

"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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CONTENTS

Drifting	3
The Consequences of Losing Out With God ...	8
Announcements	13
Especially for Young People	14
Is Your Spiritual Well Affected?	15
Radio Log	20
The Greatest Invitation	21

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Guest Editorial

Gog and Magog Part 6 of 6

The Fate of Gog and Magog

Ezekiel 38:1 And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

2 Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him,

14 Therefore, son of man, prophesy and say unto Gog, Thus saith the Lord GOD; In that day when my people of Israel dwelleth safely, shalt thou not know it?

15 And thou shalt come from thy place out of the north parts, thou, and many people with thee, all of them riding upon horses, a great company, and a mighty army:

16 And thou shalt come up against my people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land; it shall be in the latter days, and I will bring thee against my land, that the heathen may know me, when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes.

Revelation 20:7 And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,

8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.

9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

Let us study our prophetic text where it gives us an explicit account of what is going to occur and is occurring throughout the course of this battle. Again, verse 14 reads, "Therefore, son of man, prophesy and say unto Gog, Thus saith the Lord GOD; In that day . . ." That is a prophetic expression. In verse 16 the Prophet clarified it by saying "in the latter days," or the Septuagint says "the last

days," which is this Christian dispensation. What is going to occur? Notice that verse 14 continues, ". . . in that day when my people of Israel dwelleth safely . . ." As long as you stay in the bounds of Israel, spiritually speaking, you can be safe. God's people dwell safely. What holds us safe? Truth.

What is going to occur? Verse 15 says, "And thou shalt come from thy place out of the north parts." What does it mean when it speaks of coming out of the north parts? Biblically, what does the north parts represent? Zechariah, Chapter 6, gives us insight. When we see the thought of "north parts" mentioned, one thing that springs to mind is a cold climate, away from the source of heat and light. The north parts portray a cold condition.

Zechariah 6:6 states, "The black horses which are therein go forth into the north country." What are those black horses? Revelation 6:5 says, "And when he had opened the third seal, [The third seal is the period of time from A.D. 270 to A.D. 530. We are getting a glimpse of spirits and the spirits that worked to raise up these organizations. We are going to see how they worked initially, quickly, and then how we are facing them today.] I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and to a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand."

What do those black horses in this text refer to? Zechariah 6:2-5 says: "In the first chariot were red horses; and in, the second chariot black horses; And in the third chariot white horses; and in the fourth chariot grisled and bay horses. Then I answered and said unto the angel that talked with me, What are these, my lord? And the angel answered and said unto me, These are the four spirits of the heavens." Those horses represent spirits that are in the heavens, or in an exalted position in the minds of men. They are spirits that hold high spiritual positions. What do those black horses (or the black horse in Revelation 6:5) refer to? They refer to the spirit of apostasy that gave rise to Roman Catholicism. Bear in mind that we are speaking of systems, not individuals. Those spir-

[continued on page 25]

Proverbs 27:8 As a bird that wandereth from her nest, so is a man that wandereth from his place.

Proverbs 21:16 The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead.

DRIFTING



Brother Roger L. Decker

What Causes One to Drift?

The two verses of Scripture in our text are very pointed and deal with the man who wanders away from God. The first verse says he is as a bird that wanders from her nest. The next verse says the man who wanders from the way of understanding will remain in the congregation of the dead. Those who are spiritually dead are away from God.

The dictionary says to drift is "to wander from a set course or a point of attention, to be carried along by or as by currents of air and water." Too many of God's people who once had a personal relationship with Christ are just wandering along as a bird that wanders from her nest. They have wandered from the set course that they once had in view and become carried away by the currents and the spirits loose in the world. Many spirits are loose in the

world today, and if you start wandering as a bird that wanders from her nest, you will get caught up with those spirits. The next thing you know, you will gradually drift away from the teachings of God's Holy Word.

Many have strayed from the strait and narrow way. Men have come along and lifted the fear of God off their hearts, and now they do not see wrong in anything. They mix with anything and do most anything, yet claim to be saints of God. How did they get in such a condition? That condition did not come upon them overnight. They gradually drifted away.

What causes a person to drift? One begins to drift when he relaxes his efforts and takes it easy when it comes to maintaining his experience with God. A boat can have the largest and the best motor there is, but if it is not used, the boat will drift along with the current. A Christian

has all the graces of God at his disposal, but if he does not use them, he will wander. God can be right there to give you all the power you need to live right, but if you do not ask for it, you will drift along as a bird that wanders from her nest.

One who drifts along with the currents of the world gets further and further away from God. He does not resist temptation, but gives in a little at a time. He follows the tide of whatever is going on around him. He flows with the spirit in the world and has wandered away from his set course.

To be a child of God, one must be humble and submissive, forsake all sin, obey God's Word, and walk in the light that he has received. There is no place in the Kingdom of God for one to coast along haphazardly. No provision has been made for such a one. Jesus said in Luke 13:24, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will

seek to enter in, and shall not be able." Why are they unable? They will not strive to enter in. Jesus was saying that entry into the kingdom can never be automatic, but it is the result and the reward of a struggle.

Friend, if you ever make it into Heaven, you are going to go through some struggles. You must strive to enter Heaven. You cannot coast in. You must put forth great effort. Again, Jesus said to "strive to enter in at the strait gate." The word *strive* means "to agonize." The English word *agonize* was derived from that word. Jesus was saying the struggle to enter is so intense that it can be agony to the soul and the spirit. You must agonize to make it in.

Many people think that they can relax and coast along, just as long as they have a religion. If that is the way you feel, how are you going to stand alongside the Apostles and before Jesus? It is easy to think that once you have made the initial move to Jesus Christ, you have reached the end of the road and can sit back, as if you have achieved the ultimate goal. On the contrary, there is no such finality in the Christian life. You must ever press forward or eventually you will go backward. You have to keep moving in the Kingdom of God.

Young person, if you have just gotten saved, you need to stay active in the Kingdom of God and keep moving forward. Do not relax your efforts. God has the power and the grace to keep you. If you will go forward in the Kingdom of God, there are not enough devils in hell or out of hell to cause you to stray from the course.

Building to Stand for Eternity

When Jesus taught the Gospel, He made it so plain and so simple. He said in Luke 6:47-48: "Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will show you to whom he is like: He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the founda-

tion on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: [why?] for it was founded upon a rock."

Jesus was saying that when the wise man built his house, he dug deep and laid the foundation upon a rock. That man put forth extreme effort to dig deep to get to the Rock, or to get to Christ. The foolish man also laid a foundation, but he laid it on the earth, or on human understanding. He did not dig deep into the things of Christ; he had an earthly religion. In other words, he had a religious profession, but he lacked the power of God. It was too much toil for the foolish man to dig deep. He thought he had found an easier way, but he was shortsighted. His structure could not weather future storms.

Friend, when you build, you must build for future storms that will arise. Storms are going to come. As a Christian, you are going to be tried, persecuted, talked about, and made fun of, sometimes even by your own people. Still, you must dig deep and lay a solid foundation on Christ; then when the storms arise, the floods come, the rains descend, and the winds blow, you can stand right on the Rock and not be shook. While others around you are being shaken, you can stand.

Storms are inevitable, but when you lay a solid foundation and dig deep into Christ, you can stand in the days, the months, and the years ahead. You must build on Christ to stand for eternity. You need to build so that you can still be standing when Jesus comes. Do not repent for a week and then return to the old life; repent for eternity. You should not come to Jesus just to try it out. Come to Christ because you are sick of sin and through with the world. You can build to stand. You do not have to fall and quit serving God. Christ has an experience for young people as well as the elderly.

The wise man built in the light of eternity. He knew that he needed to build his house on the rock, so he

dug deep through the clay and the stones and got down to the rock. He put forth great effort and wanted his foundation to be secure. Why? He knew that the rains were coming and the winds were going to blow, but he also knew that if he could get to the rock, his house could withstand the storms. In other words, he was not as one who has a mere profession, but as one who has Christ within. He got all the superficial things and all the hidden things out of his life. The foolish man was shortsighted: he built conveniently, because he thought it was too much toil to dig deep.

When you dig deep, you must get everything out of your life that is wrong. You need to get right down into the inner recesses of your heart and clean out all the filth. Do not leave wrong attitudes, bitterness, envy, or jealousy in there. Empty all the chambers of your heart completely so that you can get down to the Rock, and then keep toiling. Do not be satisfied with a shallow experience; dig deep.

Some people do not go deep enough in repentance. They repent of many things, but they hold onto one little thing in their hearts. Jesus must have the whole house or He does not have any room at all. Some are ready to give Him the dining room, the living room, or the kitchen, but what about those little closets where they have things hidden?

The wise man dug deep and built upon a rock. Some do not dig down to the Rock; then when the storms come, you do not see them anymore. You see them testifying one week, but swept away the next. Others gradually drift and wander away. Jesus said in Matthew 7:25 that the floods were going to come and the winds were going to blow. Adverse circumstances will come upon each of us in life. The Bible says the rain falls on the just and the unjust. We all will go through hard places such as illnesses, things will break down, we will lose money, and so on. However, if we dig deep, we can stand when those things happen.

Pressing Toward the Mark

How did the Apostle Paul teach the Christian walk? Did he leave room for coasting? No. Read what Paul wrote near the end of his life in his letter to Timothy. In 2 Timothy 4:6-7 we read: "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." Paul was ready because he fought the good fight of faith and finished his course with victory. That is the only reason he could offer up that testimony.

The Apostle Paul wrote in Philippians 3:13-14: "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Paul was saying this: two things were foremost in his life. The first thing was forgetting the things that were behind, which was necessary. Paul did not glory in past achievements or use them as an excuse to relax his efforts. Perhaps you have labored hard and God has rewarded you abundantly, but do not use that as an excuse to relax. Paul said, ". . . forgetting those things which are behind . . . I press toward the mark."

Second, Paul said he was also reaching forth to those things that were before. The words used for "reaching forth" describe one in a race who is going hard for the tape. He has one thing in mind, and that is finishing the race and breaking the tape first. He does not look at the runner beside him, but he reaches forth. He does not stop and turn around to see where his fellow runners are, and he does not look to the right or to the left; he keeps his eyes on the goal. One who has his eyes on nothing but the goal is heading for the finish line to win the race.

Acts 14:22 reads, "Confirming

the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." What does the phrase "through much tribulation" mean? It means through much pressure. You might have pressure from your parents, your in-laws, or your peers. Some young people are afraid to testify or carry their Bibles because of peer pressure. Young person, you need to be bold for God. You are running a race. Do not let anyone rob you of victory. You must obey God.

Paul is letting you know that there is no easy way. You cannot drift into Heaven. You can only get there if you fight the good fight of faith. That is the only way you can make it. Paul was being honest with those who had chosen to be Christians. He was saying that it is through much tribulation that one enters the Kingdom of God.

Who Is a Drifter?

A drifter is one who will not strive to enter. He will not dig deep and lay a solid foundation, he will not press toward the mark, he will not withstand tribulation, and he will not fight to keep the faith. As one drifts, he gets further and further away from God. He drifts a little at a time. As he follows the currents and begins to drift, he wanders further and further away from God.

The prodigal son journeyed from his father's house and ended up in a pigpen feeding swine. That was quite a journey away from his father's house. Others who were raised right in Church of God congregations felt that they would not do the things of the world, yet they ended up doing them. Why is that? They had no restraint. Friend, you become powerless when you drift away from God.

When one begins to drift, the goal gets further away. Initially when one starts drifting, he feels as if he will not go far. He thinks, "I

will never get involved in the vile sins of the world. I know what I am doing. That kind of lifestyle is not for me." However, as he drifts further and further away, he lacks the power to resist the currents of this old world.

