

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

THE GOSPEL TRUMPETER
USPS #871620

Periodicals postage paid at the post office in Newark, Ohio 43055.
POSTMAN, send form 3579 to the printer:

THE GOSPEL TRUMPETER
675 N. Cedar Street
Newark, Ohio 43055

This periodical carries no subscription price; however, it is partially maintained through the gifts and offerings of its readers, with the balance of the expenses being paid by the local congregation.

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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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Website: www.godsacres.org

Vol. 31 September 2001 No. 9

Guest Editorial

Gog and Magog Part 5 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.

In these texts of Scripture again we see the characters "Gog and Magog." We began a study identifying who these characters are and we have read an array of Scriptures. In previous issues we biblically established what these characters represent. In this lesson

text we see portrayed the activity in which they are engaged and then graphically depicted their ultimate fate. By the help of God, we want to study concerning the fate of Gog and Magog.

By way of review, we found that this lesson text is prophetic. In Ezekiel 38:2 the Prophet said, "Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him." In Ezekiel 39:1 the sacred writer instructed, "Therefore, thou son of man, prophesy against Gog, and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, O Gog."

Being a prophetic text subjects it to rules that must be applied to properly understand prophecy. One of the most essential rules to properly understand prophecy is to establish the timeframe for the prophecy under consideration. Ezekiel 38:16 reads, "And thou shalt come up against my people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land; it shall be in the latter days." Where the King James says "the latter days," the Greek-English Septuagint (the Old Testament in use at the First Advent of Christ) says "in the last days."

Can we biblically establish the timeframe of when the last days prophetically commenced? If you read Acts, Chapter 2, you will find that on the Day of Pentecost, many divine occurrences took place. Peter stood to his feet and quoted Joel 2:28 in Acts 2:16-17, which says: "But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel. And shall come to pass in the last days. . . ." The Apostle Peter gave us insight concerning when the last days biblically commenced: they began on the Day of Pentecost with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the institution of the church. This was the commencement of the Gospel Day, or Holy Ghost Dispensation. Going back to the prophecy in Ezekiel 38:16, we read, "It shall be in the latter days." The time setting for this prophecy is the Gospel Day, or the day and time in which we are privileged to live.

Our companion text in Revelation
[continued on page 25]

Isaiah 29:1 Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city where David dwelt! add ye year to year; let them kill sacrifices.

2 Yet I will distress Ariel, and there shall be heaviness and sorrow: and it shall be unto me as Ariel.

3 And I will camp against thee round about, and will lay siege against thee with a mount, and I will raise forts against thee.

4 And thou shalt be brought down, and shalt speak out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust, and thy voice shall be, as of one that hath a familiar spirit, out of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust.

5 Moreover the multitude of thy strangers shall be like small dust, and the multitude of the terrible ones shall be as chaff that passeth away: yea, it shall be at an instant suddenly.

6 Thou shalt be visited of the LORD of hosts with thunder, and with earthquake, and great noise, with storm and tempest, and the flame of devouring fire.

7 And the multitude of all the nations that fight against Ariel, even all that fight against her and her munition, and that distress her, shall be as a dream of a night vision.

8 It shall even be as when an hungry man dreameth, and, behold, he

eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty: or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and, behold, he drinketh; but he awaketh, and, behold, he is faint, and his soul hath appetite: so shall the multitude of all the nations be, that fight against mount Zion.

9 Stay yourselves, and wonder; cry ye out, and cry: they are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink.

10 For the LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered.

The Danger of Going Into a Deep Sleep



Brother Roger L. Decker

The Danger of Opposing Truth

We want to focus on verse 10 of our Scripture text, which reads, "For the LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered." The spirit of deep sleep that the Prophet was talking about is not literal sleep but rather spiritual sluggishness, blindness, and

inactivity are taking over too many of God's people. Many have a spirit of indifference, a spiritual blindness has taken hold of them.

