

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

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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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Guest Editorial

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S IMAGE

A Time Line to the Establishment of the Kingdom

Part 1 of 3

Daniel 2:31 Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible.

32 This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass,

33 His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay.

34 Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces.

35 Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.

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.

As we begin to study this passage of Scripture text, we can see that the Prophet Daniel was exercising his prophetic office. Daniel recounted to Nebuchadnezzar the dream that had troubled him. Daniel not only rehearsed the dream to the king but also gave the interpretation in the succeeding verses.

In a dream, Nebuchadnezzar saw what verse 31 denotes as "a great image." Through the vehicle of this image, God established a vital prophetic truth. He established a

prophetic time line for when the God of Heaven would set up a kingdom, as verse 44 declares. As we examine this passage, we want to consider the truth concerning Nebuchadnezzar's image, which is a time line to the establishment of the kingdom. In this issue we want to gain an introduction to this prophetic passage.

As we begin to consider this prophetic passage, one question that comes to mind is, does prophecy have any relevance to us today? When we look back in the annals of prophetic writings, do they have any substance beneficial to you and me? In response to that, I would ask, are the realms of religion entertaining any confusion concerning the time when the Kingdom of God was established? In the realms of religion, there is great confusion and diversity of teachings concerning when the kingdom was or, as some teach, will be established. As we look into this prophetic text, we cannot view it as a recital of history, though there must be an element of history to give it a prophetic time frame. However, when we live in such a day when the tendency in religion is toward the dispensational persuasion and the teaching of the postponement of the kingdom, we need to have an understanding of the truth based in the Scriptures. This lesson is very relevant to our day, not a mere history recital.

In Mark 1:9 Jesus spoke some vital words when He said, "Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power." If the Kingdom of God has not yet come, then there is no power; and if there is no power, then there is no ability for you and me to have victory in our lives. Therefore, this is a basic truth, yet a very crucial one. We can only have victory by having power, and Jesus intimates that power comes with the kingdom.

God does not want anyone to be confused concerning biblical truths.

[continued on page 26]



Isaiah 6:1 In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.

2 Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.

3 And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.

4 And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.

5 Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.

HOLINESS

Brother Roger Decker

Living Upright Before the Lord

The Scripture says, "In the year that king Uzziah died . . ." That era of time ended. Under the reign of King Uzziah, Judah enjoyed great prosperity. The reason is that he sought help from God. You can read that the Lord helped him in battle, helped him to build, and gave him great wisdom and honor. Also, King Uzziah was an inventor. All was well with King Uzziah until pride began to do its ugly work; then he died a leper, out of the will of God. After his departure from this life, Judah went into corruption. It was then that Isaiah received this prophecy.

I want to focus on verse 3 of our Scripture text, which reads, "And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of

hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory." In the Old Testament, whenever Israel or Judah went into corruption, or apostasy, God raised up a prophet to put out a call to bring them back to holiness. There were great men such as Abraham, Moses, Joshua, David, and Gideon, just to name a few. God used them to lead people back to holiness and to living upright before the Lord.

Whenever men of God proclaimed the message of holiness, it had an effect upon the hearts of those who lived in uncleanness. Again, verse 5 reads, "Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts." You could never charge God with being faithful to your soul. God is

always faithful to people, and holiness is the message. The seraphims represent those who have been redeemed. Those who are redeemed do not fight holiness; they proclaim it. An honest-hearted individual may not understand holiness altogether; nevertheless, he will not rise against something that will bring him closer to God. Isaiah used the word *holy* three times in our Scripture text. He said, "Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory."

Man is a threefold being: he has a soul, a spirit, and a body. God wants every part of a man to be holy. First Thessalonians 5:23 says, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly [or complete]; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord

Jesus Christ."

You may say, "The soul is saved, but the body is not." Friend, you did not get that from the Word of God. Away with the thought that the soul is saved but the body goes about doing its own thing. No, the Scripture says, "... I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Some who do not have victory in their souls fight holiness. They have made such statements as, "Yes, I am saved, but I am just not to the place where I can bring my body under control." When you are saved, you have a new Master, and that Master is Jesus Christ.

Walking in Newness of Life

Often people try to use certain Scriptures in the wrong way. Romans 6:1-7 says: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein [the grace of God was not given to continue in sin; the grace of God was given so that you do not have to sin]? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death [he was not speaking of water baptism; you get into Jesus Christ through spiritual baptism]? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth [from then on] we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin."

The old man is dead when you stop serving sin. When do you stop serving sin? When you are saved, or born again. This Scripture is very clear. You tell me when you

stopped serving sin, and I will tell you when the old man died. Romans 6:12 states, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof." Holiness is the message of the Church of God, and that message separates her from all man-made churches. One who is truly saved will not fight holiness. The message of the church is holy, holy, holy. God wants His people to live holy. He is holy; therefore, the church is holy.

Today in many congregations, people fight holiness. They give more liberty for this and that, and they do it under the guise of "light." On the contrary, more light makes you more like Christ. Light never takes you away from holiness. Light brings you to a closer walk with Jesus Christ. God demands holiness in your spirit, holiness in your soul, and holiness in your body. He wants you separate from all uncleanness. Second Corinthians 6:17 instructs, "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you."

God wants holiness in your soul. If your soul is not saved from sin, you are not going to Heaven. If you are not saved, your soul is unsaved, and you are not in the church. Now, you might be in a man-made church, but you are not in the church that came down from God out of Heaven. Salvation is in the blood of Jesus Christ. The Bible says in 1 John 1:7, "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." Salvation is not in church joining; that is merely a decent way to be married and buried, and then send you on your way to hell.

Obedying the Gospel

If you have never repented of your sins, you are not saved, and you need to be. You are unclean,

and you are coming before a holy God. If you truly have godly sorrow, you will not come boldly or proudly. You will come ashamed and embarrassed, because you have hurt the great God of Heaven. If you are not obeying the Gospel, then you need to be saved. You are not saved by good works or by being morally good, but by confessing your sins, turning your back on sin, and then living a holy life pleasing to God. Getting saved is not just going to an altar. There is no power in that; it is just a convenient place to kneel and get hold of God.

There is too much pride in the hearts of people. Some think, "What will people think if I walk down the aisle and get down on my knees?" Friend, what difference does it make what they might think? For one thing, they are not going to judge you. They do not have power over life and death. You are not going to answer to them at the Judgment. Some have said, "I would never go down in front of people and make a spectacle of myself!" Well, if you want out of sin bad enough, you will. When you really want out of sin, all you see is your sin. If you are sick of sin, it will not make any difference if the building is completely full. When you are sick of sin, you want to be delivered; you want free from sin.

Sometimes young people are hindered from getting saved because other young people who profess to be saved do not live right. In their eyes, they are not doing things as bad as those young people are doing. That is a shame! I thank God for young people who truly love the Lord and want to live right.

When you confess your sins, you are confessing to God; you are not confessing to the preacher. Now, sometimes ones tell the pastor their problem so that he can instruct them, but that is not so that he can tell others. Psalm 32:5 says, "I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest

the iniquity of my sin. Selah." Romans 14:11 reads, "For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God."

When you get saved, you confess to God, and you do it in front of men. You may ask, "Don't you believe that one can get saved at home?" Yes, absolutely, but there is going to be a confession in that person's life before the people. He will confess that he has been truly saved before the people. Luke 12:8-9 reads: "Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God: But he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God." To confess Christ is to acknowledge Him before men. You might be a member in good standing in Babylon without repentance; but in God's eyes, you are just another sinner.

One main reason that one would not walk down to an altar of prayer before the congregation is that he or she is too full of pride. At times, even after you have been saved, you will need to bow at an altar of prayer. You may think, "I hold a position. What would people think if I were to go down to an altar of prayer?" You are not living so well that you do not need to go to an altar occasionally. No one lives so that the Word does not dig around them. The easiest people to move should be God's people. They do not want anything in their lives that would hinder them in their walk with God. Some profess Christianity, yet you never see them at an altar. As a pastor, I have been there, and I will go again if I have a need.

Perfecting Holiness

Holiness does not end with the soul being saved. The Apostle Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 7:1, "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." You have a spirit within

you that must be cleansed; then after you are saved, there is a cleansing that you must do. When you get saved, God cleans you up; not one sin remains. However, you have to drive some things out of your life. This is what the Bible calls perfecting holiness. Again, Paul said, ". . . let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

I repeat, man is threefold, just like the Trinity. What needs to be cleansed in your spirit? Let us look at one thing found in 2 Corinthians 6:14-18 and 7:1: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved . . ."

What promises was Paul talking about? Verses 17-18 tell us: "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." There is the promise that if you will leave the yoke of spiritual fornication and come out of it, the Lord will receive you and be a Father to you. He said to "come out from among them, and be ye separate, . . . and touch not the unclean thing." Then he went on to say, "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse

ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

Be Not Unequally Yoked

Paul said that one should not be unequally yoked. You may not know what the term *yoked* means. It is a military term, and it means "to stay in your own ranks." To be unequally yoked is to apostatize from Christianity, to leave the righteous principles of Christianity and join hands with heathenish ways. The Lord said to come out from among them and not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers. He was not speaking of having unsaved friends. He was saying that you should come out from among unbelievers in Christianity who try to draw you away from Christ.

In God's eyes, spiritual fornication is just as bad as literal fornication. God does not want His people to commit spiritual fornication. In other words, God does not want His people in false worship or taking up with a false spirit. He does not want you to leave the righteous principles of Christianity and join hands with heathenish ways. One problem that has caused some people to fall is trying to have fellowship with those who have apostatized instead of leaving them alone. Friend, you cannot do it. I have the Word of God to back me up. Some people think that is having a cut off spirit. However, when it comes to uncleanness, the Christian will not walk contrary to the Word of God. Being a friend to someone is one thing, but trying to fellowship one who has apostatized is another matter. You may ask, "Don't you think we need to help sinners?" Absolutely. We should go out of our way to help sinners. I am talking about trying to fellowship apostates, those who have left the way of truth and no longer walk in the light in which they once walked. In essence, Paul asked these questions: "What fellowship does righteousness have with unrighteousness? What part

does a believer have with an infidel? What communion does light have with darkness? What harmony does Christ have with Belial?" The answer to those questions is, there is no fellowship with Christ and Belial. Although that Scripture is not dealing with marriage, there should never be a union between a believer and an unbeliever. Why is that? The believer and the unbeliever have two different standards. When a believer and an unbeliever are united in marriage, things will be brought into the home that the true Christian would not have had. There are things that the unbeliever wants to do that the believer does not want to do, and it causes dissension. Marrying in the Lord is best for the Christian; then they can raise their family in the Lord, in the church, and in the Truth. Child of God, you should never marry outside the Lord. If you do, you are asking for trouble. I am not preaching my opinion. I am preaching from the Bible. It is "Thus saith the Lord."