Friend, you do not know how far the devil will take you when you allow yourself to drift. He has your demise all laid out. If he can get you to begin to drift, you will get involved in things that you know you should not get involved in. The next thing you know, those things will bind you. The devil has a trip for you that you will never forget, and he is hoping that sometime during that trip, your appointment with death will come up; then you will be sealed in a lost eternity.

There is no set way for the drifter; he goes whatever way the currents of the world flow. Job wrote in Job 12:23-25: "He increaseth the nations, and destroyeth them: he enlargeth the nations, and straiteneth them again. He taketh away the heart of the chief of the people of the earth, and causeth them to wander in a wilderness where there is no way. They grope in the dark without light, and he maketh them to stagger like a drunken man." What was Job saying? He was saying that one who is away from God wanders as one without a guide, a waymark, or a path. As stated in our Scripture text, he is as a bird that wanders from her nest.

When one begins to drift away from God, he follows this current for a while, and then he follows another current, drifting further and further away from God, confused as to where he really is. If you were to ask those who are drifting, "Are you saved?" Often they reply, "I don't know. I think I am." When you are truly saved, it takes the "think-so" out of it. You cannot stand before God with a "think-so" experience. Either you are saved or you are not saved. Those who drift often become uneasy, discontented, bored, and look for a change. They want something different. Friend, you are

a prime target for the enemy when these thoughts start going through your mind: "I want something different. Look at all the things I couldn't do when I was being raised in the home." Do you know why you should not do them? It is for your protection, but if you want to do them, God will allow you. Then you will wander as a bird out of the nest. You will wander further and further away from God.

God puts restraints and restrictions on His people, not because He wants to make it difficult for them, but because He wants to keep them from the lust in the world. You must keep your soul pure to stand before God. He is not a hard taskmaster. Joy and peace cannot be found in following the flesh.

Dwelling in Safety

Paul, writing to Timothy, stated in 1 Timothy 6:6, "But godliness with contentment is great gain." It is great gain when you can be content to live godly. God has provided a refuge for us. Some have become bored and unsettled; they are not established. They try this and that, looking for a thrill or something to entertain them. Friend, if you have drifted away from the fold, you have stepped into the devil's territory. The devil is the god of this world; he rules the kingdom of darkness, and you become his servant when you do not live godly. Oh, he will let you think that you have it made and that everything is going all right while you sow those seeds, but those seeds will bring forth a harvest. One harvest it brings forth is bondage. He will make you a prisoner. Eve failed to stay close to her husband, and she became deceived. Christian friend, if you will remain under God's control, within the confines of the church, there will be a hedge around you. What did Satan say to the Lord about Job? Job 1:10 tells us, "Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every

side?" Why did God put a hedge around him? Job was perfect and upright. Job 1:1 says he was "perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil."

God is no respecter of persons. He will do the same for you as He did for Job. There is a hedge around those who live right. If you drift away from God and step out into the world, nothing can prevent the devil from getting in. The devil will take complete control of your life. If you have drifted or wandered outside the confines of the church, you are living dangerously. First Peter 5:8 says, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."

I would rather stay inside the hedge, even with the trials, persecutions, and tribulations than to have that hedge taken down and allow the devil to devour me. I would rather have God's support than to have all the things that people in the world say they do not want to give up and be an open prey for the devil.

We read in Galatians 6:9, "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." Saint, do not be weary in doing well. Your only hope of dwelling in safety is to stay within the confines of the church; stay as close to God as you possibly can. Do not allow anything to cause you to drift away. As a bird that hops from branch to branch and leaves its nest and eggs unguarded, so is the man who leaves his soul unguarded when he wanders away. He takes down the guard when he drifts. When a man or a woman begins to wander from God, that takes down the guard to his or her soul. You must stay as close to God as you possibly can.

Proverbs 13:13 reads, "Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed: but he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded." He said he that despises the Word shall be destroyed. In other words, those who want to get away from the

Word and have no regard for it, who refuse to be ruled by it, will be destroyed. If you do not want the Word of God to rule your life, God will let you go your own way, but you will be destroyed. Those who want to live by the carnal desires of the flesh will be destroyed. On the other hand, those who fear or reverence God's Word will be rewarded here and hereafter.

Verse 14 states, "The law of the wise is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death." The commandments and precepts of God's Word will be constant preservatives from the temptations of Satan. It will keep you at a distance from the snares of death, from those things that will destroy your soul. Proverbs 14:26-27 reads: "In the fear of the LORD is strong confidence: and his children shall have a place of refuge. The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death."

It is dangerous to wander from Christ, to drift away from His church, to drift away from the teachings of His Word, or to drift away from the presence of His Spirit. Staying away from the house of God is also dangerous. Why? The world is cold, dark, windy, and stormy.

Signs of Drifting

What are some signs of drifting? You do not have to be in the dark. You can know when you begin to drift. One sign is that the things of God do not satisfy you anymore. You cannot find pleasure in the things of God. When that happens, you are beginning to get caught in the currents of the world. Some thing else holds your interest more. You just endure the services. Church has become boring to you. Another sign of drifting is that you have a better time around worldly friends than your brothers and sisters in Christ. You would rather be around those who are caught up in the current that is drawing you away. Another sign that you are

drifting is when you feel that you can make it all right without doing everything that others do who are spiritual. You are drifting when you do not see the need to take time to pray. You can get up and go to work or to other places and not even acknowledge God. However, prayer is needful for all; no one can get by without it. The strongest person will become faint when he or she fails to pray.

First Corinthians 10:12 says, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." I say again, you are drifting when you do not pray. As you drift, you will let days or even weeks go by and not talk to God. Friend, something has happened. You are wandering away from God. When you can let a day, or a week go by without even opening your Bible, you are drifting.

Job said, "I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food" (Job 23:12). The Apostle Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." You are slowly drifting away when you can drift along and not read the Word of God.

Another sign of drifting is when one can miss the church services and not even feel condemned. Some feel that if they want to go to church that is all right, and if they do not go that is all right as well. Friend, if that is your attitude, how are you going to get around Hebrews 10:25, which states, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." When you can just miss services and not even feel condemned, you are drifting. You are caught up in the current of the world. Something has taken hold of you that is not right.

People give all kinds of reasons why they miss church services, but what is the real problem? They have become lean in their souls, because they have drifted. If you are a child of God, you are as duty bound to attend the services as the preacher is. There is no double standard. When you miss one service, the next thing you know, you can miss another.

Another sign of drifting is when one no longer has a burden for the sick or for the lost. Galatians 6:2 says, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." Romans 15:1 reads, "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves." Some have drifted so far that they never even think about the lost or the afflicted. One can never drift toward Christ. If you drift, it is always away from Him. The current always goes away; the flow always runs the other direction. When you drift away from Christ, you are drifting away from your refuge, and you become an open prey for the devil. There is no time to wander. Friend, if you are drifting, what if God should call you home? What if your appointment

with death should come? Jesus did not make any provision in the kingdom for drifters. You must either move upward and forward or you will encounter disaster and ruination.

The Christian's safety is when he is going forward and upward. If he starts to wander from the course, he puts himself in grave danger. To stop drifting, one has to put forth effort. You need to own your condition and come right back to Christ. In Christ you will find the power needed, and you will find a refuge for your soul. That is the only way you can stop the wandering.

Are you drifting? Are you wandering about as a bird that wanders from her nest? Are you caught up in the currents of this world? Why don't you come to Christ and dig deep? You need to get a settled, established experience with Christ. Can you feel the hand of conviction upon you? If you can, God is telling you that you are out of the ark of safety. You need to come back and dig deeper in your experience. Your only anchor is Jesus Christ.

(Cassette C-1490E)

Jewels of a Life

There are so many jewels that may be worn day and night; so many gems that are always and only your own, that you need not grieve for those that show their brightness only by day. There is the jewel of Consideration, that you may wear just over your heart. There is the moonstone of Hope, that may glitter over your brow, filling your eyes with brightness. There is that brilliant stone of Sympathy, the emerald, that makes you put out your right hand of Help. There is the beautiful stone of Loving-kindness, that makes the left hand help the right. However, above all, overshadowing all, pinning down your tresses, is the diamond of true Love—love which endureth all, suffereth all, hopeth all. Are not these better than jewels dug out of the earth? For, indeed, these jewels come from the heavens above.

Selected

Luke 9:57 And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.

58 And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.

59 And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.

60 Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.

61 And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee, but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.

62 And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.



The Consequences of Losing Out With God

Brother Esau Brooks

Looking Back

Many are going about claiming to be working for God. However, Jesus told us in Matthew 7:22-23: "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name have done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you . . ." Jesus said, in so many words, "You talk about working for Me, but I never knew you. We have never been introduced." That is hard for many to accept, let alone realize, but what Jesus said is true. It does not matter how much opposition His Word receives or how much people argue

against it, it is still true.

There is nothing in life that we need to watch more carefully than this matter of serving God. It begins at an altar of prayer, but there is a possibility with many that it has not yet begun with them, even though they have been to an altar. The mere act of going to an altar does not accomplish much. It is what happens after you go to an altar of prayer that matters, for unless you have gotten hold of God and He has heard and answered your prayers, you could be worse off than you were before you went to an altar of prayer.

Many have it all fixed up in their minds. They are willing and ready to collaborate with the

thought that just because they went to an altar, they are saved. Some believe that they are saved just because they went to an altar and then were baptized. However, the Bible says that one is saved only when he or she has been born again. Paul, in 2 Corinthians 5:17, wrote, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

Friend, allow me to beg of you to give the more earnest heed, lest at any time you should let these things slip away from you. Consider the multitudes of people who started living for God, and no doubt had a glorious experience, but where are they today? They are back out in the

ways of sin. May God help us not only to appreciate the privilege we have, but to labor by the grace of God to be accepted by Him.

As I read the Bible, many times I marvel at the things revealed. The most important thing about it is that it is intended to be received as a message from God to us. One suffers many consequences as a result of losing out with God. Consider the words of our Savior in verse 62 of our Scripture text: "No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." Jesus was addressing these words to an individual back then, but today He is addressing them to you.

Are You Overlooking Something?

Rarely do we hear anything said about this verse of Scripture. Many people seem to have it all figured out in their minds as to what this Scripture is talking about. I invite you to diligently consider the message contained in this portion of the Word of God. Notice, first of all, in addressing this individual, that it came as a result of his action. Verse 61 says, "And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house." It seems that this has been people's response throughout the ages of time. Man apparently has always found things that he considers more important than serving God. Often when God has made His call or His demand upon individuals like this man, they have said, by their actions, "I am going to follow You, Lord; that is my intention, but let me first go to ... then I will take care of what You are requiring." It was in answer to the favor this man was asking that Jesus declared the words of our Scripture text.

I am somewhat inclined to believe that Jesus' words had reference to all three of these individuals. The first one said without any persuasion, "Lord, I

will follow thee whithersoever thou goest." That sounded good, but it is quite evident that he failed to look deep enough into what he was saying. Often people say things that they do not mean.

Many times I have exhorted the church to be careful to say and sing only that which they mean. As a matter of fact, the Bible says to sing with understanding. People need to get settled and get down to the business of serving God. Many are treating this matter too casually. Serving God is the most serious matter in which anyone can engage. Luke does not say whether this man had heard Jesus preach, but we are told of the results. The resolution this man came to was, "I will follow You, Lord, no matter where You go." In answering him, Jesus said in verse 58, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." In other words, Jesus was saying, "Are you still willing to follow Me? Are you willing to follow Someone who does not even have a place to lay His head?"

