." I thank God that though my sins were as scarlet, they became white as snow when I came before God. He did not turn me away. Though I had gone to depths that I am not proud of, God did not turn me away. Friend, He will not turn you away either. If you have sinful things in your life and you feel, "I can't serve God. I have done too many bad things," God can help you. He can set you free and save your soul. No matter how many times you have tried to live for God and failed, He is still waiting for you to truly sell out so He can take your sins that are as scarlet and make them white as snow. When God cleanses your heart, not one spot will be left upon it. If you live for God, you will not have to wake up the next morning feeling guilty about what you had done the night before. You will not have to bear so much if you will come to God and let Him save you to the uttermost.

The Blessings of God

In our Scripture text in verse 19, we read, "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land." God was not speaking of the good of the land in the way that most people in our day might con-

sider it. Luke 12:15 says, "And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." God is not interested in how many houses you own or in how many fancy pieces of art work you have hanging on your walls. He is not interested in your material wealth. That is not what "the good of the land" is referring to. Let us look in the Old Testament to see what the phrase "the good of the land" refers to. In Nehemiah, Chapter 9, the author wrote about how the people of God had been delivered out of Egypt. Verses 20 and 25 read: "Thou gavest also thy good spirit to instruct them, and withheldst not thy manna from their mouth, and gavest them water for their thirst . . . And they took strong cities, and a fat land, and possessed houses full of all goods, wells digged, vineyards, and oliveyards, and fruit trees in abundance: so they did eat, and were filled, and became fat, and delighted themselves in thy great goodness."

During this Old Testament time, the people did not have available the many things that people today consider to be the good of the land, things that did not involve sin. Our Scripture text says, "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land." In other words, "If you will be willing and obedient, you can have all the wonderful things before you. You do not have to go the way of the world and the way of sin."

Deuteronomy 6:11 tells us what good things the Lord will give: "And houses full of all good things, which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not; when thou shalt have eaten and be full." God was giving the people things that they were unable to attain or purchase themselves, things they did not deserve. He said He would give those things to them if they were willing and obedient. That is what made it so

good. God just laid those blessings at their feet. That reminds me of Philippians 4:19, which says, "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." That is what God does when you get saved.

One songwriter penned: "I'm a millionaire, I'm a millionaire, My Father is rich in houses and lands and I'm his heir. I'm a millionaire, I'm a millionaire, I'm a happy millionaire." You might not have a dime in your pocket, but if you are willing and obedient to what the Word of God says, God will let you eat the good things of the land. He will bless your soul above that which you could ever imagine. Nothing in this world can come close to how God can bless your soul. No sinful pleasures can be compared with the blessings of God. Nothing can compare with having God to supply your needs. The devil might have planted the idea in your head, "I'm having a good time," but that cannot compare with what God can give you if you will live for Him. If you partake of the world's activities, you will get in bad shape. I know this is true because I have been on both sides of the fence, and I want to stay on God's side of the fence. God's way is far better than I can express to you. The grass is not greener on the other side of the fence, because I have already been there. The good of the land is with God; it is in the things of God.

Sin's Prospects All Deceive

The world views the good of the land as a high-paying job, a luxurious home, a nice sports car, social acceptance, and a large bank account. Although there is nothing wrong with having those things, that is not what I am striving for. I am striving to get closer to God, to be more conformed to the Son of God. God's Word is a pattern of how Jesus lived and walked, and the only way you are going to receive the true blessings of God is to follow what He has given you. In Isaiah

55:2 the Prophet asked the question, "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness." In other words, "Why do you go out and struggle so hard in the world to become satisfied? Why are you putting yourself through that to try to get happiness in your soul? Why don't you turn to God? You would be so much better off if you would give your life to Him. If you will hearken diligently and be willing, you can have the good of the land and God will bless your soul. He will give you a work to do that is rewarding, a work that will keep you busy and occupied in the things of God and bless your soul abundantly."

I saw a billboard alongside the roadway showing some boys playing basketball and drinking light beer. The slogan on the billboard said, "Life is good." Well, it may be good for a little while, but they are going to have to reap that. They are going to have to pay for their drinking. Life will not be so good when they start reaping, when they are suffering and dying of cirrhosis of the liver or lung cancer. Young person, if you are involved in sinful acts and you think it is good right now, you need to keep in mind that it is not going to be so good one day when you start having to reap what you have sown. You will say a thousand times, "I wish I wouldn't have done that. I wish I had gotten saved when I was younger."