Some have said, "I will win him or her to the Lord." It usually works the other way around. That person gets won to the world. The model prayer is, "Lead us not into temptation" (Matthew 6:13). If you marry an unbeliever, you are throwing yourself wide open to temptation. He or she may promise many things to you while you are dating and during the engagement, until you say, "I do." Then, often that one will not want anything more to do with the church. He or she may say, "I am going to live the way I want to live, and you are going to stop going to that church." Then you will not feel that you have any power at all to resist, because you know that you did not do right when you married an unbeliever.

Cleansing That Takes Place After Conversion

Friend, you need to be careful of your spirit. The Bible lets us know that we must have our spirit

cleansed from the filthiness of the spirit and the flesh. The Bible says in Proverbs 14:29, "He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding; but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly." A cleansing needs to take place. Another translation makes it a little plainer: "A patient man has great understanding, but a quick tempered man displays folly." One thing that needs to be cleansed is having a bad temper. Some are hasty to fly off the handle, so to speak. The slightest thing upsets them and they get offended. Next, they get angry and say things that they do not mean and would to God they had never said; it becomes a battle of words. That temper needs to be cleansed.

Some people get angry if they do to get their own way. Children are wonderful until you cross them and tell them no. Some parents ought to try saying the word no. Often they have trouble saying no because they feel they have to give a long explanation about why they said no. So instead of going through all of that, they say yes. That is very different from what it used to be when I was a child growing up. When my parents said no, we knew better than even to ask why. It was just no. I might have thought that I had a good reason for what I was wanting to do, but even if I did, I did not get to air it.

Parent, you need to tell your little ones no while they are young. If you do not, when they get older and you try it, then you are really going to have a difficult time. You need to bend the tree in the direction you want it to go when it is young, and you should always bend it toward the light. Once a tree becomes big and stout, you cannot bend it back the other way. You need to tell your children no if you do not think they should go somewhere. Sometimes children say, "Why can't I? Everybody else is going." Then you should say, "I am not their parent; I am your parent. No." We used to have a rule with our children. Sometimes children like to bring another

child with them to ask Mom and Dad in front of the other child: "Can I go over to their house today?" Our rule was that it was an automatic no if they did that. We did not allow them to put us on the spot.

Some people get so angry if something crosses them that the wrong language comes out of their mouths. Christian friend, the wrong language should not come out, because it should not be in your heart. Only what is in the heart can come out.

Some people get so worked up that they are ready to fight. If they could do that and still be a Christian, they probably would. Some get so mad that they could kill someone. Tempers like that need to be cleansed, perfected in holiness.

What else needs to be cleansed to perfect holiness? Your mind needs to be cleaned up. Ephesians 4:22-23 states: "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind." You cannot think on things that you cannot have and still be a Christian. You need to ask God to cleanse and perfect your mind. Be careful what you think on. Philippians 4:8 says, "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." In other words, he said to think on those things, esteem them highly, recommend them heartily, and practice them fervently.

You must be careful what enters your mind. Not only does the mind and the soul need to be cleansed but also the flesh. Some fleshly things need to be laid aside after God saves you from all sin. For example, if you smoke cigarettes, when you go to an altar of prayer, God will forgive you. Some people are not even tempted with that habit after that, but that is not true with every-

one. Some people have a struggle with it, just as others might have a struggle with their temper or whatever. Friend, although you might have a real struggle with something, do not quit trying to get the victory over it. God will not put a cigarette in your mouth, and neither can the devil. You are the only one who can do it. God will help you to have victory over that habit. I have seen some have real struggles, and they are good Christians today because they would not give up.

Laying Aside Fleshly Things

You might have other fleshly things that need to be laid aside that you acquired when you were out in sin, such as swearing, drinking alcohol, chewing tobacco, or taking drugs. Some use slang words that are fill-ins for swearing. Immodest dress is against holiness. In hot weather people want to take off almost everything but the tan. What else is immodest? Sleeveless dresses and skirts that look like undergarment material. Also, there is not one thing modest about skirts that come down on the hips or short blouses that show the midriff. Wearing tight clothes is also immodest. Some wear their clothes so tight that their undergarments show. Trousers on men that go down to their hips or lower and drag the floor make that individual look like a deadbeat. Some wear tight jeans or tank tops because they want to look macho. A real man is not the man who can put up his dukes. The real man is one who can say no to the devil and yes to God. You cannot find too many of them around. You can find some around who can whip someone, but you cannot find too many who want to live holy.

Young person, when you are dating, if the one you are dating cannot keep his hands to himself, then you need to stop dating that person. If he cannot speak right without putting smut and filth in his conversation, then he is not worth having. The whole man is

holy. Always remember, young person, that you are in the presence of God. If someone will not keep his hands to himself, you have the right to slap him.

There is too much fleshly dating. Some who claim to be Christians do not care whether the person they date is saved. If they really cared, they would not flock to them like that. How should you get a boyfriend or a girlfriend? You should get down on your knees and pray. If you truly seek the Lord about getting the right companion, you will not be changing to different ones whenever a new person comes along. That is not praying; that is fleshly.

Immodest actions that are not becoming to the Christian should be put off, as well as curt words, cutting someone off, and smartalecky remarks. Everyone should show respect to pastors and ministers. You may not agree with them, or even like them; nevertheless, you ought to treat them right and talk to them right. It is your privilege not to like them, but it is not your privilege to run your mouth and say anything you want to say.

The whole man must be holy. You need to put off things that keep you from being holy. You need to let go of whatever hinders you in your walk with God. It could be unforgiveness, holding a grudge against someone, or lust. You will never see the Lord in His rightful place until you let it die. When you let it go, then you are in good shape to see the Lord ready to help you. Then, when your iniquity has been purged and your sin has been taken away, what will happen? Verse 8 tells you, "Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me."

Are you living right? The only day that you know anything about is today. God does not let you see what will happen tomorrow. Perhaps if He did, it would scare you. Today is the day of salvation. Do not harden your heart. Today is the

day that you need to humble yourself. Time is moving on, and the percentage of those who get saved when they are older diminishes. The time to be saved is when Jesus Christ is knocking on your heart. Won't you be bold enough to say, "Yes, I want to be saved. No matter what my family or anyone else does, I want to live all the days of my life right." God will give you good things. You can receive many good things from the hand of God. He will open the windows of Heaven and bless you. The world does not have good things. The world is full of deception and seasonal pleasures, but the Lord has good things. If you have a need, won't you mind the Lord?

(Cassette C-4675E)

Some Minutes in the Morning

*Some minutes in the morning,
Ere the cares of life begin,
Ere the heart's wide door is open
For the world to enter in.
Oh, then alone with Jesus,
In the silence of the morn,
In heavenly, sweet communion
Let your every day be born,
In the quietude that blesses.
With a prelude of repose,
Let your soul be soothed and softened
As the dew revives the rose.*

*Some minutes in the morning
Take your Bible in your hand.
And catch a glimpse of glory
From the peaceful promised land.
It will linger still before you.*

*When you seek the busy mart,
And like flowers of hope will blossom
Into beauty in your heart.
The precious words like jewels
Will glisten all the day
With a rare refulgent glory
That will brighten all the way!*

Selected

Luke 5:1 And it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Gennesaret,

2 And saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets.

3 And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed

him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship.

4 Now when he had let` speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.

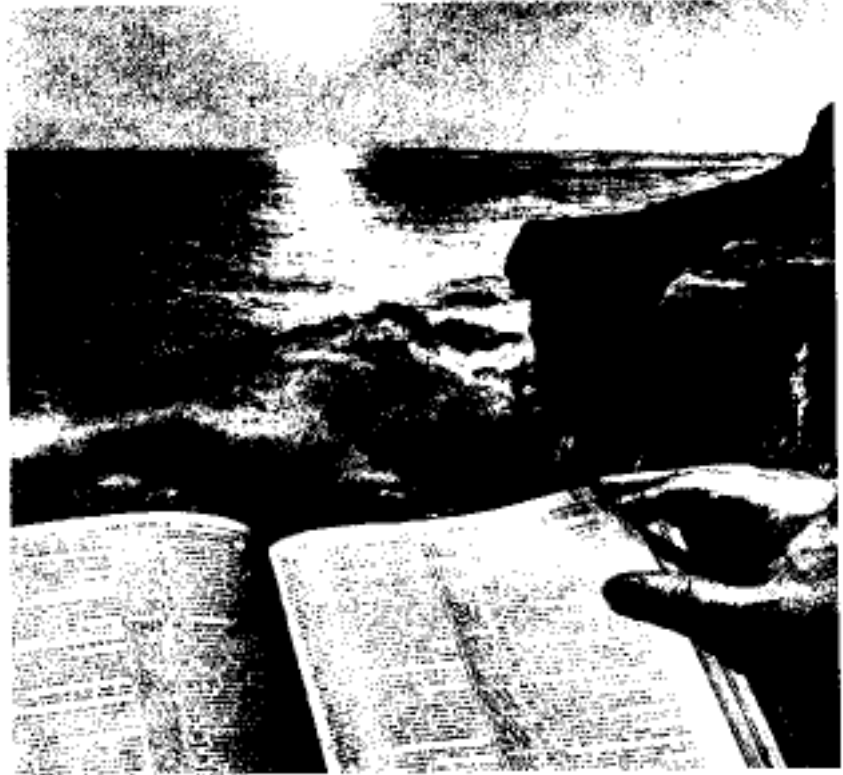
5 And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: never-

theless at thy word I will let down the net.

6 And when they had this done, they enclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake.

7 And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink.

LAUNCH OUT INTO THE DEEP



Brother C. H. Dickerson

Salvation Is Personal

Everyone is facing eternity. Just as sure as you are breathing, you are facing eternity. It could be before the midnight hour. So few people are making preparation to spend eternity in Heaven. Many will end up in a lost eternity, being tormented in hell forever. That bothers me, and I am stirred over it.