If you are not careful, you will allow Satan to work a deception on you. You may say, "I will follow You, Lord," but it is another matter to consider what all that involves. When the man in our Scripture lesson declared, "I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest," that was quite a mouthful. He thought he was being honest, but to shock him into reality, Jesus said, in essence, "You are overlooking something. Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but I, the Son of Man, do not even have a place to lay My head. Are you still willing to follow Me?" This made a difference. How do we know that it made a difference? We never read anything about this man in the Word of God again. I do not know what his thoughts or his intentions were, but I do believe that in his heart he really meant what he said. However, when Jesus shocked him into the realization of what following Him meant, he had

different thoughts. How is that like many people today? They say so much, yet mean so little.

What Is Meant By Following the Lord?

Friend, I do not intend to make you feel bad. I would like to make you glad, but you must be presented with the facts. It is one thing to say something, and it is another thing to fully realize what you are talking about. For instance, many people today say they are saved, but are they really? What are they allowing in their lives? In what condition do they stand before God now?

The story today is the same as it was before Jesus was born; there was no room for Him in the inn. Oh, there was room out in the stable among the animals, but the inn was too cluttered. You see, there is an "inn" in each of us. We could call it the innermost part of our lives. Is Christ only in the words that you speak?

On that memorable day when Jesus made His appearance in the form of a child, they could find no place for him. His mother was about to deliver; that alone should have provoked some care and sympathy, but the innkeeper casually said, "There is no room in the inn." No doubt, Joseph insisted, "But my wife is in a delicate state. She must have somewhere to stay the night."

"Well, about the only place that I can let you have tonight is the stable." Jesus has been dwelling in the "stable" of people's lives ever since.

Many are still saying, "I will follow You whithersoever You go, but I will not allow You to run my life." Is God having His way in your life? Are you yet holding claims to your life, saying, "Yes, I am serving God. I am a Christian, but other things must come first. I must attend to my job and visit my friends and my family." In some churches, if the preacher were to

dare to bring a message against that, he would be labeled as being too harsh. The ministry has been confronted with that for so many years that many shy away from making too many demands upon people.

Many people feel they are all right as long as the preacher leaves them alone to do as they please. The moment he begins to hold to what the Scripture says, that is where they get off the boat, so to speak, and find another way to go. What is all the commotion today around religion? What does it consist of? People want to have their own way. They say the way is too strait, the preacher is too harsh, and he demands too much. What they fail to understand is that it is not the preacher who demands it. His job is to call people's attention to that which God demands.

Why do you suppose Jesus mentioned that He had no place to lay His head? It looked as though the man had decided to follow Jesus all the way, no matter where He went. However, he would follow only to the extent that it would not cramp his style. If you are thinking that things have changed, you are listening to the devil. What God demanded of Paul, Peter, and the other Apostles, He is still demanding of us. Many churches do not tell people that, but it is still true. You must take into consideration what all is meant by following the Lord.

You may ask, "Are you trying to tell me that if I have a home or a family, I have to let it go to follow Someone who does not have a place to lay His head?" Yes. I know there is a danger in looking at this in a physical way. In reality, these words are to cultivate us into having a self sacrificing spirit.

Had this man followed the Lord, it would have had to have been with the understanding that there was no physical place out there that he would inherit. I have noticed that many people go to an altar of prayer and get saved and

baptized and take a place in the congregation; then they expect to preach, but they do not even know what to preach. People are walking about saying, "I am a minister." A minister of what?

Denying Self

Jesus required of people from the beginning, as He stated in Matthew 16:24, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." You need to get it clear that you are to come after Him. You are not going to come before Him. In other words, it is not you first and then Jesus. Your interests should not come first and then God's interests. Jesus said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself." That is strong language, especially in the days of abundance, comforts, and conveniences with which we have been blessed. These things make it difficult for people to make the sacrifice God is requiring. It is no wonder that we have the conditions today that we have before us.

We must get the same picture that Jesus was portraying before this man in Luke 9:58, when He said, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; [These are things in which they delight themselves. When a fox needs a hole, it has one to go to. When a bird needs a nest, it has one to go to.] but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head."

Friend, do you really have any place in your life where Jesus can rest His head? You may ask, "What do you mean 'rest His head'?" Well, to put it in today's language, Is there any place in your life where Jesus can be the Head? Saying yes is easy while you are in the church services, but what about after the services are over and you are presented with a challenge? God expects you to find grace to help in that time of need. If you settle on compromising your position or your stand with God, you will suffer the consequences.

God does not need you to have Heaven. Heaven exists without your being there, and it will continue to exist without you if you do not want to pay the price. Once I heard someone say, "I have to go to Heaven, because Jesus died for me to get there." Dear one, He died to make it possible for you to get there, but you have a price to pay. Someone may say, "I heard that salvation is free." The accepting of the offering is free, but the keeping of it will cost you.

Salvation can be compared with getting married. The ceremony is the easiest part of the ordeal. However, not long after you get married, you come face to face with the fact that to stay married means something. The sweet young lady that you married may not continue to be the sweet young lady that you married. Husband, living from day to day, you need to be careful that the same look you saw in her and looked upon her with continues. You came from one walk of life, and she came from another; now you have to blend into one. Also, you both need to know when to keep quiet. There is going to come a time when you cannot have the last word, and neither can she. I am not preaching on marriage, but I am making a comparison so that you can see exactly what this business of serving God is all about.

Going to church and testifying that you are a Christian is one thing, but you must live the life consistently, twenty-four hours a day, without letting down on your duties, even when you do not feel like it.

The devil is continually saying, "Give up." Every once in a while he comes around to me and says, "You can't make it." I remember once I began to listen to him, and he almost had me talked out of my salvation. He began to show me this and that and the sacrifices I would have to make. Then he said, "The best thing is to let this thing go," and he almost had me convinced, but God had mercy. I began to think.

What a blessing it is to be able to think. I said, "Wait a minute! If I let this go now and I intend to get to Heaven, I will have to come right back to where I let this thing go and pick it back up." So I said, "Devil, I will not let go." This is the way I have been going ever since.

Putting God First in Your Life

Verse 59 of our Scripture lesson says, "And he said unto another [Jesus was addressing another man here], Follow me. But he said, Lord [I will come, but], suffer me first to go and bury my father." To paraphrase, the man was telling Jesus, "Don't get me wrong, Lord, I am not against following You. I want to follow You, but just allow me the privilege to lay away my father first. Consider the predicament I am in. I can't leave my father like that. Someone has to bury him, and I am his son. Would You allow me to first go and bury my father? Then when I have done so, I promise that I will follow You."

What was wrong with what that man said? Verse 60 tells us that Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God." The man probably thought, "Lord, did you really say, 'Let the dead bury their dead?' Am I to go on as if nothing has happened? What kind of Savior are You? Must I leave my father in his old age to the mercy of the world and attend to Your interests first?" That is what Jesus said. That is the way it was then, and that is the way it is yet.

You may be thinking, "Preacher, are you going to tell me that if my loved one were to pass away, I must leave him or her to attend to whatever the Lord would have me to do?" That is correct. I wonder, how many would be a Christian when it comes to this? Jesus was telling the man exactly how it was. You see, this business of serving God is far more involved than what many are seeing today. Too many people see serving God as merely

going to church whenever they can make it. They use excuses such as, "It's a little chilly outside. I think I'll stay home tonight." Friend, serving God involves more than going to church when you can make it; it is a self-involving matter.

The Necessity of Following God on His Terms

Evidently, the man did not agree with Jesus, because we do not hear anything about him after this. Another one disappeared, and then another fellow came. He might have been standing around and watching how the other two had reacted and thought he would do better. Perhaps he said, "Those other fellows have turned their backs on You, Lord, but I will follow You."

In verse 61 he said to Jesus, "Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house." Jesus answered, "No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62). No matter who one is, where he is from, what his nationality is, or what his ideas are, if he lays his hand to the Gospel plow, the plow by which souls are brought out of sin and into the Kingdom of God, he is not fit if he looks back.

Men have given all kinds of interpretations to this verse. Some have read this to mean that once you backslide, you can never be saved again. However, that is not what Jesus was teaching. He was implying a process of life in which one is continually letting other things come first and God last. He wants us to know that such a one cannot fit in God's great plan. This thought of looking back implies constantly becoming involved in things other than the Kingdom of God.

The Savior was presenting three main ways that a person can lose out with God. First, by not being willing to pay the price of letting God be the Head in one's life. Second, by putting family

obligations first rather than His interests. Third, by allowing one's concern for others (not in the sense of winning them to the kingdom, but in the sense of accommodating them) to come before God.

The third man said some fellows were at home in his house. Why did he have to bid them farewell? They would finally miss him if he were to go. They would wait for a while, and should he not appear, no doubt, they would inquire about him. Someone probably would have seen him and would have said, "Well, the last time I saw him, he was following the Master." Then, his friends would have realized, "That's the end of our relationship with him."

Back in the morning time, that was the way Christianity was viewed. Once one got salvation, it spoiled him for anything or anyone else. Oh, I know it is not so today in too many cases. Some stand up and argue against it, but that does not make any difference. Let God be true and every man a liar.

The three characters in our Scripture lesson intended to follow the Lord, but they wanted to do so on their terms. Friend, is your salvation based on your own terms or God's terms? You need to reexamine this thing. Too many today are having trouble with the very same things those three individuals had trouble with back in Jesus' time. Do you know why? Because the same devil that was working against them is still working against us today. Neither the devil nor his intentions have changed. His goal is to ruin your chances of making Heaven your home. You need to have victory over the devil.

Drawing Back Into Perdition

Today many feel that if the preacher is too straight-laced, they will go down the block and start their own church where they can call the numbers, so to speak. Do you know who is behind that? The

devil. You see, just because you are called "Church of God" does not mean you that are truly Church of God. Anyone can take a little paint and write "Church of God" over the door, but that does not make the people who go there Church of God. For one to be Church of God, he or she has to be Church of God on the inside.

It used to be against the law to advertise something that you did not have in stock. When it comes to God, it is still wrong. Do you know what God said? "I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not . . ." (Revelation 2:9). Saying that you are Church of God when you are not is blasphemous. She is the only one of her kind.

I hope you can understand that serving God is not as difficult as it sounds. Yes, we are called upon to make some sacrifices, and some make great sacrifices; but God rewards and blesses those who do. Jesus made it clear that you must close your eyes to everything and everyone if you are going to make Heaven your home. What this one or that one does is not important. It is what you do that matters.

No man can continue to look back on the things of this earth and yet serve the purpose of the kingdom. People may make allowances for it and act as if it is no more than reasonable, but Jesus was teaching that if one does that, he is not fit for the kingdom. He falls too short of what God requires. When Belshazzar was feasting with his lords, his wives, and his concubines, he went so far as to desecrate the vessels of God. Soon afterward, a hand was seen writing on the wall, letting him know that he was weighed in the balances and found wanting. You want to make sure, dear heart, that when the time comes for you to leave this world, you are not found wanting.

I have heard about Christian people dying and leaving a triumphant testimony. I can remember one outstanding example

that took place in my lifetime. An older brother came down to the last of his days on this earth and sent for me. He said, "If you want to see the end of me, come now." So, I dropped everything I was doing and left. When I made my appearance in his bedchamber, he looked over and said, "Brother Brooks, this is the true faith of Jesus Christ. Hold onto it, defend it, and do not give it up." Then he dropped back and died with a smile on his face.