Friend, you can have the good of the land and partake of wonderful things for your soul. I am not talking just about physical eating, but you can have the "good of the land" in a spiritual sense, a place where your soul is so blessed. How? You need to say, "God, I am going to leave the sinful life behind and go with You. No matter what people say about me or how strong the temptation is to go back with my friends, I am going to go with You."

I like the song that says, "I've tried the road of sin and found its prospects all deceive; I've proved the Lord and joys abound, More than I could believe." To serve God and partake of the good things that God supplies is more blessed than you can even conceive. There are no disappointments in serving God. If you have let the devil talk to you about going back into sin, what are you thinking? You need to get victory over that and rebuke the devil. You cannot truly have a good life in sin.

The Law of Sowing and Reaping

The good of the land is not what the world would lead you to believe. Hollywood portrays people having adulterous affairs as the life to live. They are with one person one week and the next week they are with someone else. Often you do not see the end results of that lifestyle. People who live that kind of life have to carry guilt and condemnation, not to mention the diseases that come with that kind of lifestyle. Those people reap terrible things. The world would have you to believe that going to parties, dancing, living it up, drinking, and having worldly popularity is good and delightful; but that will not last long. That kind of lifestyle cannot satisfy you. Oh, it may please the flesh for a little while, but it really hurts when the reaping comes.

There is a spirit in casting off all restraints and going wild. Young people are tempted to cast off all their restraints. The devil tells them, "You are eighteen now. Just cut loose and go wild!" However, they will pay for that in a few years. It will not take long before it will not be pleasurable anymore. Engaging yourself in all manner of ungodly conduct will bring guilt and condemnation to your soul.

When I first got saved, I had a friend to whom I spoke concerning his soul. I lived the Christian life in front of him, but he determined in his mind that he was not going to be

a Christian. Today he is so miserable. A few years ago he said to me, "I am so confused and messed up." He had been drinking and using drugs. Had he given his heart to God earlier in his life, he would not have to suffer so many bad things. Friend, you can avoid having to reap the effects of sin in your life if you will get right with God and do what He would have you to do. The worldly pleasures that the world and Hollywood support will leave your soul empty and void of real happiness and satisfaction. Moreover, you will lack the peace that you are really longing for in your soul.

Galatians 6:7 says, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." When the farmer plants a kernel of corn in the ground, it is just a small kernel in the ground. After the growing season, the farmer will go out and harvest hundreds of kernels of corn. Friend, if you are sowing small seeds of sin and fleshly pleasures, when you start reaping, it is going to be multiplied.

The Living Bread

"The good of the land" is that thirst-quenching water of life that you can drink from the Word of God. It is the Living Bread that brings eternal life to your soul. Only the things of God can satisfy your soul. Jesus spoke of the Living Bread in John 6:51. He said, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." You can have everlasting life if you will go with the things of God; that is the good of the land. What could be better than everlasting life and light in your soul? Having your soul enlightened to spiritual things is "the good of the land."

In John, Chapter 4, you can read the story of the woman at the well. In John 4:14 Jesus, speaking to this woman, said, "But whosoever drink-

eth of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." Friend, if you have not really tasted this Living Water, you are missing such a blessing in your soul. It is a thirst-quenching water. I am so glad that one day I tasted of this wonderful thirst-quenching water; it is wonderful! There is nothing better! Do not allow the devil to tell you there is something better out there.

Young person, if you are planning to go to college, you need to live where you can still attend the church services. You need to be where the Truth of God's Word is going forth. God gives peace, but not as the world gives. He gives joy unspeakable, and it is full of glory. He will give you a love for all mankind. James 1:17 says, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." Every good gift is from God; every good thing that you enjoy is from God.

In Genesis 2:7-9 we read: "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil." God planted a garden, created man and breathed life into him, and then He put man in it. He put everything that was good and pleasant in that garden.

Verses 16-17 read: "And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." God was portray-

ing the same message here in Genesis that Isaiah brought in Isaiah, Chapter 1. He said, "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land." In Genesis, God said, in essence, "You can eat of all the trees except one." God wanted man to be obedient and serve Him. He put man in the midst of that beautiful garden where he had everything he needed.

Just as God placed Adam in the Garden of Eden, He will place you where you can find everything you need. When you are feeling sad, He will cheer you up. When you are feeling ill, you can partake of divine healing. God will supply your every need, but you have to resist sin. God said, "If you will be willing and obedient, you will eat of the good of the land."