Today in the business world, there are two types of people: the conservative and the liberal. Most people who have earned a fortune have done so because they have made a decision either to sink or to swim. For example, doctors and

lawyers attend college for many years, which is very expensive. When they finally receive their diploma, often they have to borrow money to set up their practices. Sometimes even their companions have to work to help, because they must make a go of it or they will lose everything.

Our Scripture text implies that this spirit is in the religious world. We see two classes of people: those who are close to the Kingdom of God and those who are far away. Some people launch out into the deep when they get saved and go all out for God. Others are satisfied because the burden of sin has been

lifted. However, the Word of God lets you know that if you are going to make it, you must go further than just having your burdens lifted. You have to go all out for God. Your attitude must be, "I am going to serve God no matter what anyone else does." Unless you make that decision, you will not go far. In our Scripture text Jesus taught the disciples to launch out into the deep. Spiritually speaking, launching out into the deep means that the further out you go, the greater your stand. One thing is certain, if you are going to serve God, you must take a stand. You may ask, "What kind of stand do I have to take?" The first

thing you must do is take a stand for God's eternal Truth no matter what others do. You must also stand for what is right. Sometimes people may try to convince you that what they are doing is right, but if it is not done in the biblical way, it is not right. You must stand for God's eternal Truth even if it costs you everything. You have only one chance to make Heaven your home; you will not get a second opportunity. There is no such thing as a millennial reign, or purgatory. When you draw your last breath, where you go is where you will be for eternity. You may wish that you had done things differently, but you will not have another chance to do it. Friend, you need to stand for God's eternal Truth, even if you have to stand alone.

Someone may ask, "How can I know what is right? Many people say they are right." I will tell you exactly how you can know. You must look for those who have the right spirit. No matter what others say, if people have the right spirit and they are standing for what is right, they are the ones with whom you need to stand. When you do what God tells you to do, it will put you in the Church of God, in the body of Christ, where Christ is the Head.

Taking a Stand for Truth

Many years ago God moved upon a man named D. S. Warner and showed him the importance of the unity of God's people. When he saw the message of unity, he came out of false religion and took a stand for the Church of God. Although people turned against him, and even his wife and other ministers turned against him, nevertheless, he stood for Truth. Church, if you are going to hand Truth down to your children and reach your lost loved ones, you must take a stand, no matter who turns against you.

Today not enough people are launching out into the deep, spiritually speaking. Too many people

want to play around close to the edge so they can jump out if things get too rough. However, if you launch out into the deep, you must either sink or swim. God wants His people to launch out into the deep and take a definite stand for the Truth. You need to burn every bridge behind you. You might have to eliminate some friendships. Before I got saved, I used to spend a lot of time at the race tracks. I was there so much that it was almost my second home. Then one night God saved my soul and turned my life around. From that time on, the race tracks and everything that went along with them were no longer a part of my life. The next day, I told my racing buddy, "I went to church and God saved my soul last night." I lost a friend that day, but I found a Friend who will never forsake me. Our earthly friends may die or decide to have nothing to do with us, but God will never let us down. Friend, if you will stand for Him, He will always be there for you.

One thing that holds people back from getting saved is their friends. They do not want to take a stand for Truth; they want to straddle the fence, so God just lets them go their own way. Friend, we are coming down to the end of time. You are going to have to line up with God's Word or He is going to take a stand against you.

Child of God, whenever God shows you something to put off or put on, you need to measure to it willingly. One thing that causes people trouble is that when God shows them things to put off, instead of getting rid of them, they put them in their drawers or closets. The devil tells them to put them there just in case they backslide; then they will not have to go out and buy all of that again. When people do that, the temptation is too great. Friend, when God saves you, turns your life around, and shows you what you ought to lay aside, you ought to do it so that those things will not tempt you; then you can have the victory that God has

for you. If you will do that, you will find it much harder to go back into sin.

The Danger of Staying Too Close to the Shore

Looking again at our Scripture text, Jesus said, "Launch out into the deep." In other words, do not stay close to the shore. When you are close to the shore, you might have the thought that you can turn back. Some who are too close to the shore are self-righteous. They say, "I am just as good as any other church member. One religion is just as good as another." As far as that goes, one religion is just as good as another, because religion cannot save you. However, salvation will save you, pick you up out of a life of sin, and turn your life around. It will make you a new creature.

As we look at our Scripture text, we want to look at three thoughts: the effort demanded, the obedience required, and the cooperation necessary. Jesus commanded them to launch out into the deep. When they did what He told them to do, it brought results. Too many people have shallow experiences, and the results are that too few souls are being won to Christ. Close to the shore is where rocks and other obstacles that will damage your vessel are located.

Many have lost out with God because they stayed too close to the shore and ran into some obstacles. One example of this is when one tries to hold onto worldly friends. After I got saved, I told my worldly friends, "I will not be going out to the dance halls, the beer joints, or the nightclubs any more. God saved my soul, turned my life around, and made me a new creature. I will be going to church instead." That was when those worldly friends said goodbye. They did not want any part of my new life. A child of God cannot associate with the world and have fellowship with God at the same time. Also, you cannot associate with those who have lowered

the standard and have fellowship with God. He has a high standard, and He will never lower it. Some people try to lower it, but when they do, they are no longer a part of the Church of God. They might only have the name.

Another thing that prevents people from launching out into the deep is holding on to worldly adornment, whether it is on the finger, around the neck, in the ears, or anywhere else. God forbids it.

In our Scripture lesson, when Jesus said to launch out into the deep, in essence, Peter said, "Lord, we have tried to catch fish all night and have caught nothing. We are tired and weary, but we will do as You say." Friend, if you ever secure anything from Christ, you must put forth effort. Christ is not a welfare director. You must work for anything you get from Him. Although salvation is a gift, you must do something. Isaiah 55:7 tells us that if the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts, then God will save him. However, He will not do that until one puts forth strenuous effort. If you will do your part, God will do His part.

There Is Something That You Must Do

Let us look at some miracles that Christ did. The very first one was changing the water into wine at the wedding in Cana. When Jesus' mother told Him there was no wine, He said, "Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come." His mother told the servants, "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it." In essence, Jesus said, "Take six of those waterpots and fill them up with water." Each of those waterpots held between one hundred to one hundred fifty gallons. To fill them, the servants had to lower a bucket through a hole in the ground, let it fill with water, and then turn a crank to pull it back up. A bucket probably held only a couple of gallons, so that was a lot of work to fill six waterpots, yet they

put forth the effort. When the governor of the feast tasted it, he told the bridegroom, in so many words, "Most men set forth the good wine first, but you have kept the good wine until now."

Jesus performed another miracle for a man lying beside the pool of Bethesda. When the waters were troubled, whoever got into the pool first was healed, but every time he tried to get into the pool, someone else always got in ahead of him. One day Jesus came by and saw the lame man sitting there. The man told Jesus, "I try to get into the pool when the waters are troubled, but I have no one to help me." Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk." That man had to do something.

Another man had a withered hand, and one day Jesus came by and said, "Stretch forth thine hand." The man with the withered hand had to do something. In Jesus' day people had to pay taxes. He and the disciples had no money, so the disciples asked, "What are we going to do?" Jesus told them, "Go down to the sea and cast in a hook; and when you catch a fish, open its mouth and you will find the money to pay the taxes." The disciples had to do something.

God is not in the handout business. Today we live in a lazy age. People want everything handed to them. Some have allowed that same attitude to prevail in their spiritual lives. They do not want to fight the devil or put up any resistance, yet they want to be delivered. They do not want to take a stand or suffer to be free from snares, yet they want freedom.

The first time I tried to smoke, it was not long until I got sick, but I kept trying it until I could finally smoke without getting sick. The same is true of many who took their first drink of alcohol, but eventually they could drink it down and find pleasure in it. Friend, if you have taken up either of those habits and then gotten saved, you must get rid of the habit. If you are determined,

He will give you the power to drive out sinful habits. However, you must put forth effort and perhaps even suffer a little. You should not expect God to do everything.

When it concerns getting up and going to church, many people do not resist tiredness or a few aches. Some look out the window and see a little snow on Sunday morning and go back to bed. On the other hand, if they have to go to work, they get up and go. Friend, going to the house of God is far more important than going to work. If you want to lay up treasures in Heaven, be victorious, and win souls, then you must put forth much effort.

The Results of Disobedience

Second Kings 17:33 reads, "They feared the LORD, and served their own gods, after the manner of the nations whom they carried away from thence." This is happening yet today. People who once feared God and walked with God are down in Babylon serving their gods. They feared God, but not enough to continue to stand for God's eternal Truth; therefore, they were carried away to Babylon, and now they serve Babylon's god. Church of God people who have let down on the standard are even worse. God still has a hair standard, a dress standard, and a standard of holiness.

Verse 41 states, "So these nations feared the LORD, and served their graven images [not only did they do it, but they also taught their children to do it], both their children, and their children's children: as did their fathers, so do they unto this day." If you have God's Spirit, Babylon will make you sick. It makes me sick to see individuals who claim to be saints of God, yet they look like Jezebel with their painted faces and immodest attire.

The people about whom we just read feared the Lord, but not enough to keep them from worshipping their own gods. They did what they wanted to do, in any way they wanted to do it. We are living in an

age when people's spiritual vision has become dim. Many think they can disobey God and get by. Too many people do not have respect for men of God. Some try to kill their influence. Such persons are not children of God.

King Saul was as backslidden as a person could be. In fact, he was so filled with hatred that he tried to kill David. David ran for his life, and Saul tried to track him down. One night David found Saul asleep. He could have killed him, but he would not lay a hand on him. Why? Because once Saul was a God-called man. Where is that fear today? People are deceived who think they can disobey God and get by with it. Friend, how can you think that you can get by when you do not do what the Word of God tells you to do? You cannot get by.

God's Word tells us that it is an glory for a woman to have long hair, but it is a shame for a man to have long hair. The Bible teaches that only two types of women cut their hair: one was a woman whose husband had died, and the other was a woman who was a harlot. Sister, you may say, "I don't think God would condemn me for cutting my hair." To do so is disobedience. Brother, you may say, "I don't think God would condemn me if I were to wear a ponytail." God condemns all disobedience. People in the religious world want the blessings of God, but they do not want the commitment to serve God every day. When they become ill, they call for prayer, yet they have no interest in getting their hearts straightened out with God. They want the benefits that one has in serving God, but they do not want to pay the price.

Do You Lack Having a Commitment to Serve God?