The older brother who started the work in Honduras and Cayman, in his last few moments of life said, "Brother Brooks, I am going to do with you as Elijah did with Elisha. I am casting my mantle on you, and I want you to take it from where I am leaving it," and he went on. So, you see, I have a force motivating me, and nothing else matters to me but that.

The Bible exhorts in Hebrews 10:38-39: "Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul."

Some people say, "We can't make it together; we have to separate." It reminds me of Abraham and Lot. They made it good up to when their herdsmen began to disagree. Abraham came to Lot and said, "Now, Lot, we are brethren. Let there be no division among us. If you go to the right, I will go to the left. If you want to go to the left, I will go to the right." Do you know what the Bible says? Lot beheld the cities of the plain and decided to separate from Abraham and pitch his tent toward Sodom. Then it was not long until he ended up in Sodom, and Sodom was in him. It would not have been so bad had he only pitched his tent toward Sodom, but he let Sodom get in him and his family, and it ruined him. He died in shame and disgrace. Friend, you need to examine yourself closely to see that what you

are building for eternity is not leaning toward the comforts of this life, for to draw back is perdition.

Becoming a Servant of Corruption

What will happen to people today who turn their backs on the message, on God, and on the church and influence others to do the same? What are they going to say on the Judgment Day? As long as you bear a grudge against someone, you may find pleasure in turning others against that person. But what about the Judgment Day? You need to start living for that.

To make it to Heaven, you must be as Jesus said. He stated in Luke 9:51, "And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem." You have to set your face steadfastly to go to Heaven, and do not allow anyone to talk you out of it. Many spirits will come and whisper in your ears things that will turn you against your brothers and sisters and will cause you to lose your soul if you are not careful. It is a blessing when you deny yourself the luxury of trying to hear everything that people are saying. Do you know what I tell people? "I do not want to hear anything that will affect my soul and turn me against others." No matter what the trouble is, you should not be distracted. The Lord said in Luke 17:32, "Remember Lot's wife." She did not turn back; she looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.

In 2 Peter 2:19-21 we read: "While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage. For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness,

than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them."

Some people who used to stand and preach that division is sin are now encouraging it. Suddenly they feel that they cannot make it with a certain brother any longer. They say, "He must come to our terms and humble himself before us." Well, are they humbling themselves before him? This is a two-way street.

Second Peter 2:22 says, "But it is happened unto them according to

the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." That is the way God described the condition of every individual who looks back to the things they were once delivered from.

You may not regard this message seriously, but it is very serious. In the language of our text, Jesus declared that no man is exempt from it. If one puts his hand to the plow and looks back, he will not fit into the purpose of Almighty

God.

Is Christ the Head of your life or does someone else hold that prominent place? You may say, "I have to leave because my wife is gone." That sounds like the fellow who, when the invitation was given to come to the feast, said, "I married a wife and cannot come." What an excuse! If he married her, he could take her along with him. May God bless you.

(Cassette C-4257E)

Announcements

CANBY, OR

November 19-25

THANKSGIVING FELLOWSHIP MEETING: Church of God, Canby, OR

Evangelist: Brother Roger L. Decker, Newark, OH
Service Times: Mon.-Sat. 7:30 p.m. ; Thurs.-Sat. 10:30 a.m.
Sun. 10:30 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.
For further information, contact: Pastor E. David Stegmeier
Telephone: (503) 266-9297

DETROIT, MI

November 19-24

REVIVAL: Bible Standard Church of God, 14601 Gratiot Ave.

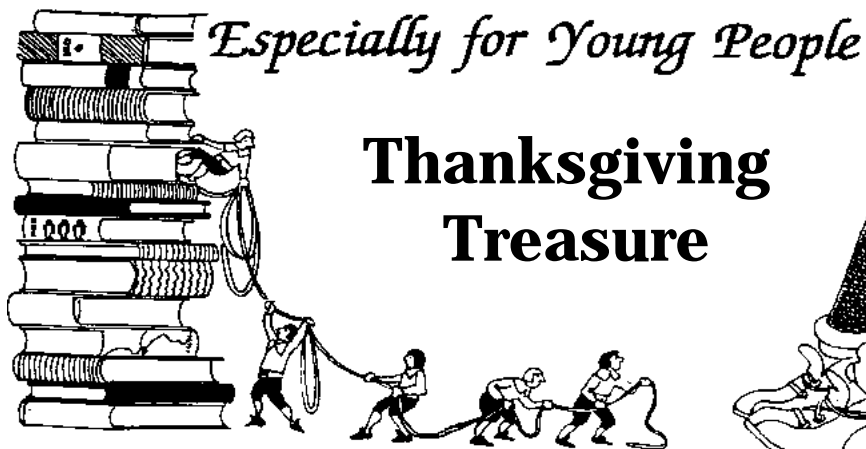
Detroit, MI 48205
Evangelist: Brother Earl R. Borders, Newark, OH
Service Times: 7:00 p.m. nightly
For further information, contact: Pastor Samuel Oree
Telephone: (313) 891-5210 or (313) 892-3483

NEWARK, OH

December 26-30

OLD-FASHIONED CAMP MEETING: Church of God, 675 N. Cedar St.

Newark, OH. First service: Wednesday 7:00 p.m.
Three services daily: Thurs.- Sun. 10:00 a.m., 2:30 p.m., & 7:00 p.m.
Dormitories, dining hall & snack bar. Meals for full-time evangelists and pastors (with spouses) are half-priced.
The meals are reasonably priced. Lodging-free will offering.
For lodging reservations, contact: Brother or Sister Bush
Telephone: (740) 345-1213
For further information, contact: Pastor Roger L. Decker, 83 Decrow Ave., Newark, OH 43055. Telephone: (740) 344-2543.



"Mom, that new boy, Karl, who has just escaped from Hungary, says he is very rich," Jeffery told his mother. "He has burns all over his body, and he hasn't any toys, and they live in an old shack. How can he say that he is so very rich?"

"Why don't you invite him over to play?" Jeffery's mother said. "Maybe he is so poor that he has to play make believe that he is rich." Then she said, "Tomorrow is Thanksgiving Day. Let us share with them some of our good food. I shall put some food in a basket and you can take it to them."

Karl and his mother were glad to get the basket of food. When Jeffery asked Karl to come home to play with him, his eyes lit up with excitement. "You got big home," Karl answered, "and a nice mother too. I go play with you. Maybe you rich like me?"

"Oh, we're not rich," Jeffery said, with a smile, "but we got it pretty good anyway. I have lots of toys to show you. You can ride my bike too."

Karl seemed out of place with his clean, patched up clothes as he followed Jeffery upstairs to Jeffery's bedroom. Karl did not get excited about Jeffery's skates or the other things that Jeffery showed him. The Hungarian boy seemed most interested in the books, for he picked them up one by one and examined them. Then he laid them down with a disappointed look on his face.

"Would you be willing to be

beaten by clubs, burnt by a red hot poker, or be locked up in a jail for days without any food for these things you have shown me?" Karl asked his friend.

Jeffery was so surprised at such a strange question that he did not know what to say for a minute. Then he began to wonder if the Hungarian boy's mind had been damaged by the things he had suffered in his country. Everyone knew that Karl and his mother had suffered terrible things under the Communists before they got away.

"Of course not!" Jeffery told his friend. "But why do you ask?"

"You have a lot of nice things," Karl muttered slowly, "but I don't see that you have a Bible. I thought all Americans had a Bible."

Jeffery laughed a little and felt suddenly ashamed. "Oh, I've got a Bible," he confessed, "but I forget it half the time at church."

"Don't you read the Bible every day?" Karl asked him in surprise.

"Of course not!" Jeffery felt a little displeased with his friend for such a question. "The Bible is for Sundays only, you see."

"I guess you are a poor boy," Karl exclaimed sadly. When Jeffery stared at him in surprise he explained, "Do you see all these burnt places on my arms and chest and face? The Communists gave them to me because I had a Bible and because I

would not give it up to them. I hid it away and read it in secret. The reading of the Bible made me very happy, for it told me of Jesus. One day He came into my heart and made me a rich boy! They beat me and locked me up without any food, but they could not take Jesus away from me, for He is in my heart!

"You have a lot of things. You can lose them or tire of them. I have a Person, and no one can take Him from me. Every day I learn more about Him as I read my Bible. He is my treasure! But I guess you don't know Him or you would feel the same about Him as I do."

Jeffery hung his head and blushed with shame. He thought for a while, and then he smiled as he said, "Now I know why you say that you are a rich boy! I got to thinking the wrong things as being the most important. I'm going to read my Bible every day too and let Jesus come into my heart. What do you say we start reading the Bible together on Thanksgiving Day?"

Karl smiled and said, "Okay!"

Selected

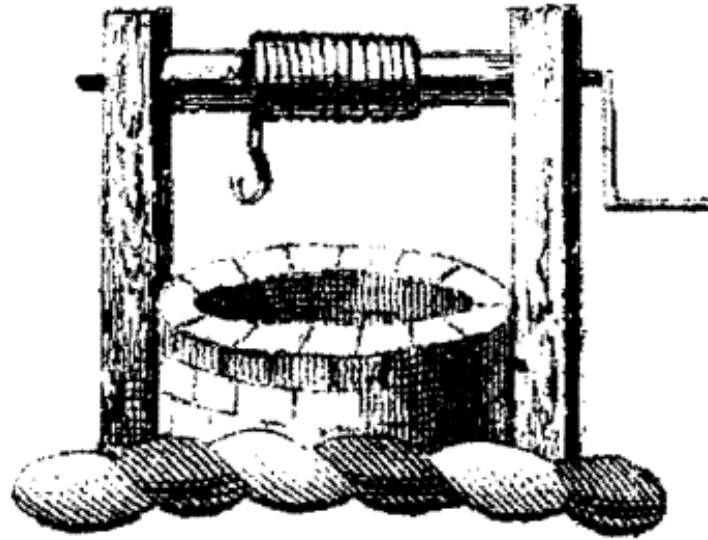
"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

Luke 15:30 But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf.

31 And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.

32 It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.

Is Your Spiritual Well Affected?



Brother Irwin Sesher

Coming Clean With God

Once I was lost, but I am so glad that now I am found. Dear one, if you are spiritually dead, you may go through the motions of playing church, putting on a spiritual face, shaking the preacher's hand, and acting saved in church; but when you get in the car and head home, you act like the devil. That is not the type of life the Lord wants you to have. The enemy has so many people deceived today. Some say, "I was baptized when I was a baby." The question is, are you saved today? Others say, "Don't forget the card I signed when I went to that church" or they say, "I shook the preacher's hand." Friend, are you living a life free from sin? Salvation is something that you can know for certain. You can have a know-so salvation.

Child of God, when you were out in sin and then went to an altar of prayer, you were sick of sin. You knew that you needed help in your soul. However, you could not get help until you came clean with Jesus Christ. The reason some people do not receive help in their souls is that they do not come clean with God.

What happened when you were growing up and your mother told you to go to the bathroom to get cleaned up for dinner? If you went to the dinner table with dirty hands and a dirty face, no doubt she said, "Why didn't you get cleaned up?" You might have been ready to eat, but she was not ready to serve you. The only way that you could partake of the food at the dinner table was to go back to the bathroom and get yourself cleaned up. Friend, coming clean with God is exactly

what He requires of you, otherwise He cannot use you. You will not get much out of the church services. You will go in, sit down, and say, "This is just another service." You will not receive what God has for you. Dear one, you need to come clean before God and confess all. 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."

First John 1:9 states, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." John did not say some, but all. First John 4:15 tells you, "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God." Confessing all unrighteousness is the key.