The Prophet said in verse 13 that they serve God with their mouths, but their hearts are far from Him: "Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught

by the precept of men." The Prophet let us know that they honored God with their lips, but God was not the center of their lives, or the center of their affections. Today many people serve God only with their lips. They say they pray, and they say that God answers their prayers. God is mentioned in their conversations and they have the outward appearance of holiness, but they have what Paul called in 2 Timothy 3:5, "Having a form of godliness,

but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."

The Prophet was not talking about the poor sinner coming to God. He was talking about people who would not walk in the Truth that God had revealed to them. They opposed it and failed to walk in it, and they opposed the church. If you study it, you will find that those people actually fought against Mount Zion. Verse 8 of our Scripture lesson says, "It shall even be as when an hungry man dreameth, and, behold, he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty: or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and, behold, he drinketh; but he awaketh, and, behold, he is faint, and his soul hath appetite: so shall the multitude of all the nations be, that fight against mount Zion." What is Mount Zion? It is a type of the Church of the Living God.

If you oppose the Truth and the church, God is going to pour out upon you a spirit of deep sleep; then you will find yourself in a terrible condition. You are going to be as one that dreams. You will dream that you eat and drink and dream that you have been satisfied. When you wake up, however, you will find that your soul is still hungry and thirsty; you will find that you still have an appetite. We need to take note of this prophecy, because it fits our day. I want you to look at this condition of deep sleep and make sure, by the help of the grace of God and His Word, that you do not fall prey to it. Obedience to the Word of God is your safety.

The Lord put this deep sleep on people because of their attitude against His people. Where did this sleep have its origin? God, not the devil, put this spirit on the people. The Prophet Isaiah said in our Scripture text, "For the LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered" (verse 10). When he said "the LORD hath poured out," it means that He has saturated people with a deep sleep.

Fooling around with the things of God and His Word is dangerous. Opposing the church and Truth is also dangerous. God is liable to saturate you with a spirit of deep sleep. The words *deep sleep* are used in other places in the Scriptures. It means that every spiritual faculty is put to sleep. Therefore, the mind does not function right: your feelings, your emotions, your thoughts, your spirit, your soul—the whole man becomes saturated with a spirit of deep sleep. You can no longer see the things that you once saw clearly, because your vision becomes blurred. The things that you once stood against become a part of your life. Then you will lose your ability to think straight, comprehend, and discern spiritual realities. This is a very serious condition. When God pours out this spirit upon you, the only One who can awaken you is God.

Keeping One's Hands Off the Lord's Anointed

This spirit of deep sleep is the same type of sleep that God put upon King Saul when he was pursuing David. He was out to kill David. The second time Saul was pursuing David, David got word that Saul was on his way. David was out in the wilderness, hiding in a place where he could look down and see Saul's camp. David decided to go down into the camp. There was only one way he could do that without being killed: God moved and put Saul and all his army to sleep. We read in 1 Samuel 26:12 that David took Saul's spear and cruse of water from his bolster, which was right beside his head. David's servant wanted to take that spear and kill Saul, but David said no. He would not allow his servant to touch God's anointed. There is where a real danger lies, and that is the reason some have gone to sleep spiritually. They laid their hands on God's anointed. Saul was backslidden, yet David stayed his hand. Another time when Saul was

pursuing David, David cut off a piece of his garment, and God smote him in the heart. In other words, he felt bad about having done so.

First Samuel 26:12 reads, "So David took the spear and the cruse of water from Saul's bolster; and they gat them away, and no man saw it, nor knew it, neither awaked: for they were all asleep; because a deep sleep from the LORD was fallen upon them." What was Saul out to do? He wanted to destroy a man of God, and God put him to sleep. David went into the camp, right up next to Saul's head and took his cruse of water and spear, and Saul did not even awaken. No one in the whole army saw David and his servant. You would have thought that some guards would have been wide awake, but they were not. God put a deep sleep on them. That is the reason some people are doing the things that they are doing today. God has put a spirit of deep sleep upon them, and they go on in an unconscious state, spiritually speaking.