Physically, many people want to enjoy companionship, but they do not want the commitment of the marriage vow. This condition is becoming more prevalent. They want the benefits of marriage with-

out the responsibility. Today many men and women do not want the babies. From 1973 to 1997, thirty-seven million children were aborted. That is an average of 525 children an hour for an eight-hour day, or eighty-seven a minute for an eight-hour day, or one plus every second.

Today people want religion without a commitment. They do not want to support the church in any way, shape, or form. They come in two minutes before the service starts, toss a quarter in the offering plate, and leave two minutes before it ends. As far as they are concerned, that is all there is to it. Friend, if you are going to serve God, you must make a commitment. Many people only want Christ in the time of tragedy. As long as everything is going well, they do not need Him. However, should a crisis occur, they are ready to get hold of Him. I do not believe too much in deathbed repentance. God saves people to work for Him. He wants His people to be witnesses to this lost and dying world. Christian friend, the Lord wants you to have a backbone so that you will dress as a saint should and conduct yourself as a saint should. Others need to see that there is really something to serving God.

Many people say they love God, but they lack having a commitment to serve Him seven days a week. Nevertheless, God demands obedience. Jesus told Peter to launch out into the deep. God has always demanded obedience, and He still demands it today. Unless you learn obedience, you will not see any results. Peter said, "Lord, we have toiled all night. We are professional fishermen and know how to catch fish. Nevertheless, because You said so, we will launch out and let down our nets." Why did they do it? Because Jesus said so, not because they thought they were going to catch anything. They were obedient. No matter how big or how small a commandment is, God still demands obedience. I have heard people say, "I don't think God would

send a soul to hell because of this or that." Friend, it is disobedience that sends a person to hell.

Some say, "I don't think God would ever send a soul to hell for smoking cigarettes," so they just puff away. However, He said to cleanse yourself from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit. The tobacco habit is a filthy habit. How many people have been burned up by them? How many have ruined clothes or furniture with scorch marks? It is a filthy habit, and God said to cleanse yourself. He is not going to take it away from you. You started the habit, so you must cleanse yourself from it.

Another area that many people have trouble measuring to is the ordinance of feet washing. Most people today do not want to do it. I remember when it was in the movement's Sunday school books, but later they removed it. Jesus said as often as you do it, do it in remembrance of Him. Obedience to Christ brings results.

How to Stand With Victory

We read in Matthew 7:24-27: "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock [in other words, the winds of false doctrines and the rain of people may come against you, but if you are planted in Jesus Christ, when the storm clears, you will be standing with victory]. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand [this man fell for the winds of false doctrine, because he did not take a stand]: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it." You need to take a stand for God's eternal Truth,

my friend. No matter who you have to turn down, you need to get off the fence.

Disobedience will bring consequences. In 2 Thessalonians 1:8 Paul wrote, "In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." Paul spoke of the results of disobedience. A corrupt tree cannot produce good fruit. Isaiah 66:8 states, "Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children." As soon as Zion travailed and labored, children were born.

James wrote in James 1:6-7: "But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord." Proverbs 24:14 states, "Thy expectation shall not be cut off." The Gospel ought to excite people. Saint, if you go to the house of God and expect to see people saved, your expectation will not be cut off. If you go to the house of God and expect to have a good service, your expectation will not be cut off. Going to the house of God should be exciting. Though you have had a hard day and feel cast down, when you go to the house of God and hear people testify of what God has done for them, it will not be long until you become excited and feel encouraged.

Too many people think the worship service is a time to talk. Friend, service time is not a time to talk, count your money, write out your grocery list, or play with the children. You need to come expecting to have a good service and to see souls saved.

Cooperation Is Essential

Seeing souls saved takes cooperation. Jesus said, "Without me ye can do nothing." Christ made His

church a body, showing that one member cannot function on its own. Just as individual members of the physical body cannot function alone, so it is in the spiritual body of Christ. It takes all the members working together in unity. Jesus sent out seventy disciples, two by two. We can read of other instances when two worked together, such as Paul and Silas, Moses and Aaron, Joshua and Caleb. Why? Because Jesus said if two or three agree on anything, it shall be done. Cooperation is essential.

Paul said in 2 Corinthians 6:1, "We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain." Why did God give us grace? Titus 2:11-12 tells us: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world [the Greek says 'the present age']." Some people will tell you that this age has become so filthy and modern that we just have to go along with it, but that is not so. God's grace can give you the power to live godly in this present age. You have no excuse for not living godly.

God gives grace to called ministers, called teachers, and called evangelists for the perfecting of the saints and for the edifying (or the building up) of the church. It is through grace that you can deny yourself. It does not hurt you to sacrifice your time, your money, or whatever else God calls upon you to do. Friend, you should not hold back tithes and offerings. You will get in trouble with God if you do. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 3:8, "Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour." You will be rewarded for how much you labor for God.

You may say, "There is nothing that I can do." You can pray. God has ordained that while some peo-

ple are poor and cannot give, others can. Some people may be slow of speech, as Moses was, but God can supply them with the help they need. Others can pray and encourage the pastor while he is preaching by having smiles on their faces or by saying amen. One person cannot do it all. The saints should work together in unity. The pastor may preach a message and no one moves, yet he has sown a seed. Then when a revival or a camp meeting comes, another man may preach and many people will line the altars. That is what Paul meant when he said the one man sows and another waters, but God gives the increase. You should not run down the pastor when sometimes no one moves to an altar of prayer when he preaches. He is busy sowing the Gospel seed. Instead, you should pray. Then when an evangelist comes in, souls can be saved, and the church will grow. Some may feel that the church is not growing fast enough. That is not from the Bible. God's Word lets us know there will be some on the utmost branches, a few at a time, but they will grow. I would rather see a few get saved and rooted and grounded in Truth than to see twenty-five people come and then walk away unchanged.

It takes all of God's people working together for the church to increase. You are not to glorify self, but you are to help and to glorify God. Are you willing to work with your pastor and other saints to see souls saved? God not only wants fruit to feed hungry souls, but He demands it. He will cut off the unfruitful branches, and men will gather them to be burned with fire. However, He will purge the fruitful branches so they will bring forth more fruit. This purging means getting rid of self and having more of Christ. Jesus said, "I am the vine, and ye are the branches." In the spring the physical vines need to be trimmed back. Sometimes it looks as if the branch has been cut back too much, but when the rain and the sunshine comes, soon the vine be-

gins shooting out new branches, and the fruit is beautiful. Why? Because it was pruned. It is also beautiful in the spiritual when there is more of Him and less of self. That is what God wants. You may think that you have really done something, but God wants you to realize that you are nothing without Him. You ought to be lifting up Christ and giving God the glory.

When it comes to salvation, you

must launch out into the deep, sink or swim, live or die. Are you willing to do that? You need to forget about everything else and do what God wants you to do. He wants you to dive out in the middle of His great harvest field and work for Him.

If Jesus Christ were to return today, where would He find you? Are you clear before God? Have you done square business with Him? Have you made your wrongs right?

You should be sold out to God and willing to work with the people of God. Do you have a spirit that is not conducive to being a child of God, a hateful spirit that says, "I am not going to do anything. I am just going to sit"? That spirit will take you to hell. If you have been careless in your experience, I trust that you will talk to God about it.

(Cassette C-4304E)

PERFECT LOVE

Slow to suspect—quick to trust
 Slow to condemn—quick to justify
 Slow to offend—quick to defend
 Slow to expose—quick to shield
 Slow to reprimand—quick to forbear
 Slow to belittle—quick to appreciate
 Slow to demand—quick to give

Radio Log



LOCATION	STATION	DAY	TIME
Newark, Ohio	WCLT-AM 1430	Sunday	7:15 a.m.-8:00 a.m.
Anderson, Indiana	WQME-FM 98.7	Sunday	8:00 a.m.-8:30 a.m.
Gaffney, South Carolina	WAGI-FM 105.3	Monday	8:30 p.m.-10:00 p.m.

Tune in to the radio station nearest you to hear an inspiring message from the Word of God. If you enjoy the broadcast, let us hear from you!



The Holy Spirit impressed my heart to write of the experiences of passing days.

"But there is nothing worthy of writing. The days are alike, all commonplace. The daily round of duties, each so small, what can I say of them, dear Spirit of my God?"

"Do you hold it a small thing, a commonplace experience to awaken in the morning wrapped in My arms with My breath fanning thy heart?"

"Nay, my Lord, forgive me for saying this is a small thing, but surely this is not what You would have me write?"

"Yes, speak of the consciousness of My presence as you dress and go to the barn. Speak of the communion we have and the knowledge of My brooding presence as you go about the work of feeding, milking, and the care of the animals. Is it a small thing to bubble over with joy all the day long, because you feel My presence and hear My voice?"

"Oh, no, Lord! It is better than a pillar of cloud by day or a pillar of fire by night."

"Is it a commonplace life to know constantly the up springing power and thought of God in your body, holding at bay Satan and many temptations and diseases which otherwise would have assailed you? To walk and work in a vigor not your own? To be so clothed upon by Me that you walk in power? Out of weakness are made

strong to perform the labor I plan for thee?"

"No, Lord, this is wonderful."

"Is it commonplace to dwell in the secret place of the Most High? To abide under the shadow of the Almighty? Commonplace to be in union and communion with Me, so that you know you are a child of Mine? Is it a little thing to be the temple of God and let Him bring forth the fruit of the Spirit? To be His open letter, even in little things, 'known and read of all men?' Is it a small thing to stand among the meek, an inheritor of the earth? Is it small to be constantly in God's Spirit of light and obedience? Your commonplace life is all this; will you say again it is little and commonplace?"

"No, Lord Jesus, forgive the thought that anything Thy love has touched can be small or commonplace."

"Beloved child, you have measured the days by your desire to do for Me. You work to see results, and seeing how small they seem to you, you call the days commonplace; and being hedged in by My loving circumstances and hidden in My tender hand from the strife of tongues, you have noted what others were called and fitted to do and measured your doings by theirs, and so made a mistake. Look no more at them. Look at what I desire to do for you and in you. Look at Me, and, as you look, be changed

into My image. 'Your strength is to sit still.'" "But, Lord, I heard Thy command, 'Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel,' and I have tried to do good and save souls."

"How fared the work, dear one? Did you save souls?"

"No, Lord, that was Thy work."

"Did you succeed in doing good?"

"No, Lord, that too was Thy work."

"My child, can you not see that had you been quiet and emptied, I could have used you more effectively? All your running, all your trying, hindered My doing. When you were still, I could speak and you would hear and answer, and we could commune, and when you were empty, I could use you to convey the blessing to another.