Saint, as you go through this Christian life and witness to others of how the Lord has brought you out of sin, changed you, and kept you, you are going to meet opposition. Adversities will come upon you. That is not a time for you to back away. For a great army to accomplish anything, it must move forward. Church, we are in a spiritual battle. We are not going to have victory without a battle. We need to stand our spiritual ground. Some things can affect your joy in this Christian race. Things can taint your spiritual well if you allow them.

Getting a Personal Experience With the Lord

Let us talk a little about this well. John 4:1-6 tells us: "When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,) He left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee. And he must needs go through Samaria. Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour."

Consider how close Jesus was. He was sitting right on the well. Friend, just going to church cannot save you, and knowing that your mother or your father is saved cannot save you either. Knowing someone who is right with God cannot save you. You have to get a personal experience with God. You cannot depend on someone else's salvation. It must be just you and God in a close experience. Jesus' sitting on the well shows how close He was. He is just as close today, yet people still reject Him.

Verse 7 reads, "There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink." It was not by chance that this woman went to the well at that

time alone. Usually the women went to the well together in the morning or in the evening. However, we read that this woman went to the well around the sixth hour. Why did she go then? It was her time to meet Jesus. She had a decision to make. There was Someone at the well that she needed. Dear one, you need Jesus Christ today. This is not a time to say, "Later." What a wonderful opportunity you have right now! The world is not going to help you when it comes to godliness. The world does not have the answer. Some people think, "I will get all the answers I need down at this organization or that association." Friend, they cannot give you any help for your soul.

When the Lord wants to meet with you, He will make a way. However, if you reject His call, He may find it necessary to get your attention through a bad accident or another tragedy. If you are unprepared to meet God, today is the best time to let Him come into your heart. When things look the darkest, the Lord will make a way. He will work when nothing else will. The woman was at the well to draw water. That was time for her to make a decision. Sinner friend, this could be your last chance to be saved. You do not know what the future holds. What are you going to do with Jesus?

So many people attend nominal religious services Sunday mornings, and that is it for the week; they want no more. They do not want to bother having Sunday evening or Wednesday evening services. Too many other things are going on in their schedules. They do not want to alter their daily routines. Cold, dead, dried up religion is all they have. What does nominal religion have to offer people today? Nothing. There is no life in it, dear one. Much of nominal religion prints programs ahead of time for their services. We do not have programs in the Church of God, because we let the Holy Spirit lead and direct the services.

Living Water

We read in John 4:9-10: "Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." Friend, the Lord has so much to offer you, so much more than the world has. This great salvation is so wonderful! The woman of Samaria asked the question, "You, being a Jew, askest drink of me, a woman of Samaria?" This plan of salvation is for people of all walks of life, for all races of people, and for all nationalities. It is not just for the elite, the poor, or the middle class; it is for everyone.

We read in Hebrews 2:3, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him." First Thessalonians 5:9 states, "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ." Saint, aren't you glad for this great salvation? It is wonderful! John 4:11-14 reads: "The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water? Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle? Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

The Lord had so much more to offer this woman, and He has something more to offer you. He always has more to offer than this old world does. Dear one, this world has nothing to offer you compared

with what Jesus Christ can give you. Notice that the Scripture says, "A well of water springing up." It does not say anything about a pool, a lake, or a river; it says a well. Let us look at what a well is. The definition of a well is "a place where water issues naturally from the ground, to pour forth or flow up as water in a spring, to gush, to bubble up." The key words in this Scripture are "springing up." Christian friend, when you got saved, you were happy. What a joyous occasion! Being a Christian is the most excitement a man or a woman can ever experience on this old earth. It is just a little bit of Heaven to go to Heaven in.

Zechariah 13:1 states, "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness." I thank the Lord for that fountain, for that well constantly springing up. It is not lying dormant, but it is springing up. An active well has life in it. Every time you reminisce about what God has done for you, where He has brought you from, and the things that He is going to show you, what happens to that well? It starts bubbling and gushing forth. You cannot hold it in. You have to let others know about it. It comes from the inside to the outside. You may stand up and say, "Glory to God! Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!"

If you are a Christian, you are alive spiritually. This is something to get excited about. It will put a smile on your face and joy down in your heart. That is a sure sign to others that you are a child of God. You will not walk around with your head down and say, "I'm a church member." Instead, you should say, "I'm saved! I am part of the Church of God!"

Safeguarding Your Spiritual Well

Saint, you need to keep your well active. You can get in a dormant state if you are not careful. Do not let the enemy shut down your

spiritual well. He is doing that to many today. That is his job—to shut down one's well so that person will live in a dry, dead condition. Dear one, you need to safeguard your spiritual well.

With a literal well, you must do some things to safeguard it. We can look at these things and compare them with the spiritual. First, you would safeguard your well by making sure that surface drainage is kept away. Interceptor swells may need to be constructed uphill from the well to divert drainage away from the well. It is the same thing in the spiritual sense. You need to keep away from that spiritual drainage that could contaminate your spiritual well. First Thessalonians 5:22 tells us, "Abstain from all appearance of evil." Child of God, you need to be on your guard at all times for that unclean, spiritual drainage, anything that might work its way into your well.

Some schools and hospitals have been built on top of or close by abandoned dumps, and over a period of time, the drinking water became contaminated. The enemy has stockpiles of barrels of spiritual contamination. Saint, you need to be aware of some things that the enemy is trying to put in your spiritual well. He has many things that he can put in your well that will knock you out spiritually. Depression is one tactic that he uses. Feeling sorry for yourself is another. The devil will tell you, "You are fighting a losing battle. No one cares about your situation." The devil would like to dump a barrel of spiritual contamination upon you. Therefore, you need to guard against those things. The devil would love for contamination to seep into your spiritual well.

Saint of God, you need to be encouraged and be strong in the Lord. The Lord is your only hope. He is your Fortress and your Rock; you need Him. You should be thankful that the Lord has brought you out of sin and for the direction in which you are traveling. Think of

where you could have been today had you failed to get right with God. You could be lost and undone, or in hell. The Lord has done so much for you, and He has so much in store for you! Do not doubt God. The Lord is the same yesterday, today, and forever. He will fight your battles if you will turn to Him. Dear one, the Lord has not forgotten you. He knows all about you. He knows more about you than you know about yourself, and He knows exactly what you need.

Psalm 31:1-4 reads: "In thee, O LORD, do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed: deliver me in thy righteousness. Bow down thine ear to me; deliver me speedily: be thou my strong rock, for an house of defence to save me. For thou art my rock and my fortress; therefore for thy name's sake lead me, and guide me. Pull me out of the net that they have laid privily for me: for thou art my strength."

Dear one, you cannot be victorious without God's help. That is the reason so many people are getting themselves in such bad shape. They are trying to fight the devil in their own strength. Friend, you cannot do it in your own strength; you need God's help. Verse 5 reads, "Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O LORD God of truth." God will be with you in the time of need. In the heated battle, He will be there.

The enemy often works through the mind. He wants to control your mind, and by doing so, he can claim victory. Dear one, do not give in to the enemy. You should be active in doing the Lord's work. Do not neglect to attend the church services. You are not going to receive any help if you do that. Sometimes people acknowledge that they need help, but when you ask them, "When was the last time you were at church?" they say, "Well, it's been awhile." That is part of the problem. They need to go to church.

If your car malfunctioned and you did not know what was wrong with it, taking it everywhere else

but to a mechanic to find out what the problem was would be foolish. You would not take your car to a hardware store if you were having trouble with your engine. You would take it to a mechanic who could fix it. The same is true concerning your soul. You need to go where you can receive help for your soul. You are not going to get help for your soul down at a barroom. When you are having spiritual problems, you should not stay away from church. That is where you can get the help you need for your soul. The enemy knows that, so he will come up with many excuses for your not attending the church services. He will come up with things that need to be done and places where you need to go. Things that you would not have thought of will seem imperative to you.

When I was growing up, it did not take long for friends to realize that they did not want to visit us Wednesday evenings and Sundays, because we attended church on those days. While they were welcome to come with us, we were not going to miss the services. Many people in nominal religion just lay aside attending the church services when they have company. My dad or mom would say, "We are going to church. Do you want to come with us?" Then, they would say, "Well, we had better get going." Most people did not stay around. It got to the point where we knew those people were not going to visit us Wednesday nights or Sunday nights, because they knew that church came first for us. Missing the church services will not help you spiritually, dear one. That is where you will receive the help you need for your soul.

Fortifying Your Spiritual Well

Let us look at a second thing that you need to do to safeguard a well. The earth around the well casing should be mounted with heavy soil or clay to keep any

standing water, drainage, or runoff from lying against the well casing. Child of God, you need to have your spiritual well fortified by the Word of God, because the church is running into opposition. You need to uphold and stand behind your pastor. Also, you ought to pray for him. He needs you, and you need him. He is the watchman on the wall, and the enemy would love for you to start second guessing, or questioning, his decisions. Again, I am speaking of how to keep from contaminating your spiritual well.

A godly pastor does not preach his own ideas, but he delivers what he receives from God. The Lord knows when the pastor needs to preach on the standard. Possibly, if the Lord had to depend upon you to preach the standard, it would never be preached. What happens to a congregation when the standard is not upheld before the people? Before long the congregation no longer looks like the Church of God, and it becomes a church among churches. The standard is good for you. It will help you, instruct you, lead you, and protect you. It is not hard, but it will humble you.

Pride hinders many people from seeking help in their souls. The word pride is a small, one-syllable word, but it hinders many people from serving God. We read in Proverbs 8:13, "The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogance, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate." Proverbs 11:2 says, "When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom." Proverbs 16:18 tells us, "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall." Pride is not going to take you anywhere but down.

Child of God, you need a wall of protection around your spiritual well. The Word will help protect you. The preaching of God's Word reinforces the walls around your spiritual well; it fortifies your well and makes it stronger. Then things will not seep into your spiritual well so easily. On the other hand, if your

well is not fortified by the Word of God, it will cave in.

If your well is reinforced, you do not have to worry about stagnate water problems. There is no action in standing water, and it attracts flies, mosquitoes, and disease-causing bacteria. You do not need those types of things seeping into your spiritual well.

Discontentment will try to contaminate your spiritual well. Have you ever been around people who were disgruntled? That spirit can seep into your spiritual well. The fault finders say, "Nothing ever goes right," and they can contaminate your well. The backbiters and the gossipers can also contaminate your spiritual well and clog it up if you listen to them; then it will not be long before your well dries up because there is no life there.

Occasionally you might have to cleanse your well. In literal water wells, this is done by using chlorine bleach. The spiritual well cleansing is done by staying close to God, by asking the Lord for direction, by reading His Word, by spending time in prayer, and by staying in line with the preached Word of God. This keeps your spiritual well cleansed. Spiritually speaking, an active well is a clean well, ready to do service for the Lord.

How to Protect Your Spiritual Well

Another necessary safeguard to avoid contamination of a literal well is that the top of the well has a waterproof cover to keep rain from washing in debris. That is very important. I thank the Lord for the Holy Spirit's guidance and protection, especially in the evil day in which we are living. Saint, where would you be without the Holy Spirit? You would be merely going through the motions of serving God without the reality. That would be sad. The Lord has so much more in store for people than just a form of religion. You do not want anything to get into your spiritual well that

will contaminate it and hinder your walk with God. If the rain comes and you do not have protection over your literal well, dirt and debris will wash in. The same can be said about your spiritual well if you do not have the protection of the Holy Spirit. Dear one, you need to keep your spiritual well clean, always ready for the Master's use. You must have clean hands and a clean heart. Do not let anything clog up your spiritual well.