Saul's entire army was asleep. Can you imagine that? A great army of three thousand chosen men, chosen by the king, slept. That was abnormal. The king's chosen men were the best the army had to offer. Nevertheless, David and his servant walked right into the camp, took the king's spear and cruse of water, and walked out unnoticed while they slept. That was of the Lord.

I say again, fooling around with the things of God is dangerous, and opposing the man of God is dangerous, even if you disagree with him or do not have confidence in him. Saul was backslidden, and God was not even talking to him anymore; yet David knew enough to keep his hands off him. Verse 9 tells us, "And David said to Abishai, Destroy him not: for who can stretch forth his hand against the LORD's anointed, and be guiltless?" The answer is, no one can. This was the same sleep that came upon Adam when the Lord took one of his ribs

and made a woman. God put him into a deep sleep.

Characteristics of One in a Deep Sleep

We want to look at some ways to recognize when one is in a deep sleep. There are at least four characteristics of one who is in such a condition. Again, verse 8 in our Scripture text states, "It shall even be as when an hungry man dreameth, and, behold, he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty: or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and, behold, he drinketh; but he awaketh, and, behold, he is faint, and his soul hath appetite: so shall the multitude of all the nations be, that fight against mount Zion." Notice first that the soul of the person who is in a deep sleep is empty, and he is faint. Verse 9 reads, "Stay yourselves, and wonder; cry ye out, and cry: they are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink." Next, they are drunken. Now, he was not speaking of getting drunk on alcohol. The Prophet said "they stagger." This is spiritual talk. He also said he is as one who dreams he is eating, but when he awakens, he is still hungry.

When one fights against the church or against Truth, his eating is going to be like dreaming. How can you tell? The next verse says "he is faint." Instead of getting spiritually stronger, one becomes fainter and fainter. Christian friend, since you have been saved, where are you today? How strong are you spiritually?

The Prophet let us know that those who are in a deep sleep are dreamers, but when they awaken, their souls are not satisfied and they grow fainter and fainter. Why? They allow more room for the flesh, and making room for the flesh will make one weak. You will not prosper with God if you make room for the flesh.

People in such a condition make excuses. They justify everything

they do and make excuses for their condition by saying such things as, "I wouldn't be this way if it weren't for the pastor" or "I wouldn't be this way if it weren't for that brother or sister. That person offended me, and I'm hurt." No one was hurt worse than Jesus or the Apostles were hurt. They are in the condition they are in because they did not take it to God and they made room for the flesh.

King Saul got in such bad shape that he overstepped and disobeyed the Word of God. He even picked up a javelin and tried to pin David to the wall, but David was able to get out of the way. Saul also went to the witch of Endor. Whenever God put in a man of God or a prophet, they always destroyed all the witches and all those who had familiar spirits. They had them all killed. Saul, their first king, who stood head and shoulders above all the men of Israel, bowed down to a witch to get direction. Why? Because God was no longer talking to him.

Today some people in this deep sleep are running to other people for counsel because God is not talking to them. Saul's condition started with rebellion and disobedience to the commandments of the Lord. Disobedience and rebellion will leave your soul in a horrible condition.

Isaiah 1:2-5: "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth [he was not talking about the literal earth]: for the LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward. Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart

faint." That is what happens when one rebels and forsakes the Lord. That person is going to be covered or eaten up with sin. Sin will destroy you, and there will not be any heart in you to serve God.

If you study the life of King Saul all the way through to the day he died, step after step took him deeper and deeper. He had hatred and jealousy against David. The Bible lets us know that jealousy is as cruel as the grave, and it took Saul down. He rebelled, he disobeyed, and he went to an early grave.