Saint of God, if you are willing to go with God and be obedient to all the Truth that you have learned, God will bless your life and cause you to eat the good of the land. Just as it was in the beginning, so it will be now. God will give you more than enough to satisfy your soul and fill your life with happiness. In the Garden of Eden, Adam could not eat everything because God just kept replenishing it. Adam had to tend it, but as long as he was obedient, God gave him all he needed.

Be Doers of the Word

To receive the good of the land, you must be obedient to the Word and the Spirit of God; they are two separate entities. Some people say, "Well, I'm going to go with the Bible, and that is it. I'm not going to do what the pastor says, because I have my Bible." The Spirit of God anoints the man of God, and you need to follow him as he follows Christ. God, through His Spirit, sends the pastor what you need. He stands high upon a wall and sees further than you can see, because you are within the walls. The man of God can see impending danger. You may say, "Oh, I cannot see any danger in doing this little thing." The man of

God is standing up on the wall, and he can see dangers that you may not see. You have to be willing to follow not only the Word but also the Spirit. You cannot disregard either of them. You must have both to live this life of holiness. James said in James 1:22, "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves."

Friend, if you are willing and obedient, good things will happen. If you are willing and obedient to God, He will send you the right companion. You will be happier and more satisfied with the companion that God sends you than with any one you could find out in the world. You may think, "I am going to find a companion." If that person is not the one whom God has for you, you are going against God's will, and you are heading for trouble. When you find the companion that God has for you, you will feel that you and your companion are one. It is wonderful when God gives you the right one. If you are willing and obedient, God will bless you with a nice family. He will supply all your needs because His Word says so. Also, if you are willing and obedient, you will make Heaven your home.

Friend, you have a decision to make: are you going to follow God or refuse and be lost? Some people say, "We all are predestinated, so we don't have any choice in the matter." Friend, that is not true, and it does not line up with God's Word. You must make that decision today and each day of your life. Look again at our Scripture lesson. Verse 19 says, "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land." However, verse 20 says, "But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it." God's Word is described as being "sharper than a two-edged sword." My friend, if you rebel and refuse to go with God in your life, this Book tells what your end will be. A certain rich man spoken of in Luke 12:16-20 refused God, and God said, "Your soul will be required of you this night." That

man was not ready to go, and he ended up being lost forever.

The rich man spoken of in Luke 16:19-31 fared sumptuously every day, but he did not go with God. The Bible tells us what his end was in verse 23: "And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments." Friend, you have the opportunity to have such a wonderful and blessed life. God has laid it all before your feet. You need to really think about the decisions you are making. Consider what the end of those decisions will be. Consider what your life would be like without God. You need to consider both sides of the story. If you have God, you will have wonderful blessings and can eat of the good of the land. If you do not have God, you will be devoured, because the enemy is roaming about looking for those whom he can devour. If you refuse to serve God, the devil will take you down. It does not matter to him how; he will take you down any way he can.

Young person, if you were raised in the Truth and have turned against God, Romans, Chapter 1, lets you know that you can be turned over to vile affections and all kinds of ungodliness. My admonition to you is to hold on to the things of God. Won't you be willing and obedient to whatever God shows you? You need to ask God to reveal His will to you so that you can do it. You must be willing and obedient to what God would have you to do so that you can eat the good of the land.

(Cassette C-3253E)

**When we let
God
GUIDE
He will
PROVIDE**

Psalm 12:1 Help, LORD; for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men.

2 They speak vanity every one with his neighbour: with fattering lips and with a double heart do they speak.

3 The LORD shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaketh

proud things:

4 Who have said, With our tongue will we prevail; our lips are our own: who is lord over us?

5 For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the LORD; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him.

6 The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.

7 Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.

8 The wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted.

God Wants Us to Remain Faithful



Brother E. David Stegmeier

"Abide With Me"

We are living in a day of uncertainty. People are asking questions and wanting answers. More than ever, I feel the need of seeking God. I plead with God, "I need You. I must have Your grace and wisdom. I need Your divine direction."

Life is so complex and so complicated. A feeling of fear and apprehension is all around us. As God's people, we can be absolutely certain about some things. Of all people in the world, the Church of God has a positive message. I feel very confident, not in myself, but in God who never changes.

We are living in a time of great transition. Governments and nations

are changing, and ideologies of nations are changing. Government and religious leaders are going back and forth. Finding people who are dependable and trustworthy is difficult. I have known people, some for a long time, and the stand they are taking today is different from what they have taken in the past. That concerns me, and it also frightens me. We can see changes all around us. Time is swiftly moving on, but as it goes on, it changes continuously. As a minister of God, my heart's cry is, "Where are the faithful people?" God has a wonderful nucleus of faithful people. Saint, may God help you to remain faithful.