Sad to say, some who once were saved and living for God have let dirt and debris get into their spiritual wells. They look more like the world. You can tell by their actions, their talk, their walk with God, and their attitudes toward God's people and the man of God. Dear one, you must be careful. You need to safeguard your spiritual well.

The last point I would like to make concerning your spiritual well is this: going down to Babylon to worship will contaminate your well. You may say, "Well, I have some good friends down there. It will not hurt me to go down there and worship with them." Many have said the same thing, but where are they today? Their spiritual wells were contaminated. They went down to Babylon and listened to the talk, and that talk clogged up their spiritual wells. Now their wells are not springing up with clean water as they once did. Contaminated wells will contaminate other wells.

The true Church of God does not have to go down to Babylon, but people down in Babylon need to come up to Zion. Revelation 18:2 tells us, "And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen [a continuation], and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird."

Do not think that you are so spiritual that you can handle Babylonian birds. They might "tweet" pretty and sound wonderful to the ear, but watch out if you should cross them. A hateful spirit will rise

up. A hateful bird does not care about keeping its cage clean; its cage is lined with rotten attitudes, critical spirits, backbiting remarks, the tearing down of true men of God and God's people. People with that spirit do not care how they do it as long as they get the job done.

Those who have foul spirits do not care what they say or who they say it to. They are going to have their say, even if it tears down the true Church of God. They do not care whom they hurt or whose reputation they destroy. That is so sad. They think only of themselves. Saint of God, you need to avoid those people. If you do not, they will affect your spiritual well. If you feel, "Oh, I can handle it," you need to be careful! They can put on a good front. They can bring in singers from other denominations and try to blend it with the Church of God. However, it is not the Church of God. It is false; it is not of God. Now, it might be led by a spirit, but it is not the Spirit of God.

Checking Your Spiritual Well

Dear one, how is your spiritual well? Is it in a condition to draw others to Jesus Christ? Can the world see Christ in you? Is there something down in your well that gets excited about the things of God? When the pastor calls for a revival meeting, do you hope it goes for two or three weeks or are you hoping that it is only a three-day meeting, thinking, "Let's get it over with"? Having the Spirit of God in your heart and soul is something to get excited about. His richness and blessings are everlasting. John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Verse 36 reads, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." You do not want the wrath of God on you.

Many people's spiritual wells

are not as active as they once were, and others have dried up completely. However, those wells did not dry up overnight. It took a great deal of neglect, of not doing that which was needed to stay close to the Lord. Not staying fervent and getting your eyes on others will eventually dry up your well. Saint, you must not get your eyes on other people. The enemy would love for you to do that. By getting your eyes on other people, you will fail to see your own true condition. Trying to see what others are doing rather than taking care of yourself will only get you in trouble. You need to check your well, and who is better qualified than the Lord. He knows the true condition of your spiritual well.

God's people need to dig deeper into the things of God. Deep wells are where the purest water is located. Psalm 95:4 states, "In his hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is his also." If you stay on the surface, you will be washed away by everything that comes your way. If you are going to be anything for God, you must be rooted and grounded. Ephesians 3:17 says, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love." How is your love for the Truth? How is your love for your brothers and sisters in Christ? How is your love for the things of God? Do you have a well springing up with the goodness of the Lord? Can you go to your pastor and truthfully say, "I appreciate you"? If you answered no to any of these questions, then you need to check your spiritual well.

Too many people just want superficial religion, enough to declare that they are a member of a certain church. However, if you were to ask them if they have been born again, they would not want to talk about that. They want to hold onto the world with one hand and Jesus with the other. Well, it is not going to work. First John 2:15 instructs, "Love not the world, neither

the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

Many things in the world will contaminate your spiritual well. That is the reason you need to have your spiritual well fortified. Also, you need to check your well periodically. You would not hesitate to have your literal water well checked if something were wrong. What about your spiritual well? The enemy knows your weaknesses, and

he will work through each of them. He never gives up. If you are getting elderly, do not think that the enemy is going to leave you alone. He will work on you even more. You need to be on fire for God and be ready when the enemy comes to accuse or belittle you. When he does come, remember what Jesus said to the woman of Samaria: "But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall

be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:14).

Friend, do you have spiritual life? Do you have a well springing up within you? When someone wants to talk to you about the things of God, does it start bubbling even more? You need to check your spiritual well. Are there any cracks in it? Has anything seeped into it?

(Cassette C-4479A)

Repaired While You Wait

There it was, a big sign overhanging the sidewalk: "Repairs Done While You Wait." It spoke very loud to me, for I was in need of some repair: physical, mental, yes, and spiritual too. I had been swamped with work in my study. Many calls had come for special services. I had been running here and there, calling on the sick, and visiting new families. Night functions had robbed me of much needed sleep. I was badly in need of repair. That sign looked very much like a verse of Scripture. It seemed to me that it said: "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength."

There it was="Repairs Done While You Wait." Ah, yes, I saw it clearly. I had rushed into the Lord's presence after breakfast, had thoughtlessly and heartlessly uttered words that in some measure expressed my gratitude for the night's sleep, and had indicated my desire for help and guidance through the day. However, I had not waited for the Lord to do the necessary work in my life. I had jumped into the work of the day-tired, nervous, and probably somewhat irritable. That sign taught me a much needed lesson.

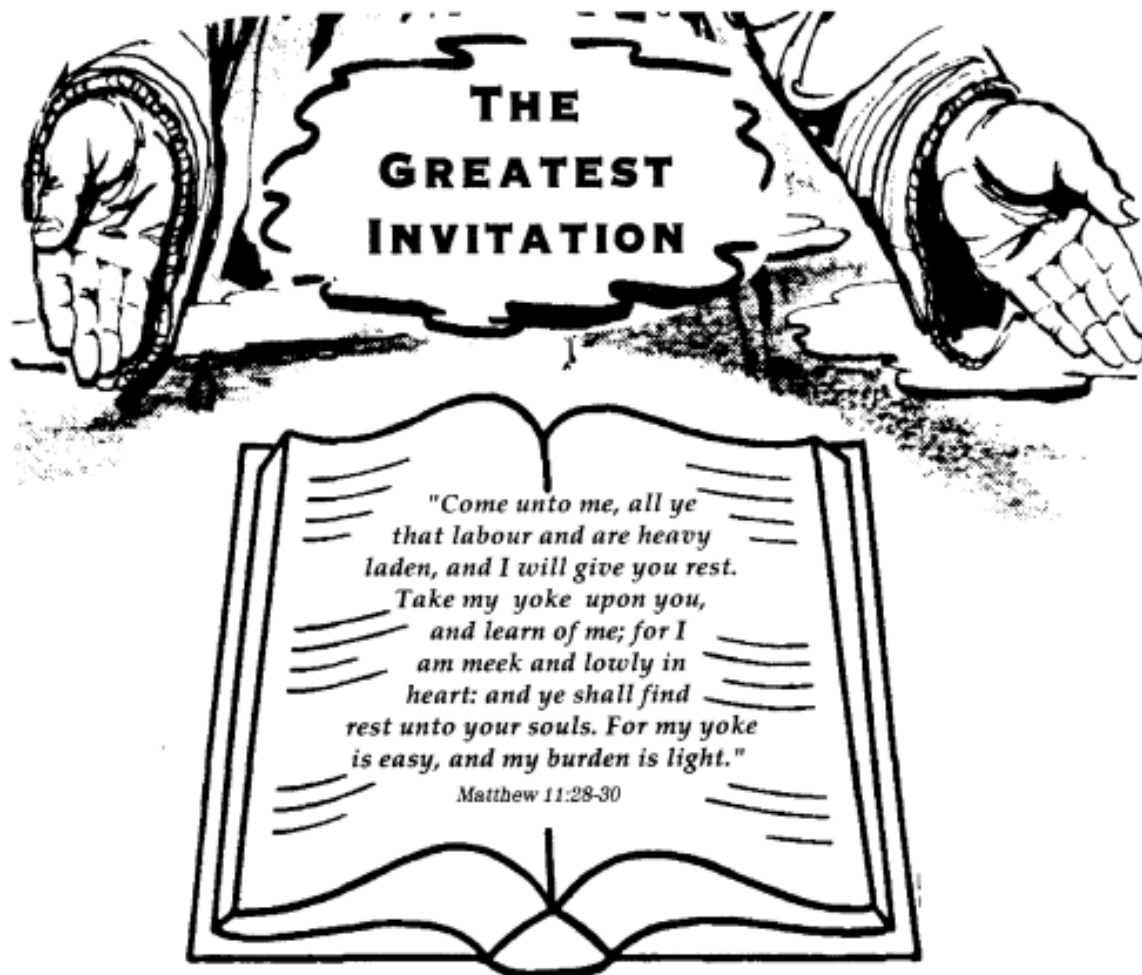
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LOCATION	STATION	DAY	TIME
Newark, Ohio	WCLT-AM 1430	Sunday	7:15 a.m.-8:00 a.m.
Anderson, Indiana	WQME-FM 98.7	Sunday	8:00 a.m.-8:30 a.m.
Gaffney, South Carolina	WAGI-FM 105.3	Monday	8:30 p.m.-10:00 p.m.

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Brother Cleve Green

"Come Unto Me"

You will receive many invitations in life. You will not care to answer some invitations, and others you will be pleased to accept. However, the greatest invitation that you will ever receive is from Christ Jesus, the Son of God, inviting you to become a member of the royal family of God. Jesus gave the invitation in verse 28 of our Scripture text, "Come unto me." The great emphasis is on the word "Come." Someone once said that in the word *come*, the letter C stands for an invitation to the children; the letter O stands for an invitation to the older folks; the letter M stands for an invitation to the middle-aged; and the letter E stands for an invitation to everyone.

Notice that Jesus emphasized

the word "Come." You must come to God before you can receive anything from Him. Jesus implied much when He gave the invitation to come. To come to Him, you must humble your heart, turn your back upon the world and sin, be sorry for the wrongs you have done, confess, acknowledge, repent, and believe. "Come unto me," Jesus said. It makes a difference to whom you come. Jesus is the only One who can set you free. Blessed be His holy name! Men have "come" to other sources, but they got nowhere. Many have gone away religious, but they were yet unconverted; they were not born of the Spirit of God.

Again, Jesus said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden . . ." This is not just a call to the hard-working man. Jesus was

not talking to people who are laden down with work, but He was addressing people who are laden down with sin. He wants you to come to Him and unload your burden of sin. Jesus went on to say, ". . . and I will give you rest." This type of rest cannot be found anywhere else or through any other means. You could buy the most expensive mattress, but it would not give you soul rest. You could go away for a month's vacation, bask in the earthly sun, and take it easy; but you could not find this soul rest until you meet the conditions of God's Word and become born of the Spirit of God. Only then can you find true rest for your soul.

Jesus said in verse 29, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me." Friend, when you have been con-

verted, you want to do what God wants you to do. You may wonder, "If there is a yoke, how can the yoke be easy?" It is easy because Jesus Christ is on the other side of that yoke, helping you each step of the way. One Old Testament writer said the way of the transgressor is hard. Why is it hard? The guilt, the condemnation, the remorse, and the constant agitation remind you that if you were to die in your present condition, you would be lost. As a sinner, you are on the road to hell. That makes the way of sin hard. The sinner has no future worth looking forward to. On the other hand, the Christian has a great future ahead.