Isaiah 29:8 says their soul will be hungry, and they will even say things such as, "The Lord feeds me. I don't need to go to church." God is not going to dispatch an angel to their house to feed them just because they are disgruntled. God is not going to make any exceptions. He does not have disgruntle food; He has manna from Heaven, Christ. The Lord will feed you, but He will feed you the same way everyone else in the congregation gets fed. How is that? Jeremiah 3:15 tells us, "And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding." That is God's ordained plan for us to grow spiritually. When you try to detour around that, you are going to go under a spirit of deep sleep. There are no shortcuts for you when it comes to serving God. God has an ordained plan, and He is not going to rearrange it just to suit you because you are crosswise with the pastor or someone else. The best thing for you to do is get your soul straightened out with God, and then God can feed you.

Many times when an individual is in a deep sleep spiritually, he will give excuses concerning the reason he is not doing well spiritually. However, you can stand for God if you have to stand alone, if you keep your heart right. If anyone ever had excuses to quit, it would have been the Apostles in the morning-time church. They were in trouble often, but they were willing to lay down

their lives for the Gospel and finish their course with consciences void of offense toward God and man. There are too many whiners and babies today, and they look for others who will whine with them. They need to get their hearts right, grow up, settle down, and serve God. Then they can throw away all the excuses and be as the Apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:10, "But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."

A Drunken Condition

What else is a sign of deep sleep? Verse 9 says, "Stay yourselves, and wonder; cry ye out, and cry: they are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink." This verse is not speaking of being drunk physically, but spiritually. Many people today are drunk on the spirit of this world, the spirit of pleasure. They are living as though that is all there is to life. Eternity is not in their thoughts, only things that pertain to this life: eating, drinking, and being merry. They are drunk on the cares of this life. All they think about is partying and having good times. However, there is more to life than that. Some people sit in the worship services, and all they think about is making money or what they are going to do the next day. Friend, you need to have God help you when you come into the services and open your heart and soul to Him. You might not be here tomorrow. Are you drunk on the pleasures of this life? Life is serious. You have only one life, and you need to take care of your soul.

Others are drunk on Babylon's wine, and it has a mixture for you. If you want to get drunk quickly, spiritually speaking, all you have to do is mess around with some Babylonians. They know how to affect you and draw you in. They

will sweet talk you, but down inside they have an old Babylonian spirit that they cover up just to get you in.

We read in Jeremiah 51:54-57: "A sound of a cry cometh from Babylon, and great destruction from the land of the Chaldeans: Because the LORD hath spoiled Babylon, and destroyed out of her the great voice; when her waves do roar like great waters, a noise of their voice is uttered: Because the spoiler is come upon her, even upon Babylon, and her mighty men are taken, every one of their bows is broken: for the LORD God of recompenses shall surely requite. And I will make drunk her princes, and her wise men, her captains, and her rulers, and her mighty men: and they shall sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake, saith the King, whose name is the LORD of hosts." If you mess around with people who are spiritually asleep, soon you will be asleep. God does not want His people asleep spiritually. He wants them awake, watchful, and on guard, standing and ready to do His will.

Revelation 18:1-6 states: "And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation [or dwelling place] of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird [if you drink in the spirit of Babylon, you are going to get an old nasty attitude, and you will dwell right there with a wrong spirit and be asleep, spiritually speaking]. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins,

and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double."

Babylon is being rewarded double: once in the sixth seal and once now in the seventh seal; she is being rewarded for her sins. God is still pouring out the Truth on Babylon. Babylon is the same as it has always been. It is a cage and a dwelling place for unclean spirits. People can dwell there in safety with their old nasty attitudes. They can dwell there even though they are crosswise with the church. They can find other Babylonians that will agree with them.