One song that I have heard quite often at funeral services says this:

*Abide with me, fast falls the ev'n tide.
The darkness deepens. Lord, with me
abide.*

*When other helpers fail and comforts
flee,
Help for the helpless, Oh, abide with
me.*

*Swift to its close ebbs out life's little
day,
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass
away.*

*Change and decay is all around I see.
O Thou who ehankest not, abide with
me.*

*I need thy presence every passing hour.
Thy grace can foil the tempter's power,
Who like Thyself, my guide and stay
Can be through cloud and sunshine.
Lord, abide with me.*

*I fear no foe, with thee in hand to bless.
Ills have no weight and tears no
bitterness.
Where is death's sting? Where grave thy
victory?
I triumph still if Thou abide with me.*

I am speaking on a subject that is very important to me. My heart's cry is, "Lord, give us faithful, trustworthy, unchangeable people." I want to encourage you and help you. Church of God, God wants us to remain faithful to the Truth with which He has entrusted us. God needs faithful, unchangeable men and women in this day of unfaithfulness. Too many are proving disloyal to the cause of God, the man of God, and one another.

God is looking for people who have fixed and settled experiences of salvation. He wants individuals upon whom He can count. Our choir sings the song, "He Can Count on Me." Can God count on you? Can the man of God count on you? Can the Sunday school teacher count on you? Can the choir director count on you? Can they say, "I know he or she will be there." There is a good nucleus in my congregation that I can depend on. I know they will be there no matter what the weather is like. It makes no difference if the church is going through hard times or times of ease, I know that they will be there and that I can count on them. We need more of those types of people.

Putting Confidence in Unfaithful Men

As I seek God every day, I pray, "God, please direct me to a thought or a Scripture that will help these dear people." Friend, I want you to be faithful to God to the very end and faithful to the man of God. Proverbs 25:19 says, "Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint." Have you ever tried to chew with a broken tooth? Just a little pressure on it hurts. That is like an unfaithful person. When the pressure is on, he causes pain and dis-

comfort. You cannot put pressure on an unfaithful man. He will blow up and cause you all kinds of problems. Do you know what happens when a foot is out of joint and you try to put pressure on it? It really hurts. When the pressure is on it, you feel the pain. So it is with an unfaithful man.

Another translation says, "Putting confidence in an unreliable man is like chewing with a sore tooth, or trying to run on a broken foot." In other words, it is very difficult. For the church to go on, she needs faithful, reliable, dependable people. I am glad that some congregations have a tremendous nucleus of those types of people. I want to encourage you to continue to be faithful to the very end.

When I was in high school, I played football for four years. My coach said, "When the going gets tough, the tough get going. Stegmeier, get out there and work!" I was a halfback, and once he hollered at me, "Stegmeier, my grandmother can run faster than you can." That mortified me, so when I got the ball, I ran as I had never run before. When the going gets tough, the tough get going. You need to be dependable. May God help you.

Proverbs 20:6 says, "Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?" Another translation says, "Most people will tell you what loyal friends they are." Have you ever had someone tell you, "I really love and appreciate you. You are a great person, and I am right behind you all the way." Most people will tell you what loyal friends they are, but are they telling the truth? An old adage says, "Talk is cheap; let's see some action." The Bible says that if you love someone, you will show it by your deeds. Sometimes when people say they love me, it makes me feel really good, but then I hear some things that do not sound so good. Talk is cheap, but sometimes people's actions tell you that their love is hypocritical.

Hold to God's Unchanging Hand

From our Scripture reading, I want to focus on the first two verses as our text: "Help, LORD; for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men. They speak vanity every one with his neighbour: with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak." In other words, they are two-faced. I do not like that, and God does not like that. The Psalmist was writing this while going through a very difficult time. Today we are living in an extremely difficult time. The Psalmist was saying, in so many words, "O Lord, where are the faithful people? Where are those who will stand with me as I stand for Truth? Lord, godly men are disappearing. Where can dependable men be found? Everyone deceives and flatters and lies." You may say, "My, he was rather pessimistic there." I believe that what he said was true. Almost everyone deceives and flatters and lies; there is no sincerity left. God wants you to serve Him in sincerity and Truth.

To the world, times are bad when people have little or no money, no jobs, or no time to go fishing. To the saints of God, times are bad when few people will stand for what is right. I used to go fishing often when I was a boy in Montana, but now I do not find too much time for fishing. Fishing for men is far more important. To God's people, times are bad when we find few faithful men and women who will stand for the Truth. Someone once said to me, "I appreciate your stand." Well, what else can you do if you are a child of God? You must stand for what is right. Right is right, and wrong is wrong.