Friend, if the President of the United States were to invite you to the Capitol Building at his expense to show you all the wonderful sights of Washington, D.C., no doubt you would count it a great privilege. Well, my lost friend, there is One greater than the president inviting you. Jesus Christ of Calvary is inviting you to become an heir of God, a joint-heir to Jesus Christ. Praise the Lord! That is wonderful! May God help you to realize that He is the One who is doing the inviting. You may be fearful of some invitations because you do not know exactly what you are being invited to. Friend, God's Word tells you plainly that He is inviting you to receive spiritual rest. He is inviting you to sit down at a table spread with good, spiritual food that will cause your soul to become fat and flourishing. While you had better be careful of some invitations, you do not have to worry about Jesus' invitation.

An Invitation to Whosoever Will

There are many reasons that people invite others to something. First, some invite people only for the sake of appearance, not because they really want them there. Thank God, Jesus did not invite you because it would have looked bad not to have invited you; He invites you

because He loves you. Another reason folks sometimes invite certain individuals to their events is that he or she is the life of the party. Another reason folks invite others to their parties is that they want to make a good impression. It is like the man who invites the boss home to dinner, to try to butter him up, so to speak, so he can ask for a raise. Often people have hidden reasons for their invitations. God is not like that. He does not invite you because it would look bad if He did not or to entertain folks or for your influence's sake; but He invites you for one reason, and that is because He dearly loves your soul: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

The only reason I like to be invited to events is that the hosts love me. Friend, when you receive this invitation, you will know that it is from the Son of God, and you will know what you are invited to do. God does not have anything undercover. He tells you in His Word that He is inviting you to live a life set apart and separate from sin and degradation. He is inviting you to a life free from guilt, remorse, and condemnation. He is inviting you to a life of holiness, righteousness, and godliness, filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Then you will enjoy a life of peace that passes all understanding and satisfaction beyond all compare. I could go on and on telling you what all He is inviting you to. He will make you feel so good that you will laugh and cry at the same time, rejoicing in His great presence.

Sinner friend, the Son of God is inviting you to a life that will lead you into an eternal abode, to live forever in Heaven. You are invited to get on the highway of holiness that will soon end in the portals of Glory. In Revelation 22:17 we read, "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst

come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." The invitation is to "whosoever will." I am glad that Jesus did not exclude anyone. Whenever someone has a party, only so many folks can be invited, but Jesus Christ has invited everyone. Praise God!

I have never known anyone quite like Jesus. He has a table large enough to feed everyone. He invites everyone to come and feast with Him. He does not worry about running out of anything; there is plenty for all. He invites everyone, saying, "Whosoever will may come." Isaiah 55:1 states, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat." You do not need to have a penny in your pocket. You can come poor and become a millionaire. All you have to invest is your life. Isn't that wonderful? You can get rich overnight. You can become a happy millionaire. This is one get-rich-quick scheme that works! You can become a millionaire today and have wealth that this world can never destroy. All the devils in hell can never destroy this glorious wealth. If you truly want to keep it, you can.

God's Word says that no man can pluck you from the Father's hand (and no devil can either). Some folks have said, "My husband caused me to backslide" or "My wife caused me to backslide" or "The church is to blame for my backsliding." My answer to that is, "Shame on you!" Again, the Bible says that no man can pluck you from the Father's hand. However, the least little thing can cause you to backslide if you want to backslide. It is much like the business of marriage and divorce. Nothing can tear apart a husband and wife who love each other and want to stay together. If they do not, the least little thing can send them into a divorce court.

I once heard of a woman who was suing her husband for divorce. She said, "He keeps leaving the toothpaste cap off the toothpaste." I guess she sued on grounds of men-

tal cruelty. You may say that is foolish, but how much more foolish it is for you to backslide, having a little excuse for going back on God.

"Now Is the Accepted Time"

Christ invites everyone, but let me warn you that you cannot plan to come at the last minute. You cannot wait until the death angel is near. No doubt, you have heard the Gospel and have been warned repeatedly. Friend, do not risk losing your soul by waiting until you are lying on your deathbed. Do not depend upon the last few minutes that you might live out on the highway, amidst mangled metal and broken glass to try to get right with God. Now is the time to come. All people want to come eventually, because no sane person wants to go to hell. No, we have had enough misery, torment, and aggravation in this life without going to hell and being tormented forever.

How would you feel as the host of some kind of get-together if a few folks came dragging in about the time you were getting ready to turn out the lights and go to bed? They may say, "We thought we would drop in. We are invited, aren't we?" You would not appreciate that. How do you think God would feel if you were to do everything imaginable, and then at the last hour on your deathbed, say, "Forgive me, Jesus. Have mercy on me." Friend, if that is your plan, you need to wake up.

The Apostle Paul said, "(For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time . . ." (2 Corinthians 6:2). Why is now the accepted time? Tomorrow may be too late. Backslider or unsaved friend, your better judgment should tell you that you ought to surrender your life to God. You are not in confusion. You know what is right and what is wrong. Why not do what you know is right? God is going to hold you responsible. You are not

without understanding.

The story is told of a little child who was running down a path from her home in the mountains. Planted not far away from her home was a big charge of dynamite, ready to go off. The men had lit the fuse and were running to safety when they saw that this little child was in the danger zone. The whole side of a mountain was going to be blasted away, and that little girl was standing there, looking innocently. They hollered at her, "Run! Run for your life! Dynamite is going to go off." However, she could not understand that kind of talk. Her dad had sensed the trouble and came running down the path. He called her by name and said, "Come to me, darling," and she went running to him. She barely missed being severely hurt or killed.

Friend, that father is just like Jesus. He speaks in a language that you can understand. He says, "Come to Me, weary child" or "Come to Me, brokenhearted mother" or "Come to Me, you who are sinful and cannot quit the drink habit, the drug habit, or the tobacco habit. Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden under the old habits of sin. Come to Me, you who are laboring under the worries, the fears, and the frustrations of life." Friend, Jesus wants to set you free and put you in a new garment. He wants to make you a king. Speaking of those who are saved, the Book of Revelation says that we are kings and priests. I am glad that I do not have to pay a priest to pray for me, but I can go right into the holy of holies and pray for myself. I can go where the priest in the Old Testament could not tread. Through Christ I am reigning over sin and the devil.

Again, I say that Jesus talks in a language that you can understand. "Come unto me," He says. That is not so hard to understand. The little girl ran to her father because she understood what he meant. She could not understand what the men meant when they said that dynamite

was about to go off, but she could understand the kind voice of her father calling to her. Jesus is calling in a tender, pleading voice. If you are unsaved, you ought to run to Him. This is the greatest invitation in the world.

A Personal Invitation

Jesus said in Revelation 3:20, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man [woman, boy, or girl] hear my voice, and open the door . . ." He has come personally to knock at your heart's door. Glory to God! If you get any help spiritually, you must hear His voice. That voice is saying, "Come unto me." Isaiah 55:7 tells us, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." The implied thought is that man cannot return to the Lord until he forsakes his wicked ways and his unrighteous thoughts.

Again, Revelation 3:20 states, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." Praise God, what a feast! You have never been to any literal feast quite like this. I have been to many dinners, but the best feast that I have ever been to is sitting down at Father's table. You do not have to worry about getting too fat when you sit at Father's table. You can eat bountifully.

Some religious professors act as if they will gain too much weight when they eat at Father's table. Child of God, when you get into the Word of God, it is not going to make you overweight. It will fire you up. The more you get from it, the more you will want to do for Jesus, and the more you will be blessed.

If Christ is knocking at your door, my friend, the invitation will not be extended indefinitely. Genesis 6:3 says, "And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with

man." This implies that if you refuse His invitation, the time is coming when His Spirit will leave you. Friend, you cannot get saved unless the Spirit of God draws you. No man ever forsook his sins or felt like repenting until the Spirit of God wooed him and drew him. You ought to thank God if you feeling the wooing of the Spirit of God right now. You are highly honored to be visited by the Son of God. He is extending a personal invitation to you.

Many years ago, D. L. Moody preached a great message in Chicago, Illinois, and gave an invitation. Many folks did not move. He gave them a week to think it over, but that was too long. The great Chicago fire, which nearly destroyed all of Chicago, happened that night. Four square miles of Chicago was burned, and many lives were lost. It is said that D. L. Moody never got over that. He said, "I gave people a week to think it over, but they had only a few hours." That should teach you that now is the accepted time. Again, we read in 2 Corinthians 6:2, "(For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)"

Sinner friend, you may not live to see tomorrow. You need to get into the safety zone today. In Noah's day the safety zone was the ark, and today it is the old ship of Zion. When you hurry across the street, you feel safer once you get in a safety zone. When you wait for a bus, you do not stand just anywhere, but you stand in a safety zone so the cars cannot easily hit you. Friend, spiritually you had better get into the safety zone with Jesus. Be born of the Spirit of God and enjoy the greatest thrill that you will ever experience in your lifetime.

If you want to find a life of thrills and adventure, I beg of you to turn to Jesus. If you will launch out by faith, He will show you some adventure. He led Abraham into a

country that he did not know. Abraham had some thrilling experiences.

If you are looking for thrills and adventures, you ought to go with Jesus. These thrills will not cause you to be ashamed and embarrassed; that is what sin does. I was a young man out in sin once. At night when I pillowed my head, I was so ashamed of myself. Sometimes I promised myself that I would never do those things again. Nevertheless, the alluring, powerful influence of sin kept me doing the same sinful things. Every night I was ashamed, and I was afraid to die. I feared the Judgment; I feared meeting God in eternity. Thank God, after I gave my heart to Him, I could pillow my head in peace. Friend, Jesus invites you to receive His peace. One poet said it is peace like a river. This peace keeps flowing, whatever the problems may be. Friend, would you like to have peace in your heart? Rich men and kings would give everything they own to have this peace.

Heeding the Invitation

What a blessing to hear the tender, sweet voice of Jesus speaking in a glorious tone, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30).

You may ask, "Is there a yoke?" Yes, but it is easy, and the burden is light. In sin you have a yoke, but it is a hard yoke. In sin you have a burden, and it is a heavy burden. The burden of condemnation, guilt, and remorse is continually upon you. It is a heavy load that bows you down. Wouldn't you much rather hear the wonderful words, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" than to hear the words found in Matthew 25:41, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his

angels"? If you will heed the call, "Come unto Me," you will hear, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matthew 25:34). How about it, friend? Jesus is pleading your case before God. Even if you have failed repeatedly, Jesus yet pleads with the Father, "Give him another chance. I have walked down there, I have suffered some of the same temptations that he has had to battle."

The story is told of a young man who had a wonderful friend who was a lawyer. He often got into various scrapes and troubles and ran to his attorney friend, saying, "You have to help me. I am in trouble." The lawyer helped him and got him off with light sentences. Eventually the lawyer was elected to be a judge, and soon afterward the young man got into serious trouble. Again, he came running to his friend and said, "Help me, I am desperate. I am afraid of what is going to happen. Please, help me!" The judge said, "I will do what I can." However, someone else had to plead his case since this friend was the judge. The jury came up with a verdict of guilty, and the judge sentenced him to many years in prison. When he came crying to the judge, he asked, "Why did you give me such a severe sentence? I thought you were my friend. Before whenever you took my case, you pleaded for mercy in my behalf and helped me. Why didn't you do that this time?" The judge had only this to say: "Then I was your lawyer, but now I am your judge. All I can do now is pronounce sentence." Friend, that is the way it is with Jesus. Today He is your lawyer, and He wants to plead your case before God. However, as soon as you step into eternity, He will be your judge. He will not be able to plead your case any longer. While the Holy Spirit is pleading with your heart, won't you heed the invitation?