"Beloved one, I know thy strong desire to please Me; rest then, in Me. Let Me have you quiet, empty-handed, with ear attuned to My voice, and I will do all the rest."

"Yes, Lord; let Thy work go on in me unhindered. Fulfill Thy desire in me at any cost to self. Work out in my heart some of those thoughts of Thine, which are so far above my thoughts and prayers. Nevermore shall I think any life, any day, commonplace, nor any work small, because I know Thou, my God, art in its minutest detail. By Thy grace, hereafter, all that Thou dost will, shall be great and interesting to me, for God is there for me."

Selected

Matthew 5:27 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:

28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

29 And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

30 And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.



The Surgical Cure That God Offers Today

Brother Esau Brooks

The Results of Selling Out to God Completely

I thank God for the wonderful experience of salvation and the wonderful Truth that He has revealed to my soul. I was raised a Methodist, and I was satisfied. I did not know anything about Truth, and I was not really interested. However, the Lord directed my way until I came in contact with the Church of God. One morning I left the house and began to walk. I was weeping because the choice was set before me, "You must either go this way or give it up." I dropped down on my knees out on a hill and started to cry out to God. Until then, I did not know that it was through

much tribulation that one enters the Kingdom of God.

After I finished praying and began to go through my Bible, God began to speak to my soul. That was the first time I became interested in this thing called church and the Church of God. To make it short, God showed me the church. When I came down the hill, I went to our Sunday school superintendent and told her what God had been talking to me about. She said, "You had better keep that to yourself. Don't bother sharing that." I went back up the hill, and I was more convinced than ever that this was the way that God was leading me. So when I went on back to the church; a brother said, "We will give the morning

service over to Brother Brooks." After that, the whole town turned out to hear what kind of teaching says there is only one church, and that is God's church.

When you thrash old Babylon, you had better get ready for some hard times, because some people are going to be sympathetic toward that condition. Too many people feel that we are only going to make it by love. However, Zion will be redeemed by judgment, and unless judgment is poured out and Truth is laid to the line and righteousness to the plummet, not many people are going to make it in. The way to Heaven is contrary to everything else. Once you have started going this way, it spoils you for every-

thing else. As far as I am concerned, there is no other way but God's Word, God's church, and God's Truth. It might separate you from your loved ones, your friends, and some so-called brethren. If some could catch a glimpse of you coming down the road, they would look the other way, but you must still love them and be true to God. Every one of God's people needs to purpose in his soul to stand for God and go with God despite the sacrifice and the price.

I was the first one to get saved in my family, and when I went to the Church of God, they locked me out of the house. I remember one night in particular that I walked around the house and tried the windows until I found one that I could pry open; then I crawled back into the house. The next morning I was told that the next time I went to that church, they were going to put me out. At first I tried to talk to them. However, the conversation always became somewhat heated, and then I would feel condemned, not for what I had said but for how they regarded what I said. I remember praying and begging God to give me the grace to keep quiet. Sometimes it takes more grace to keep quiet than to talk.

I will never forget the day that my mother said to me, "What kind of religion is this that about everything you say you have to beg for pardon?" That was when I decided not to say anything else. I decided to bear whatever I had to bear and go on with the Lord. Later I had the happy privilege of seeing my mother won to Truth, and she died in the faith. She fought it so hard at first, but later she often said, "I am so glad that you didn't quit." Dear one, arm yourself with the same mind, because from here on out, the fight is going to become more fierce. The devil is more determined than ever to abolish you from the face of the earth. Nevertheless, God is still God, and after all is said and done, He will always be God. There is a price to pay, and I

pray that you will be predisposed to pay that price.

God's Righteous Judgment

We are at a state in life when it seems as if everyone is having physical surgery. Yet, regrettably when it comes to the spiritual, people think you ought to tolerate everything and try to make do. In the last two verses of our Scripture text, Jesus was teaching a message that may strike some as strange. I hope you can gather from His expression that these verses are not intended to be taken literally, but rather symbolically. I am consciously aware that some people misapply this portion of God's Word, and as a result, it will cause many to be lost.

You will note that what Jesus was talking about can cause you to be cast into hell. He stated in verse 29, "And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell." Whatever this right eye represents can cause the whole body to be cast into hell. Jesus repeated this lesson in verse 30: "And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off" Often as I have read the Old Testament, I have noticed that they did not bear long with wrong. Certain sins in those days merited death, and there was no appeal to the sentence. While we are not in that age of "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth," we are yet in the day of God's righteous judgment.

When Peter was writing his epistle, he made mention that the time has come that judgment should begin at the house of God. First Peter 4:17-18 tells us: "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" You may say, "I thought the righteous were saved." They are, condition-

ally. However, he was speaking of being saved eternally. Some may say, "What is the difference?" Salvation is still dependent on how much one obeys God and how far one is willing to walk in the Truth of His Word. The moment one steps away from Truth or lets the light go out is the moment he begins to walk in spiritual darkness. One must walk while he has the light or darkness will come upon him. No one can arrest Truth; it is marching on. For you to have Truth, you must walk in it while you have the light, lest darkness come upon you.

Peter was saying that the time would come when even the righteous would scarcely be saved. Jesus told us in one of His messages that the spirit of deception would so work that, if possible, it would deceive the very elect. Friend, you need to understand that just because you have been to an altar, received a glorious experience, and have been baptized does not mean that you can sit on the stool of do nothing and rock yourself into Heaven. No, you have something to do after you get saved. You must walk in the light, not with the light. As you walk in the light, you will come against things that will tear the heart right out of you. Yet, that will be more profitable for you than to shrink from going that way and having your whole body cast into hell. Today we are in a time of testing, a time of being tried.

Halting Between Two Opinions

Many people are becoming very reluctant to persist with God. They halt between two opinions: "I have a will to go with them, but I also have a will to stay with these people." Just as Elijah asked the people in his day, I ask you, How long will you halt between opinions? If God is God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow Baal. Friend, that is getting close. It is getting as close as your right eye and your right hand. Now, that is getting close to a right-hand-

ed man, because he can hardly make it without his right hand. However, Jesus was saying, if the right hand should get in your way and hinder you from making it to Heaven, it would be better to cut it off. No doubt, you are thinking, "Am I to cut off my right hand?" Literally, no; but symbolically, yes. Jesus was striving to show how important it is to make sure of making Heaven your eternal home. It is not enough to have bowed at an altar of prayer or to have been baptized. When you come to the place where God is making a demand of you to keep fellowship with Him, you must meet that demand or be cast into hell.

Jesus said, "If the righteous scarcely be saved . . ." As long as one walks in the light, he will be saved. You may say, "I have been in this way for many years. It is tearing on my very heart to have to do this." Well, it simply boils down to what Jesus was saying in our Scripture text: "If your right eye offends thee, pluck it out." You may be wondering, "Must I pluck out my own eye?" Symbolically, that is what the Scripture is saying. If something will cross you up in your stand for God or your walk in Truth, then it must go.

Many people rejoice in this message, but as soon as someone comes along in opposition to the message, away they go. Friend, you will not make it to Heaven that way. You may say, "But I have confidence in that person." You might have, but if that person is going to hinder your walk with God, he has to go. Jesus was saying that it would be more profitable for you that this should happen than for you to take the chance of being cast into hell.

Notice the words Jesus used: *right eye* and *right hand*. These are two of the most useful members of the body. If I had a choice between being blind and being dumb, I would choose being dumb. If I have use of my eyes, I can see where I am going. If I cannot talk, I can still write what I need to say. However,

if I lose my sight, I am at the mercy of whomever I fall into the hands of. The Word of God makes it quite plain that if you do not walk in the light, spiritual darkness will come upon you. If you want to stand and make it to Heaven, it would be better to do without the right eye and the right hand than to hold onto both and be cast into hell.

What Is Standing in the Way of Your Going to Heaven?

Today people say, "I don't believe God would send me to hell for that." I do not know why they want to blame it on God; that is not it at all. They are the ones who stopped walking in the light. If this Truth was true fifty years ago, it is still Truth today. Now, it might have become clearer, but it is still Truth. If a condition should arise that would strive to influence you to pull away from Truth, then you had better flee that condition.

There is too much moving around today, and the shocking part of it is that many are using it as a pretext for walking in the light. One thing you need to get clear in your understanding is that light will not lead you into darkness; light will lead you to greater light. Therefore, giving up those members would be more profitable for you than holding onto them and to have your soul cast into hell.

What are you to conclude that Jesus was saying in our Scripture lesson? He was telling you that you will send yourself to hell for whatever is in your life that is against God. God will not compromise for you, friend. He loves you, but He hates wrong. If conditions were to go the way many people are saying they will go, Heaven would not be any better than it is on the earth. Suppose God would let all professing Christians into Heaven, just as they stand now. If the spiritual condition prevailing on this earth were to prevail in Heaven, it would not be any better than this earth. However, there is a difference, and you

are being called on to part with whatever would keep you out of Heaven. In some cases, it gets as close as a husband or a wife, parents, children, or brothers and sisters. The Scripture tells us that Jesus did not come to bring peace on the earth, but that in one house where there are five people, two could be divided against three because of the Truth. He said that the mother-in-law would be against the daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law would be against the mother-in-law.

Sinner friend, if you plan to make it to Heaven, you must give up all sin, not just certain kinds of sin. If you are not saved from all sin, then you have the wrong kind of religion. The angel, making the announcement concerning Jesus, said, "Thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins." You cannot be saved from sin and still be in sin. No doubt, to some people, some sins look more attractive or seem morally right, yet they are wrong. However, people are not worrying about discriminating today. If something does not suit their fancy, they think it is all right to do something else. Friend, this is serious! It is time to find out what is standing in your way of making Heaven your home. Jesus made it very plain. You will go to hell for whatever is wrong in your life. There is no question about that.

Some people say, "Well, God understands." Yes, He does understand; that is the reason He gave you the Bible. He is not going to give you the Bible and then go contrary to it. He gave you the Bible so that you could follow its instructions. God so loved the world, and when He speaks of the world, He is talking about all nationalities, every individual on the face of the earth. It is not a matter of how you or I see it, but it is how God sees it that matters.

Dear friend, you must go God's way or be lost. The time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God. People need to know where

they are standing and how they are standing. When Jesus comes again, He is not going to select a few people from this religious group and a few from that group to take to Heaven. If He were to do that without their spirits being changed, after they got to Heaven, they would go back into their different groups. Friend, no matter what the wrong is, you need to heed this message, because no excuses will be taken and no justification will be regarded. It is better to leave wrong alone and be saved than to hold onto wrong and be lost.