We are living in a world where there are few things around us that have not changed. People have changed, congregations have changed, and ministers whom I have respected, honored, and revered have changed. What can you do then? You must hold tightly to Christ. We sing the song, "Hold to

God's unchanging hand." Time is quickly passing and filled with much change. Peter let us know that this world in which we are living, though it looks permanent, is going to pass away.

Peter said in 2 Peter 3:10, "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night [not to those who are watching, waiting, and prepared, but to the world]; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, [Some say, 'Oh, He will sneak in and steal the church away.' No, that is ludicrous. He has purchased the church. Sometimes when I go to the grocery store and purchase something, they ask if I want a bag. I say, 'No, you know I bought it; save the trees.' When Jesus comes, He is going to take the church boldly, because He purchased it.] and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." Jesus said in Matthew 24:35, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not [ever] pass away." Though it looks permanent, it, too, will pass.

Paul wrote in Hebrews 1:10-12: "And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as cloth a garment; And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail." Think of the world in the time of Noah. There was a great change then. Down through the annals of history, many changes have been made.

A Kingdom That Cannot Be Moved

Since the dawn of history, many changes have taken place. The world is growing older, and one of these days it will come to an end. However, God will never change; He is unchangeable. What is unchanging in the world? The Kingdom of God that we are a part of never changes.

The Hebrew writer said in Hebrews 12:28, "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, [Isn't it the desire of each of us to have grace when we are challenged, persecuted, questioned, or under pressure. May God help us to have grace to keep from changing in this changing world.] whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear." Have you ever heard someone say, "He is serving God in his own way"? In what chapter and verse in the Bible does it say that? The only acceptable way to serve God is in Spirit and in Truth.

Again, Hebrews 12:28 says, "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear." Thank God, we are in a kingdom that cannot be moved or shaken; it will remain. God established it, it is under the law of Truth, and Jesus is its leader—One who is faithful and true.

Daniel said in Daniel 2:44, "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever." Daniel 7:18 says, "But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever." Thank God, it is made of eternal material, and it is not subject to change. I like the song we sing, entitled, *What a Kingdom!*

*There's a theme that is sweet to my
mem'ry,
There's a joy that I cannot declare,
There's a treasure that gladdens my
being,
'Tis the kingdom of righteousness here.*

*There's a scene of its grandness before
me,
Of its greatness there can be no end;
It is joy, it is peace, it is glory,
In my heart, how these riches do blend!*

*I am lost in its splendor and beauty,
To its ne'er fading heights I would rise,
Till I see the King come to receive me,
And explore it with trim in the skies.*

*What a pleasure in life it is bringing!
What assurance and hope ever bright!
Oh, what rapture and bliss are awaiting,
When our faith shall be lost in the sight!*

*'Tis a kingdom of peace, it is reigning
within,
It shall ever increase in my soul;
We possess it right here when he saves
from all sin,
And 'twill last while the ages shall roll.*

Only one institution in the world will remain constant and unchanging, and that is the kingdom of God, also known as the Church of God. Jesus said in Matthew 16:18, "I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." I thank God that He has created and established the church, and He is the One who sustains and protects her. She will remain intact until He comes for her. If you are a member of God's church, how can you remain faithful? You must be obedient to the Word of God; it is forever the same. Jesus said in Matthew 24:35, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."

One man wrote: "*Last evening I stood beside the blacksmith's door and heard the anvil ring the vesper chime. Then looking in, I saw upon the floor old hammers worn with beating years of time. 'How many anvils have you had,' said I, 'to wear and batter all of those hammers so?' 'Oh, just one,' said he, then said with twinkling eyes, 'the anvil wears the hammers out, you know.' And so I thought the anvil of God's Word, for ages skeptic blows have beat upon, Yet though the noise of falling blows was heard, the anvil is unharmed. The hammer is gone.*"

Faithful Stewards

God's Word will remain. Since God's part in every way is unchangeable, He expects you to be unchangeable. I want to be un-

changeable. I want to be true to Him and His cause and to you as a people until He comes. One of the hardest battles in life has been to find out that a trusted friend, someone whom I really respected and appreciated, had proven untrue. That has been so hurtful to me. If it hurts me, how must it wound the heart of God!