(Cassette C-1735)

[Guest Editorial--continued from page 2]
individuals. Those spirits promoted and produced systems contrary to the sound teachings of God's Word and deceived souls. The black horse with the man who sat on it and had a scale in his hand portrays the spirit of apostasy.

We are seeing these spirits operate in the evening time, in the seventh seal, letting us know that these are the same spirits that gave rise to Roman Catholicism. Revelation 16:13 talks about these three unclean spirits: "And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out." These spirits are no longer housed just in those systems. They have come out, and they are working feverishly in our day to assault the camp of the saints.

The one on the black horse with a pair of the balances in his hand portrays a spirit of unfair, ungodly balances when man is taking the measures in his hand. That same intolerant spirit that Popery had is loose today. All the Popes are not in Rome. That spirit is loose today, and we are not just dealing with the system of Papalism. That spirit will try to dominate and excommunicate. According to John's writing, Diotrefes had that spirit.

Going back to our Scripture text in Ezekiel 38:15, we read, "And thou shalt come from thy place out of the north parts, thou, and many people with thee, all of them riding upon horses." Notice that the word horses is plural. Throughout the annals of the Gospel Day, they faced one spirit at a time. However, in our day we face not only the spirit of apostasy, but all these others as well. What do these horses represent? Revelation 6:4-5, 7-8 state: "And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword. And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and to a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come

and see. And I looked, and behold a pale horse."

Verse 4 speaks of a red horse, verse 5 speaks of a black horse, and verse 8 speaks of a pale horse. These horses represent militancy. Today we have tanks and planes, but in the day that these Scriptures were penned, horses were articles of warfare. The last portion of Zechariah 10:3 states, ". . . and hath made them as his goodly horse in the battle." Again, these horses denote militancy, and they represent spirits that initially gave rise to the systems that the saints have warred against down through the ages of time. The very spirits that raised up those systems have gone out into the whole world, and the church is battling against them today.

We have learned that the black horse is the spirit of apostasy that gave rise to Roman Catholicism. However, that is not the only system that the spirit of apostasy produced. It has produced other systems that men dominated, other systems where men excommunicated and cut off brethren, other systems that had forms of godliness but denied the power thereof. The spirit of apostasy is a very real force to be reckoned with today.

Revelation 6:4 mentions the "red horse." Isaiah 1:18 admonishes, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Red represents sin. What is the besetting sin that is the toot of all other sins? John 1:29 says, "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

Why is the word *sin* singular? John 16:8-9 reads: "And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me." What is the sin of all sins? Unbelief. The red horse that gave rise to Roman paganism as being an opposing force to Christianity was the spirit of unbelief, and it is working yet today. The sin of unbelief

is what made pagan Rome such a foe. In Acts 26:28, when the Apostle Paul was giving his testimony to Agrippa, we read, "Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." There is no "almost." Unbelief was speaking.

This spirit is loosed in the evening time. The same spirit of unbelief that opposed the church and the ministry in the morning time is loose and working today. It does not believe in the divine. Notice what Revelation 6:4 says: "and there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another." The minute someone starts to see a little truth and take hold of it, someone who has an old spirit of unbelief is ready to kill it.

Revelation 6:8 also mentions the "pale horse." Zechariah gave it another description that makes it a little clearer. In Zechariah 6:3 he called it "grisled and bay." The Hebrew says "barod and emotes." The word barod means "sprinkled with spots." It is a mixture, or a blend. It is a picture of the spirit that gave rise to Protestantism. Is that spirit working today? Yes.

To have something sprinkled with spots, you must have a mixture. To do that, you must compromise. The "pale horse," or the "grisled and bay," is a picture of the spirit of compromise, the spirit that produced Protestantism. We contend with these systems, and these spirits are working afresh. What are they doing? Revelation 16:14 says, "For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty." These spirits have come out for one reason, and that is to draw people away from Truth and in under their power.

Again, Revelation 16:14 says, "For they are the spirits [This is speaking of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. We are not dealing with the systems so much in the seventh seal. We are not so much battling the system, but the spirits that produced those systems have come out. We are

struggling with spirits, thoughts, and practices that are not of God. We struggle with the spirit of unbelief, the spirit of apostasy, and the spirit of compromise. (I am using "we" in a very broad, collective sense.)] of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather."

Revelation 16:13 reads, "And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out . . ." These spirits have come out to gather, to cause us to come under their power. Many have fallen under their power and have been drawn away from Truth and gathered in under a spirit that opposes the things of God. I want you to see what these spirits are doing. Revelation 20:9 says, "And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints." Just as Jerusalem was compassed about by Titus and the Roman armies, the true church is surrounded with these spirits working. This is a predominant condition that we have to labor against.

We must recognize that Gog and Magog are not just systems, but the reason they became systems is that they were first spirits. Now the spirits have been loosed in a greater way to try work on the church that pull them under the power of those spirits. We will be facing what Ezekiel called in Ezekiel 38:15 "a great company and a mighty army." He wrote, "And thou shalt come from thy place out of the north parts, thou, and many people with thee, all of them riding upon horses, a great company, and a mighty army."

Verse 16 states, "And thou shalt come up against my people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land; it shall be in the latter days, and I will bring thee against my land." Why would God allow the church to be assaulted so? For the same reason that He asked Satan in Job 1:8, "Hast thou considered my servant Job?" God allowed Job to be put in that position to prove to the devil what he was. Likewise, God allows the church to be put in a position to prove to the devil the Truth of Matthew 16:18, which states, "I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail

against it."

Ezekiel caught a vision of our day. Scholars tell us Ezekiel was seeing a picture of "that last battle between the powers of evil and the Church of God," catching a vision of the eighth beast and the forces of evil confronting the church. This is not just some distant forces of evil confronting the church or some distant system that would come, but they are the very spirits loose and back of it that we are facing today. It is a picture of amalgamated spirits trying to move against the camp of the saints and pull them under their power.

The Prophet wrote in Ezekiel 38:16, "And thou shalt come up against my people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land [the church]." Just when it appears that the forces of evil, spiritual Babylon, are prevailing, God will turn the tables around. Look at verse 18: "And it shall come to pass at the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord GOD, that my fury shall come up in my face." In Ezekiel 38:4 he said, "And I will turn thee back, and put hooks into thy jaws." It will not always be as we see it now. God will turn this thing, just as He turned the captivity of Job. How will He do this? Remember, we are speaking in figurative language. Ezekiel 38:21 says, "And I will call for a sword."

How does God confront the powers of Gog and Magog, which is composite Babylon, and the spirits back of it? Is He going to come in some form of supernatural intervention? No, He calls for a sword. What is the Word? Hebrews 4:12 tells us, "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword." As one songwriter declared, He will "loose the fateful lightning of His terrible swift sword."

God has His ordained channels through which He works in this time world. Romans 10:13-15 reads: "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how

shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" What is God's ordained manner to combat evil? He uses the preaching of the Word. He is not going to supernaturally intervene and swoop down at the last moment to save an assaulted, weak-kneed church and whisk her out into eternity just in the nick of time.

The Scripture says in Ezekiel 39:6, "And I will send a fire on Magog, and among them that dwell carelessly in the isles: and they shall know that I am the LORD." Again, Revelation 20:9 reads, "And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them." Remember, we are dealing in figurative expressions. This is not the fire of consummation. The fire that will be on the consummation day when Jesus splits the clouds will be a literal fire. This is a symbolic representation.

Again, He said in Ezekiel 38:21, "And I will call for a sword." Revelation 18:8, speaking of Babylon, says, "She shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her." What is the fire that burns Babylon? Jeremiah 23:29 said, "Is not my word like as a fire?" After Babylon has amassed and arrayed her forces and as Revelation 20:9 says, "compassed the camp of the saints," just as when Egypt and Pharaoh thought they had Israel boxed in, Moses raised the rod. The rod was a type of the Word. God turned the tables and, through the Word, brought miraculous deliverance and vindication of the people of God. He will do the same today.

Ezekiel 38:20-21 reads: "So that the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall shake at my presence, and the mountains [or exalted places, the symbol of worship] shall be thrown down [they will be exposed for what they are and lose their exalted posi-

tion in the eyes of the honest hearted], and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground. And I will call for a sword against him throughout all my mountains, saith the Lord GOD: every man's sword shall be against his brother."

Isaiah 26:1 tells us what that one wall is: "In that day [this Gospel Day] shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks [or the Septuagint says 'its wall and bulwark (singular)']." Why? There is only one salvation. All other walls, according to Ezekiel 38:20, "shall fall to the ground."

Ezekiel 39:4 says, "Thou shalt fall upon the mountains of Israel" That is the first place they have to fall The first place the truth 'Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen' (Revelation 18:2) is revealed is in the church. Ezekiel 39:5 says, "Thou shalt fall upon the open field." Jesus said in Matthew 13:38, "The field is the world." Before God gets done, the world is going to see that Babylon is fallen.

How does all of this occur? Ezekiel started out in Ezekiel 38:22, "And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood . . ." The first thing the Lord did was plague them and give them an opportunity to come through the blood of Jesus Christ. If they did not receive that, He said, "I will rain upon him." What does the rain represent? Deuteronomy 32:2 says, "My doctrine shall drop as the rain," meaning that He would give them straight, sound doctrine.

Notice that Ezekiel 38:22 progressively gets stronger. If they would not take the rain (or the doctrine), it goes on to say, ". . . upon the many people that are with him, an over-

flowing rain [if people still will not take the doctrine], and great hailstones [He will give them solid Truth, and then if they will not take that], fire, [How strong is that fire? Jeremiah said it is as fire and as a hammer; he equated them together. If they will not take the fire, in the end what will He send?] and brimstone."

Spirits are working feverishly today to produce an unholy and unlikely alliance, but God is going to do as He said in Ezekiel 38:20, "Call for a sword." In other words, He is going to call a ministry in this seventh seal and, as Revelation 14:8 says, "give them power over fire." Revelation 20:9 says, "And fire came down from God out of heaven." This called ministry will have a strong message that God will use, just as when Moses raised his rod, to turn the tables and show things as they are.

We will see a great evening-time revival. The Lord said in Haggai 2:9, "The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former." God did not bring the church in its pristine glory ("clothed with the sun, the moon under her feet," going forth "conquering, and to conquer") to take her out as a weak-kneed, whipped, worn-out, exhausted, assaulted church that He had to come and whisk away in the nick of time. He is going to turn this thing around as He turned it around at the Red Sea, at the walls of Jericho, anti when Christ came out of the tomb, and He will give-us victory. We will see a great evening -time revival. The church will see it, and the world will see it.

Let us see what the end result will be. Revelation 17:14 says, "These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them." Revelation 19:19-20 states: "And I saw the beast, and the kings

of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone."

I want you to see that in the end there is victory. Second Corinthians 2:14 reads, "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ." Ezekiel 39:7, telling us of the end, states, "So will I make my holy name [God, Church of God] known in the midst of my people Israel; and I will not let them pollute my holy name any more: and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD, the Holy One in Israel."

What is the picture? It is one of the ultimate fall of all opposing spirits and forces after this final battle in the seventh seal. Revelation 17:11 shows us the final fate of Gog and Magog and all opposing forces. Revelation 17:11 says, "And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition." What is their ultimate fate? Perdition.

What about the church? First Corinthians 15:24 says, "Then cometh (he end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power." When every system and spirit is exposed and defeated and the last honest heart is won into the church, then the end will come, and the church will be taken home in great glory.

Brother Earl R. Borders

2002 Camp Meeting Dates
June 16-23
August 4-11
December 26-29

"Pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."

Matthew 9:38