Sometimes people will talk to you with only one aim—to lead you away. You are going to have to love God enough to say, "Now, listen, if that is your reason for coming, I do not want to hear it." You may say, "Oh, that's not nice." Well, I am going to preach what is right.

Fundamental Teachings of the Word

Church, God has given His Word to direct you. You cannot expect Him to change with every new moon, as many people seem to be doing nowadays, and still be God. He said, "I am the Lord; I change not." He also said, in so many words, "Other sheep I have that are not yet of this fold. I am not going to leave them out there wandering around. Those I must also bring." It is God's plan that there be one shepherd and one fold. One shepherd means one fold, one Christ, and one church. Anytime people begin to split and divide, they are in trouble. You may disregard what I am saying, but that is not going to change the Truth.

Let me point out to you the demand that Jesus' message is making. Our Scripture text says, "If your right eye offend you, pluck it out." You may say, "That sounds as if you do not have any mercy. After all, we need to give and take." Friend, there is no give and take when it comes to Jesus' Word. He laid this down right at the beginning of His earthly min-

istry. This teaching is not something that came about just before He was ready to be crucified. He laid this down as one of the fundamental teachings of His Kingdom. Jesus taught, "You must go this way or be lost."

What is the "eye" symbolic of? That is left for you to determine. Whatever it is, if you hold on to it, it will cause you to lose your soul, because it is not right. God will permit you to go to hell for doing what is wrong. Friend, do not listen to the reasoning that many are giving. You may say, "Well, if I am wrong, God will show me." He is showing you now. You may say, "Well, He will have to speak from Heaven." I am afraid that you will roast a long time in hell before He will do that. He has already declared God's way. That is what the Bible is all about. It is God's way, and you need to heed it, because to fail on one point is to fail on everything else. You may say that this is very rigid and unlike the popular notions of today. Many today say that it does not matter what you do as long as you are sincere. However, if you are honest, you will do all that is right.

Someone may say, "It would be cruel for me to have to go through life with one eye or one hand. I don't think God would ask that of me. Think of the discomfort and the awkwardness that I would have to endure." Nevertheless, God is still saying that it would be more profitable for you to cut it off or pluck it out than to hold onto the eye or the hand and be cast into hell's fire. There are no ifs or maybes in Jesus' message.

Again, I want to emphasize that Jesus was not talking about the literal hand or the literal eye, but what He said is to be taken symbolically. These symbols represent whatever is as dear to you as your sight or your hand. Whatever or whoever means so much to you, if that person or that thing will cause you to miss Heaven, you need to cut off that relationship. It could be some dear friends that you have.

They may be people that you have loved for a long time, people in whom you have great confidence. However, this is the time to choose between them and God. Friend, I could have the utmost confidence in a person, but if that person were to try to get between God and me, I would have to let that relationship go. There is no way that, because I have confidence in an individual, I would go to hell with that one. If that is where you want to go, you may go ahead, but by the grace of God, I am going to go to Heaven.

The Consequences of Doing Wrong

Jesus repeated this lesson in verse 30, showing that He meant it to be so. He wanted us to understand the lesson clearly. He was showing us how important it is to make sure of Heaven. In the Old Testament some sins carried the death penalty. I will quote one. The writer said in Hebrews 10:28-29: "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?"

My friend, a penalty is awaiting. Therefore, you cannot afford to go by the way people feel; you must go by what God says, if you want to go to Heaven. The standard for entrance into Heaven is very high, and the price is great. If you intend to go there, you must measure up and pay the price or you will be lost eternally.

Too often people have everything worked out according to human understanding. Many times I have been confronted with arguments that people have given regarding serving God and living right, and I have had to turn away and leave. You are going to have to do that too, because if you get in-

volved, you will find yourself losing your way.

What are the far-reaching consequences of wrong? Hell is the end for wrong. In too many cases, people are going by how they feel or by what others say. Jesus marked the way clearly. My friend, wrong has to go! There is no compromise with God. He has made one provision to take care of the sin question, and the Bible reveals that for this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He should destroy the works of the devil. There are no ifs or buts about it. You must cast off that which is contrary to God's way. God is not playing games with us. Heaven belongs to Him.

I have heard people say, "Well, if God did not mean for me to enjoy this or that, He would not have made it." Sin has polluted and contaminated this world. You have to be careful about how you let your affections go out to it. Too often people get used to this or that and feel that it should continue. However, if God said no, it is no! Even if it seems harsh, you need to see sin for what it is. Sin is a merciless ty-

rant, and you cannot afford to deal with it in mercy, or with kid gloves, so to speak. You have to deal with it as it is. Sin will damn your soul; you cannot afford to play with it. Jesus did not play with it. He warned the people about it, and through the Word, He is telling you not to deal with it. God has mercy for the sinner, but not for the sin. If you want to make it to Heaven, you must settle it in your heart to follow God. Acts 17:30 states, "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent." Now is the accepted time; today is the day of salvation.

Friend, what is your "right eye" that needs plucked out or your "right hand" that needs cut off so that you can be free to follow the way of God? My advice to you is to hasten and do it. Let the surgery be performed, spiritually speaking. Will you give Doctor Jesus permission to operate on you and remove whatever is wrong in your life so that you can make Heaven your home when this life is over? Do not make the mistake of thinking that

you can die wrong and be resurrected right. If you die wrong, you are going to be wrong throughout eternity. Death is not a savior; it is merely a gateway from earth to eternity. If your "right eye" offends you, pluck it out. Do not keep holding on to it and saying, "Well, I have plucked it out, but I am still holding it." Cast it away from you and get rid of it. Whatever is an offence in making Heaven your home, you need to get rid of it and get clear of it.

Some people today are on the contrary side; they are wrong. Every time you go where they are, they bring something up to try to affect you. Friend, you need to stay away! Why expose yourself to that danger continuously? Eventually, it will take hold of you and damage you forever. You need to cast it from you. To enter life halt or maimed is better for you than to be cast into the lake of fire. Friend, you need to consider these things. May God give you understanding is my prayer. God bless you.

(Cassette C-4150E)

Three Little Stones

Three little stones in the hand of a shepherd lad! Three little stones with which to protect an entire nation! Three little stones to kill Goliath of Gath, whose height "was six cubits and a span"!

The Philistine giant imposed himself upon Israel. His presence paralyzed the heart of Israel's stoutest warrior. "I challenge the ranks of Israel this day," shouted the Philistine. "What is your strength compared with a Philistine's? What one of you shepherd soldiers dare fight with me?"

David was a shepherd lad. But equipped with three smooth stones and faith in God, he was more than a match for Goliath.

Goliath of Gath parades before the church today to "taunt the battle lines of the living God." Behind him in the hills of tomorrow, pagan forces are encamped, arrayed with sword and spear and javelin. If a devout and fearless Christian dare oppose him, he shouts in scorn, "Am I a dog that you come to me with sticks?"

The church is not afraid of his shouting. Deliberately, confidently, she selects three little stones: faith in God, faith in her own integrity as His followers, faith in His promise to deliver from evil. By these shall she slay Goliath of tomorrow.

The Lord who delivered us from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear will also deliver us from the threats of paganism.

Wilma I. Perry

The Bedridden Saint's Prayer



In 1872 I went to London, a year before Mr. Sankey and myself went over, to spend a few months in getting acquainted with some of those men of God who knew their Bibles a good deal better than some other Christians I had met.

I was in the old bailey prayer meeting one Saturday noon, where the Sunday school union has meetings for Sunday school teachers. At the close of the meeting one of the ministers wanted to know if I would preach for him on the next Sunday. I told him I would be very glad to. I went to the north end of London the next morning and spoke, with no unusual interest in fact; (thought the service rather quiet.

I was to speak again at 6:30 in the evening. While I was speaking in this service, it seemed as if the powers of the unseen world fell upon me. The mighty power of God seemed to lift the congregation, and when I got through, I asked those who would like to be Christians to rise. They rose by the hundreds.

I said to myself, "These people misunderstood the invitation." I said, "Would all those

who want to become Christians and who are not Christians, meet the pastor and me in the chapel back of the pulpit?"

They filled that room full, aisles and all. I said, "These people have misunderstood me again."

After explaining the way of salvation the best way I knew how, I said, "Tomorrow night your pastor will be glad to meet you here alone."

I had to go on to Dublin, but the next Tuesday I received a telegram from the pastor asking me to come back at once.

I went back and stayed there for ten days, and four hundred souls were saved and blessed from that meeting.

Now, let me tell you the sequel of that. There was a member of that church who had been bedridden for years. She was becoming very much discouraged. She thought she could do nothing for the Lord. Then she thought that if nothing else, she could pray. So she prayed that God would revive the church, and she poured out her heart to God in prayer.

She had seen something in some paper that I had said or done in America, and she prayed to God to send me to that church.

When her sister had come from church that Sunday morning I had been there, she said, "Who do you think preached for us today?"

"I don't know," was the reply.

"Guess," said her sister. Finally she guessed Mr. Moody from America! Then she said, "I know what that means. It is the answer to the prayer I have prayed."

When they had brought her dinner to her, she said, "No, I am going to fast and pray."

All that afternoon she was holding me up to God in prayer, and when I was preaching, she was praying to God, beseeching, entreating the Lord to hear the prayer and revive the work in that church.

I believe that it was not my preaching, but the power of that woman's prayers that brought out this blessing. When you and I get to Heaven, it may be that we will find out that those who have accomplished the most have been men and women who were never heard of in their services, but who in secret and at their family altars prayed to God.

D. L. Moody

Genesis 3:1 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?

2 And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:

3 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.

4 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:

5 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.

6 And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

7 And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

8 And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.

9 And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?

Where Art Thou?



Brother Jeremy Hupp

The Subtlety of Satan

Many questions are found throughout the Bible. The first question is found in verse 9 of our Scripture text, which says, "And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?" The world is full of questions. Some ask, "What is the meaning of life?" Others ask, "Why me?" when faced with difficult circumstances. People want answers to just about everything. Doctors have questions concerning what causes cancer and what causes Alzheimer's. Scientists have questions; about what is beyond our universe and whether

living on another planet is possible. Some scientists talk about the possibility of going to Mars. People in the world are concerned about many things. However, the greatest question today is, "Where art thou?"