The Word of God contains many examples of those who were faithful. Moses was faithful. Hebrews 3:5 says, "And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after." Daniel was faithful. Daniel 6:4 says, "Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him." Often people look me over well with their magnifying glasses, so to speak. After they are through with me, they look at my wife. When they cannot find any fault in her, they look at my children. I want to live without fault. Although you may live the best you possibly can for God, some people will scrutinize you.

As I was studying, I thought of Abraham. Galatians 3:9 says, "So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham." Abraham was faithful. I want to be faithful, don't you? Psalm 31:23 says, "O love the LORD, all ye his saints: for the LORD preserveth the faithful" Psalm 101:6 states, "Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me" First Corinthians 4:2 reads, "Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."

Do you want to be used of God in a greater way? If you want God to use you in greater things, you must be sure that you are faithful in the little things and be sure that you are giving Him 100 percent. Occasionally a young person will say, "Well, I would like to be the next pastor at a certain place" or "I would like to

do this or that." I ask, "Are you giving God 100 percent in what you are doing right now?" People often say, "Oh, I could do more if I were there, more than I can do here." You must do everything you can right where you are. If you are a choir member, you should be the best choir member that you can possibly be. If you are a Sunday school teacher, you should be the best Sunday school teacher that you can be. When there is work to be done, you ought to be the first one there, and you should come with a wonderful attitude. As stewards, whatever God has entrusted to you, whatever gift He has given you, you should give God your very best.

Young person, you ought to give God the best of your youth. Being young is wonderful! The work of God is such a great cause. David said in 1 Samuel 17:29, "And David said, What have I now done? Is there not a cause?" Furthering the Kingdom of God is the greatest cause in all the world. Wherever we are, we each need to give God our best, and together we can see the cause of God furthered, in spite of opposition.

God Wants Faithful People

First Corinthians 4:2 says, "Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful." Paul said to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:2, "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." God wants faithful men in the home and on the job. You ought to be the best employee that your factory has. I believe that communities, schools, and institutions are blessed because of faithful Church of God people.

God wants you to be faithful to His cause down to the very end. He wants you to be faithful with your money and faithful in giving. Money is top on the list of priorities according to many people. God wants your tithes and offerings, your time, your

talents, your strength, and your abilities. He wants you to be faithful to Him.

Are you faithful to the man of God? You may say, "You bring that up quite often." Well, I am a pastor, and I know what I am talking about. A pastor needs faithful people. I tell the congregation, "We all can't be in the pulpit, we all can't play the piano, and we all can't be teachers." There is absolutely no problem with everyone wanting to be the person who cleans the church. God wants faithful people.

The Bible says that Joseph was faithful. Joseph is a real example to me. When I was a young boy, of all the men in the Bible, Joseph was the one whom I wanted to be like. Joseph had many opportunities to prove unfaithful, but he was a man of faith and of great integrity. A sister in our congregation prayed, "Lord, in this time of unfaithfulness and lack of integrity, help us to maintain our integrity." Just because others are doing wrong is no sign that you have to do wrong. Joseph was a man of integrity.

David was a man of integrity. Yes, there was a time when he lost it, but he regained himself. Elijah was a man of integrity, and John the Baptist was a man of great integrity. He spoke out and lost his life when he probably could have saved his head. You may have to lose your life speaking out. Peter, Paul, and all the other Apostles were faithful men. The Bible tells us that Jesus, above everyone else in the Word of God, was a Man who was faithful to the very end.

Church of God, you must remain faithful to God. Do not give up in the race. It hurts when someone gives up. I have been a pastor for nearly thirty years. When someone proves unfaithful, it tears at my heart until I can hardly stand it. Saints, you need to pray for one another and love one another. Pray that God will help each of us to remain faithful to Him.

(Cassette C-4226E)

(Guest Editorial-continued from page 2) what verse 1 calls "visions" of a brighter age.

Let us look at what he saw. Ezekiel 1:4 states, "And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself." God let him look down through the ages of time to this bright day, which commences in verse 4 with a whirlwind. In Acts, Chapter 2, we can see that it was prophetically fulfilled. Verse 1-2 read: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind." This whirlwind that Ezekiel saw was the rushing mighty wind that occurred on the Day of Pentecost.

What else did Ezekiel see? He said in verse 4 that this wind "came out of the north." What does this mean? The north is a very cold climate. When God came on the scene, Israel was in a very cold condition. Only fifty days earlier, they had slain the Lord of Glory and said, "Let Him be crucified. Let His blood be on us and on our children." What else did Ezekiel say in verse 4? He said, ". . . a fire infolding itself," or a fire that was radiating brilliantly. What was this fire that followed this wind? The same fire that followed the wind in Acts, Chapter 2. Acts 2:3-4 reads: "And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." This fire infolding itself is a picture of the advent of the Holy Ghost on the Day of Pentecost. What we see in Ezekiel 1:4 is a prophetic expression of the Day of Pentecost. Ezekiel 1:5 tells us, "Also out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures." This fire produced living creatures. There were no living creatures until this fire came. One hundred twenty assembled in the Upper Room. They were the same ones who were getting ready to appoint an Apostle, but they were not enjoying spiritual

life. There was no life until the Giver of life came, which is the Holy Spirit. He is God's agent to bring the life of Christ to mankind.

The fire produced the four living creatures, and the fire represents the Holy Spirit; He is the One who brings life. Romans 8:10 says, "And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life." This fire, which was symbolic of the Holy Ghost, came on the Day of Pentecost and brought life to those who were assembled. When He moved in and filled their hearts and lives, they became living creatures. Second Corinthians 3:6 says, "Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." The Holy Spirit took men who were not enjoying life, and through His advent into their lives, made them living creatures.

What are the living creatures that Ezekiel 1:5 wrote about? Ezekiel 10:15 reads, "And the cherubims were lifted up. This is the living creature." Cherubims are the living creatures. Remember that the word cherubims means "the living ones." Romans 6:11 says, "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." They were the living creatures because they were alive unto Jesus Christ our Lord. What type of creature will the Spirit of God make you? Second Corinthians 5:17 says, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." The only way you can get in Christ is through the Spirit, and the Spirit is life. When He comes, He brings the life of Christ to you and you become a living creature.

What do these living creatures, or cherubims, that Ezekiel 10: 15 spoke of represent? Ezekiel 1:10 tells us, "As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side: and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four also had the face of an eagle."

In Revelation, Chapter 4, we can

see the same description. Revelation 4:6-7 says: "And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts [or the Greek word is zoon, meaning living creatures] full of eyes before and behind. And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle." This is the same representation that Ezekiel saw.

Revelation 5:8-9 tells us what the four beasts are: "And when he had taken the book, the four beasts [the four living creatures] and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. And they [the living creatures] sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood."

Who did Ezekiel say the living creatures were? They are the cherubims. Who are the cherubims? When we see a picture of these four living creatures, they are the redeemed of all ages, or the body of Christ, the church. There was no life until that infolding fire came that Ezekiel saw in Ezekiel 1:4, a figurative expression of the Holy Spirit who was Christ's agent to bring life to men. Ezekiel 1:5 says that "out of the midst [of the fire, the Holy Spirit produced the] four living creatures." Ezekiel 10:15 says those living creatures are cherubims, or the living ones.

Notice the characteristics attached to these living creatures, the redeemed. First, each one had life. You are not a part of the redeemed if you do not have life. There is more to salvation and redemption than forgiveness. There is remission, and there must be regeneration; that is where the Holy Spirit comes in. It is one thing to have the blood remit the sins that are past, but quite another to have the Spirit

of God come in and bring life so that you can rise in newness of life. Every one of these creatures had life because they had come in contact with the Holy Spirit.

Second, verse 7 tells us that "their feet were straight feet." Every one who has life produced by the Holy Spirit lives holy. Their straight feet denote that the kind of life they received was the power to live holy. Hebrews 12:13 says, "And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed. Follow peace with all men, and holiness." Some are weak, or lame, and, therefore, they have trouble walking straight, or living holy. If they see you not living right, they may turn out of the way completely. However, if they see you making straight paths for your feet, they can be inspired and encouraged to realize that holiness is possible.

Why must they have straight feet? They are walking on a strait street. In Revelation 22:2 we found earlier in our study that right in the midst of the city of God, the church, He had a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal. John 7:38 tells you that right in the midst in the river was a street. There are only two streets in the Revelation: one in the middle of Babylon and one in the middle of the church. The word .streets (plural) never appears in the Book of Revelation. However, the word street appears twice: one street in Babylon, which denotes the broad way, and one street in the church, which denotes the strait and narrow way. To stay on that street and to keep from falling off it, you must have straight feet. In other words, you have to live holy, because the street is a high way. Isaiah 35 says it is the highway of holiness. The only way you can stay on this highway is with holiness. If you veer from holiness, you will get off the street.