God asked the first question in the Bible: "Where art thou?" When God asked Adam this question, He was not asking for his physical location. Before Adam sinned, God communed with Adam. No doubt, every time God came to the garden, Adam looked for Him. Adam had great fellowship and communion with God. When God came down and asked, "Where art thou?" He was speaking in spiritual terms.

As you read this message, whether you are a saint or a sinner, I want you to consider the question, "Where art thou?" Verse 1 of our Scripture text says, "Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made." The preceding chapters tell of the creation of the world. We read that everything was good and how God, in His authority, spoke the heavens and the earth into existence. Then He became really personal when He created man in His own image and placed him in the garden to dress it and to keep it. Then God gave Adam a wife, and everything was wonder-

ful for a time, until the old devil came along. The devil is always looking to cause trouble. He goes to church services, camp meetings, and revivals. If you do not think he does, you are spiritually sleeping, and you need to wake up! You need to remember that God created the devil, and he gets all his power and authority from God. He has to ask God before he can bring trials and temptations upon us.

Sometimes you may say, "I do not understand why the devil is working as he is." Another question is, "Why did God create the devil?" He created him to tempt us and to try us, to see if we really love God. Friend, God wants to know whether you truly love Him. Going through difficult times with victory in your soul proves your love for God. If everything were easy and wonderful, there would be a little doubt about the depths of your love.

An old adage says that if you put the cookie jar down where the children can reach it and keep it full, they will be happy and everything will go well. They will get so that they probably will not even want it any more. However, if they have to climb high and reach to get a cookie, they will appreciate it more. It tastes so much better than when obtaining it was easier. That is how it is when we serve the Lord. Sometimes victory is difficult to gain. We have obstacles and trials to go through to get to it, but it is so sweet when we receive the blessing. Too often people want everything to be easy. If things were easy all the time, how would our love be? Difficult trials will make you appreciate the good times even more.

Friend, is God the greatest priority in your life? Is He more important than anyone or anything else? Where art thou? Realizing that the devil is very subtle is important. The word subtle means "crafty, sneaky," and he surely is. When I think of the word crafty, I think of scheming, being deceitful, and having hidden motives. That is how the devil operates. He is sneaky, crafty,

and deceitful. We each need to realize that is how he will work on us. He is sneaky. Most of God's people are not tempted with alcohol or tobacco or drugs. So, the devil will try to get a little friction between God's people. You might have the thought, "I really did not like the way that brother or sister did that." It may be that just a little grumbling is working on you. It will work in a subtle, sneaky, and crafty manner. If you are not careful, before you know it, you will get in a mess.

When the devil tries to sneak one in on you, he will use deceit and partial truths. That gets many people in trouble today. Partial truths cause a little compromise here and there. The enemy will not tell the sisters to cut their hair really short, but he will say, "Just trim it a little." Then the next month, he will say, "Just trim it a little more." He does not tell you to dress immodestly, but he will say, "Just wear your clothes a little tighter; that is the style." He might tempt you to allow the neckline of your blouse or dress to drift down a little. The devil is very crafty. He will bring in a little compromise, but he will be sneaky about it. Yet, a little leaven leavens the whole lump. He will bring in just a little of this and a little of that until, before you know it, you are miles away from God.

Beware of a Little Compromise

The devil tries to dress up his evil schemes in an attractive covering, one that looks good. Initially, he does not tempt you to look like an out-and-out sinner. He wants you to look spiritual so that he will tempt you to compromise a little. He is deceitful, sneaky, crafty, and subtle. If you are not careful, the devil will cause you to drift far away from God.

How do people get so far from God? It begins with just a little drifting, a little craftiness of the devil working in their lives, working until they are far away from God. God help us to be aware of the devil's

tricks. He is out to destroy our souls. Friend, you are no match for the devil. If you start thinking that you can whip the devil, you will be in big trouble, because he is getting ready to knock you out. In yourself you cannot handle the devil, but through God's power and His Spirit living in you, you can be victorious over him. Too many people think, "I can handle this situation." Well, you cannot handle it if you have let a little subtle craftiness slip into your life. Friend, you need to be very careful. If you let one little thing in, you can drift far away from God.

Steps That Lead to Sin

Again, our Scripture reads in verses 1-7: "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? 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. 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.

"And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons." Again, I say, the devil is crafty. Adam and Eve were in the midst of the Garden of Eden, which was full of good things. They were in a wonderful place.

The Lord put Adam and Eve in the garden to dress it and to keep it. In essence, God said, "You can have

anything you want, except for one tree; you must stay away from it." What did the devil do? He got them to take their eyes off the blessings and all the wonderful things that God had given them and got them to look at the one thing that they could not have.

Saint, if you are not careful, that can happen to you. Satan can cause you to forget the blessings of living for God and how He lifted you from the pit of sin and placed you on the highway of holiness. Then you will only focus on the one thing that you cannot have. In essence, God said to Adam, "You can have all of this, but do not touch that." He is telling you the same today. He is saying, "You can have all the blessings, but do not touch sin. Do not be disobedient, but do what I ask you to do."

If you get your eyes off the blessings and start to focus on the one little thing that you cannot have, you will become beguiled, tricked by the crafty, old devil. One thing leads to another, just as it did with Adam and Eve. You can become focused on one forbidden thing. First, you will look at it and think, "It looks really good." If you partake of it, you will die spiritually. Those are the steps to sin. You cannot help but see the temptation. However, if you want it and take it, then you will die spiritually. May God help you to stand for what is right and to focus on the things that are right. You need to look at the blessings. Do not dwell on the things the devil is trying to put before you. My friend, where art thou?

The Voice of Love and Mercy

After the devil came on the scene with Adam and Eve, they entered sin. That was a horrible day, but the good news is that God did not forget them. He was looking down, and when He said, "Where art thou?" He was not speaking of their physical location. He was asking where they were spiritually. God knew what had happened. He came down to seek the lost.

As God walked through the garden in the cool of the day, He asked, "Adam, where art thou?" No doubt, His heart was broken. God does not want to see anyone go into sin, and when someone does, it breaks His heart. When He said, "Adam, where art thou?" He wanted to see Adam come running, saying, "Lord, I have failed. I am sorry!" However, that was not what Adam did. He hid, and that is what happens yet today. People fall into sin, and then they try to hide, to get as far away from God as they can.

As God walked through the garden in the cool of the day, He called, "Where art thou?" It was the voice of grace, mercy, and love. I thank God for the day that He came walking through the garden of my life and asked, "Jeremy, where art thou?" I am so thankful that He called my name. I began to examine my life, wondering, "Where am I? Where am I going?" God opened my eyes. What a loving, merciful God! "Where art thou?" That is what He spoke to me, that is what He spoke to Adam, and that is what He is saying to you, dear friend. Thank God for the still, small voice that seeks the lost. God's voice called out to Adam. Adam should have been the one who was doing the seeking. He was the transgressor; he was the disobedient one. He should have run through the garden, saying, "My God, where art Thou?" Instead he hid himself. Thank God for a merciful God who will seek the lost. We read in Matthew 18:11-12: "For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost. How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray?" The Lord goes into the mountains and cries out, "Where art thou?" I can imagine a shepherd going out into the mountains to look for his sheep, crying, "Where are you?" God is doing the same today. He is calling for that one lost sheep. Verses 13-14 state: "And if so be that he find it,

verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray. Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish." It is not God's desire that any should perish. He is calling out to each lost one, "Where art thou?"

Examine Your Heart

Friend, you need to guard your heart. The devil is trying to deceive you with his craftiness. You need to ask yourself, "Where am I?" Spiritually, where are you now? This is the question that God is asking you. You need to be honest with yourself. Are you really true? You need to examine your own heart. I cannot detect what is in anyone's heart but my own. While I was studying for this message, I got down before God and asked, "God, where am I? I want to make sure that I am right." Dear friend, I challenge you to ask yourself the same question. Are you what you claim to be? Genesis, Chapter 42, tells about the life of Joseph and all the trials that he went through. His brothers despised him and sold him as a slave; then he was imprisoned wrongfully and forgotten in prison. Many adverse things happened to him.

Genesis 42:1-11 reads: "Now when Jacob saw that there was corn in Egypt, Jacob said unto his sons, Why do ye look one upon another? And he said, Behold, I have heard that there is corn in Egypt: get you down thither, and buy for us from thence; that we may live, and not die. And Joseph's ten brethren went down to buy corn in Egypt. But Benjamin, Joseph's brother, Jacob sent not with his brethren; for he said, Lest peradventure mischief befall him. And the sons of Israel came to buy corn among those that came: for the famine was in the land of Canaan. And Joseph was the governor over the land, and he it was that sold to all the people of the land: and Joseph's brethren came, and bowed down themselves before

him with their faces to the earth.

"And Joseph saw his brethren, and he knew them, but made himself strange unto them, and spake roughly unto them; and he said unto them, Whence come ye? And they said, From the land of Canaan to buy food. And Joseph knew his brethren, but they knew not him. And Joseph remembered the dreams which he dreamed of them, and said unto them, Ye are spies; to see the nakedness of the land ye are come. And they said unto him, Nay, my lord, but to buy food are thy servants come. We are all one man's sons; we are true men, thy servants are no spies."

What did Joseph's brothers say? They said, "We are true men." They were Joseph's brothers, the ones who had sold him into slavery, standing before him. They did not know who Joseph was, but he knew who they were, and he knew that they were not true men. They had fooled their father, but Joseph knew the truth. Friend, you may fool family and friends by saying, "I am true," but God knows if you are really true. If you will study the life of Joseph, you will find that he was a type of Christ. He suffered many things and was betrayed by his brethren just as Jesus was. When Joseph, a type of Christ, heard his own brothers say, "We are true men," he knew they were not. That is what is happening yet today. People are raising their hands, saying, "We are true men," but Jesus is looking down, saying, "No, you are not true." Again, the question is, "Where art thou?" I do not know where you are, but God knows.

Are You Measuring to Truth?

Many times in my Christian walk, the Lord has shown me places in my life where I have needed to move up. I have heard messages concerning the standard, the church, and holiness. Friend, God is shedding light on your pathway so that you can see where to go. As the Truth goes forth, where art thou?

Are you standing afar off or are you walking in the light? God has shed glorious light on your path.

When the light is shining on my pathway, I run as fast as I can to get there. I do not want to be left behind. When God says, "Where art thou?" I want to be able to say, "I am right here where I am supposed to be. Lord, give me some more light so that I can move up even closer to You." God help you not to resist the Truth. You need to be willing to walk in the light. Too many people get hung up on the standard and holiness. Friend, is it worth taking a chance on losing your soul? I want to go to Heaven. How about you? There is too much to gain to lose.