Ezekiel also stated in Ezekiel 1:9, "Their wings were joined one to another." If a person is truly walking in holiness, the natural by-product is unity. They were joined one to an-

other. Paul said in Ephesians 4:16, "From whom the whole body fitly joined together." Their wings were joined together. This unity lets us know that I cannot go without you, and you cannot go without me, because we are one. Those cherubims over the mercy seat were one piece, not only with Christ but also with each other. They faced the mercy seat and each other. If you cannot face your brother, you cannot face Christ.

Ezekiel 1:9 says "they went every one straight forward." What does unity produce? It produces progress. Why is there not more progress in the church today? There is not enough unity. Where there is unity, there is progress.

How can these living creatures walk in complete holiness and have perfect unity today? What is the key to holiness and unity? Ezekiel 1:12 tells us, "And they went every one straight forward: whither the spirit was to go, they went; and they turned not when they went. The key to holiness and unity is Holy Ghost leadership. If I am led of the Spirit and you are led of the Spirit, He will not tell you one thing and me another. Each of us has straight feet, and we are going the same direction and walking on the same street. Ezekiel said, ". . . whither the spirit was to go, they went," depicting Holy Ghost leadership.

Ezekiel wrote in the latter part of verse 12, ". . . and they turned not when they went." When the Holy Ghost leads or enlightens you, do not turn back on it. You must go straight forward with what He told you, because He is not going to tell you anything different.

This vision that Ezekiel received was of the Gospel Day, and in it he saw these brilliant creatures. In a dark hour of Israelite history, the Lord turned Ezekiel's mind to a people and a day that would be glorious. This is exactly what happened in the Genesis account. What is the picture in our text in Genesis, Chapter 3? Man was expelled due to sin. God, who is rich in mercy por-

trayed that man is not irrevocably doomed. He portrayed bright hope. Genesis 3:22 lets us know that the tree of life is a reality, but in verse 24 he tells us there is the way to the tree of life. However, there is only one way that it can be accessed, and that is through the flaming sword.

What is the lesson? Man's access to life resides in Christ. Christ is this tree of life, and man's only route to spiritual life is in Jesus Christ. Man's only route to Christ is through flaming sword, the anointed, unctionized, Spirit-filled Word. It is not through church joining, signing a card, shaking a preacher's hand, or any other religious moves. For man to have life, he must get to the tree of life, Jesus Christ. The only way we can get to Jesus Christ-Isaiah said it and the Book of Romans elaborates on it: "Who hath believed our report?" Romans. Chapter 10, says believing the report is obeying the Gospel. Peter said that the only way that one can be born again is by having the heart purified by obeying the Truth through the Spirit. Thus, this takes you right back to the flaming sword-the Spirit and the Word. That is the only access man has to Jesus Christ, or to life.

The access to life is through Christ, and the access to Christ is through His Spirit and His Word. As a witness to this life in Christ stand these cherubims (or the living ones) of which verse 24 speaks. These are the living creatures as Ezekiel 1:5 and Revelation 4:8 depict them. They stand at the east of Eden as a witness to light and life. By coming through the Word and the Spirit to Jesus Christ, man can have life, be one with Christ, and be restored to a position where he can enjoy the Eden of God. This is a prophetic picture of hope.

In conclusion, these cherubims are a picture of a people who embrace the message and enjoy life. This lesson is symbolic and prophetic, showing to fallen man that he was not irrevocably doomed. There is hope and redemption, but there is a way that man must now

access it since sin has entered the picture. The life is in the tree. The tree of life is Jesus Christ, and man's only access to life is through the Word and the Spirit. These four cherubims stand as witnesses to the fact that the power of the Word and the Spirit can redeem people and produce a church, which is the body of Christ, that can be God's light—the living and shining ones in this world.

God did not close man out in a

dark hour without hope and without light; He gave hope and light. In reality, the cherubims of this text and the seraphims of Isaiah, Chapter 6, and the living creatures of Ezekiel, Chapter 1, and Revelation, Chapter 4, depict the same ones—the redeemed of all ages, the Church of the Living God, the body of Christ. They are merely reveal different attributes.

When John saw a picture of it in Revelation, Chapter 21, the first

comment he made was, "having the glory of God," because it is beautiful to see lives transformed by the Word and the Spirit and made alive, living in holiness and unity, and going forward conquering and to conquer. It is a beautiful and an encouraging picture. No doubt, it encouraged Adam, Ezekiel, and John. If you will see it as it is, it will encourage you.

Brother Earl R. Borders

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CHRIST IS THE LIFE—men without Him are dead in trespasses and sin.

CHRIST IS THE VINE—men who are not in Him are withered branches prepared for the fire.

CHRIST IS THE ROCK—men not built on Him are carried away by the flood of judgment.