Are you measuring to Truth or are you like Joseph's brothers, falsely claiming to be true? Friend, God knows where you are, and He knows what you need to do. The good thing is that you know where you are, even if you are a sinner. God is faithful to show you where you are. He will make sure that you know what you need to do. You know exactly what your hang-ups are, and you know whether you are failing to measure to Truth. Friend, it is not worth spending eternity lost in a devil's hell. God has been merciful to you. He has shed light on your path. Are you moving toward that light? Where art thou?

First Peter 4:17-19 says: "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator." Again, verse 18 says, "And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" Sinner, backslider, hypocrite, what is to become of you? How shall you escape?

There are several steps to being

lost. First, if you neglect the opportunity to be saved, you will be lost. If you get in a rowboat on a river that has a big waterfall, all you have to do is sit idly and neglect to row and you will find death at the end. You do not have to row toward the waterfall to die. All you have to do is neglect to do anything and your end will come swiftly.

Another step that will cause you to go into eternity lost is to refuse God's call. He has been faithful to show you your need. God has always been faithful to show me needs in my life, places where I needed to walk in the light and draw closer to Him. Thank God, if you do not refuse Him, He will help you.

Another step to being lost is to despise God's instructions. If you neglect and refuse, you will begin to despise what God tells you to do. Then you will begin to have hatred for the church, Christianity, and the Word of God. You will avoid going to church. Your attitude will become, "I cannot stand to be around those people." You will despise the things of God.

Friend, if you are unsaved, you are closer to hell than you realize. You are only one breath away from hell. If God should say, "Stop breathing," you will be there. God help you not to neglect salvation. Do not refuse anything that God wants you to measure to, and do not despise any part of Truth that God has been so gracious to bestow upon you. Friend, where are you spiritually? Are you in a place of neglect? Are you refusing to walk in the light? Do you despise God and His plan of salvation?

The devil is a liar, and he is crafty. He is trying to turn your eyes away from God's blessings and deceive you. He wants you to focus on the one thing that you cannot have, and that is sin. Do not focus on what you cannot have. You need to focus on all the glorious blessings that will last a lifetime. God has wonderful things planned for you. You need to get your eyes off what

the devil is offering.

The devil is saying to you, just as he did in our Scripture text, "Ye shall not surely die." Right at the time people are asking themselves, "Where am I?" the devil is saying to

them, "Ye shall not surely die." You must rebuke the devil. God is talking to you, saying, "Where art thou?" You need to think seriously, friend. Ask yourself this question: Where am I heading? Won't you be

honest with yourself? If something is not right in your life, you need to move up. I trust that you will heed the warning.

(Cassette C-4679A)

Thank God for the Bible



Thank God for the Bible,
Whose clear shining ray,
Has lighted our path,
And turned night to day;

Its wondrous treasures
Have never been told,
More precious than rubies
Set around with pure gold.

Thank God for the Bible;
In sickness or health,
It brings richer comfort
Than honor or wealth;

Its blessings are boundless,
An infinite store,
We may drink at its fountain,
And thirst nevermore.

Thank God for the Bible
Sent down from above,
Revealing to mortal
God's infinite love;

A fathomless sea
With its bright, shining shore
Where the glorified dwell
And are safe evermore.

Thank God for the Bible—
Rich treasures untold
Are laid up in store
In its city of gold,

That beautiful home
Of the saved and the blest,
Where no sorrow can come,
Where the weary find rest.

Thank God for the Bible!
How dark is the night
Where no ray from its pages
Shed forth its pure light.

No Jesus, no Bible,
No heaven of rest
Oh, how could we live,
Were our lives so unblest?

There are millions who wander
In darkness today
No Jesus, no Bible,
No knowledge to pray;

God help us to feel,
And to act in His sight,
To render our thanks
Now by giving them light.

R. A. Clark

[Guest Editorial—continued from page 2]

In 1 Corinthians 14:33 the Apostle Paul penned, "For God is not the author of confusion." If we study to show ourselves approved, as the Apostle Paul admonished the young minister Timothy, then we can rightly divide the truth under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Isaiah declared that truth "shall sweep away the refuge of lies" (Isaiah 28:17).

Today there is much confusion over our land, and even contradiction, concerning the Kingdom of God. Those who are of the dispensational persuasion teach that the kingdom is a future event. By examining this text, we can see when the Scriptures establish the Kingdom of God as a reality.

When we consider prophecy, we need to understand that it holds a valuable and important place in the scheme of Scriptures. Why is that? According to 2 Peter 1:19, prophecy is sure. Second Peter 1:16-19 states: "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty [he was relating the account of when he was on the Mount of Transfiguration, recorded in Matthew 17:1-8]. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. We have also a more sure word [What is it?] of prophecy . . ."

Peter brought up the miraculous event that occurred on the Mount of Transfiguration, where he referred to himself as an eyewitness, and then he contrasted it and let us know that something was even more sure than miraculous occurrences. In verse 19 he said, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy." Prophecy is more sure than miracles. Why is that? First of all, prophecy can be historically

verifiable. History is historically and factually verifiable. However, many times miraculous experiences are not verifiable. Something historical and verifiable can be enjoyed by all, whereas often miracles are only enjoyed and viewed by a select few. We want to survey Daniel, Chapter 2, and see what occurred. Nebuchadnezzar had a dream, and it troubled him so much that "his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him" (verse 2). Afterward, he called all the magicians, the astrologers, and the sorcerers to see if they could tell him the dream or the interpretation, but they could not. (Babylon still cannot reveal the truth today; it is not committed to Babylon.) Nebuchadnezzar could not remember the dream, and because he was so exasperated that they could not tell him the dream, he issued a decree that all the wise men were to be slain (verses 12-13).

Verse 14 tells us that when Arioch, the captain of the guard (or the original Hebrew says the chief of the executioners or slaughtermen) came to Daniel, Daniel petitioned the king for additional time. Verse 16 tells us, "Then Daniel went in, and desired of the king that he would give him time, and that he would show the king the interpretation." The king, no doubt, was disposed to give Daniel additional time because of his previous record. Daniel 1:17 reads, "As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams." Though Daniel, Chapter 2, is the first recorded instance of when he gave an interpretation or understanding of a dream, before this time he evidently had established a reputation as being one who had that gift and ability. Therefore, the king granted him the extra time. In Daniel 2:17-18 we find that Daniel and the three Hebrew children had a hastily called prayer meeting, and then God revealed the dream and its interpretation to Daniel.

As we look at the dream and the

interpretation, we must be mindful that this alone reveals to us the nature of prophetic language. Because it needed to be interpreted, we know that its nature was that it was a figurative expression. It was not something to be understood literally; it required a spiritual man, under divine unction, to give understanding.

By the help of God, let us look at the dream and the interpretation. First, we need to understand that the burden of the dream was not for the time then present, but it was heralding a coming event. In Daniel 2:29, Daniel began to speak, saying, "As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter: and he that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass." Daniel was even plainer than that in verse 28, when he said, "But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days." The burden of that particular dream was not for that era, but for the latter days.

Biblically speaking, what are the latter days? The Greek-English Septuagint, says "in the last days." We want to establish by the Bible what the last days are. In reality, the prophecy is a time line employed by God to convey the prophecy from the day in which Daniel revealed it to the institution of the New Testament. Remember that Daniel 2:29 states that this "should come to pass hereafter." Verse 28 expands on that and says "what shall be in the latter days," or the last days. Let us find out when these last days are, and we will have greater insight into what was being heralded forth in this prophecy.

Let us view Acts, Chapter 2, in light of our study. On the Day of Pentecost in A.D. 33, Peter said in verse 16, "But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel [and then he quoted Joel 2:28]; And it shall come to pass in the last days . . ." The Apostle Peter, speak-

ing under divine inspiration, let those people know that the last days were ushered in when the Holy Spirit came on the Day of Pentecost. Biblically, when we consider what the last days are, the last days, or the last dispensation of human history, began on the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Ghost dispensation was ushered in.

Nebuchadnezzar's dream has as its main burden something that God wanted to communicate about this Christian dispensation beyond any confusion. He wanted to establish when the Kingdom of God was to begin. In the midst of the king's dream, which Daniel related, He said in Daniel 2:34, "Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces." One facet of the burden of this dream

was not so much the image. The image was nothing more than a prophetic vehicle to get to the pertinent point of when the stone would come, or when this stone would make the advent into this time world. In verse 44 Daniel said, "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom"

Daniel 2:31 says, "Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image." Why did he see an image? God deals with man where he is, and Nebuchadnezzar was an idolater. Therefore, an image would immediately command his attention. Daniel 1:2 says, "And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand [speaking of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, according to verse 1], with part of the vessels of the house of God: which he carried into the land of Shinar to the

house of his god; and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god."

Who was Nebuchadnezzar's god? Jeremiah 50:2 says, "Declare ye among the nations, and publish, and set up a standard; publish, and conceal not: say, Babylon is taken, Bel is confounded, Merodach is broken in pieces; her idols are confounded, her images are broken in pieces." When he took those sacred things into the temple of his god, it was into the temple of Bel, because he was a worshiper of Bel. Therefore, when God wanted to get his attention, he worked on a level on which he could relate by bringing an image before his mind. In the next issue we will begin to examine the image and what it represents.

Brother Earl R. Borders

Be Thankful

"Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name" (Psalm 100:4).

"Thanksgiving!" It is a big word composed of two small ones—thanks and giving. The depth of the meaning of these two words depends upon the individual. Thanks is an expression of gratitude bestowed upon someone who has shown favor, kindness, love, and mercy. It can be a statement made from the mouth only, or it can be an expression felt with deep emotion. A true giving of thanks to God is much, much more than a mere statement of, "Thank You."

The heart of a Christian should continually be filled with praise and thanksgiving to the One who broke them free from the chains and bondage of sin; a heart so filled with praise that it shall never again desire to partake of the beggarly elements of this world. "Thank You, Jesus, for a home; thank You for a family, for freedom to worship You, for a bed on which to lay our heads when weary, for life which awakens at the dawning of a new day"—on and on could the thankful heart expound upon the things of which to be thankful:

If the season of Thanksgiving is the only time that you say, "Thank You, God for all Your blessings," then you are falling far too short of giving thanks. As the blessings occur, take time to praise and give thanks to the Benefactor of all life's blessings.

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