A Deceptive Spirit

Babylon does not look as bad to some as it once did. Its glitter has some people in a spell. They say, "It must be of God." They wonder after her with great admiration. According to Revelation 17:6, John did. He wrote, "And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration." In other words, he thought, "Look at how she is decked out! She is decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, or with some truths of God's Word. This has to be right." That was the deceptive part about Babylon, and John wondered with great admiration. He went on to say in verse 7, "And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns." In other words, it was the same old pagan spirit that it always has been. So, God was saying, "Quit wondering after her, John."

How did John get his eyes opened? One angel told him the truth concerning her. It still takes a

Church of God minister to set old Babylon straight. Some people get crosswise whenever a Church of God minister comes across old Babylon and pours out another cup on her. Often the reason is that they have too many friends dwelling down there. Remember, we are not talking about people, but about systems of worship that are wrong. They are dwelling places for wrong spirits. Babylon is not a geographical location; it is a spiritual condition that people get into. They can pour out their shame and can tell people off, yet they still go to church and raise their hands. David could not even cut off a piece of a backslidden king's garment without being smitten in his heart. Today people speak out against ministers and the brethren, yet they go on under old Babylonian spirits. Some even raise their hands, testify, and praise God. You talk about being in a deep sleep!

Can a leopard change its spots? No, because those spots are not just on the outside; they go deep to the inside. Some people need to get straightened out at an altar of prayer and come to Mount Zion, the Church of the Living God. Then they will not be a partaker of her plagues. It takes a Church of God ministry to show people their true condition.

What happens when individuals become drunk? They stagger. Again, Isaiah 29:9 reads, "Stay yourselves, and wonder; cry ye out, and cry: they are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink." They cannot walk straight, and they have no direction in their lives. They are tossed to and fro. They are with one preacher today and with another the next day. They need to come right back to where they left originally and get straightened out with God, and then they will be on the highway of holiness.

When people become spiritually drunk, you cannot count on them to stand for Truth because they are tossed to and fro. Every little wind

of doctrine that comes along moves them, and they sway and stagger. If you want something bad enough, God will help you to get it. If you want to get a wrong attitude, God will help you to get one. If you want to become critical and find something against the pastor, God will allow you to build up a case in your heart. However, you are going to end up in a lost eternity; then you will come out of that deep sleep, but it will be too late. No man can live straight enough for people when they get crosswise. They found fault with Jesus and also the Apostles.

Blinded to One's True Condition

The spirit of deep sleep takes place deep in the heart of a man. Those who are in a deep sleep are blind to their true condition. They stagger around as drunk men, unsettled and confused. They begin to question truths they used to cling to. The Lord will pour out a deep sleep upon people who rebel and disobey. The slightest wind moves them and turns them another direction. They do not get their counsel from those who are spiritual; but from others who are also in a deep sleep. Where did King Saul go? He did not go to the Prophet Samuel but to the witch of Endor. God was no longer speaking to him.

Isaiah 29:10 reads, "For the LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered." They seek out advisers who are also in a deep sleep, and they do not get any godly direction for their souls. Those prophets, seers, and rulers come right along and pet the people in their deep sleep. They say, "Ah, you are justified for the way you feel. I don't blame you for feeling as you do. I agree with you. I have known that for a long time. Yes, you are doing fine. I don't blame you for getting away from that old judgment preaching."

Friend, the judgment preaching

that you hear in this life is a preliminary judgment; it is just the tip of the iceberg of what you are going to hear at the judgement bar of God. Then it will be just you and God, and you will have to give an account for the deeds done in your body. It is a serious thing to go into a deep sleep, because no one can awaken you except the Lord. The Lord is looking at your heart, and He knows whether you want to be awakened. However, you might be awakened too late. You might be awakened in eternity, and that would be terrible, because you would not be able to do anything about your condition then.

The spirit of deep sleep was not a condition confined to Isaiah's day. Many people are in the same condition today. Some who are blind to their true condition are continuing to attempt to serve God, but as the Prophet said, their eyes have been closed. Dear one, Is this your condition? Are you spiritually dead? Oh, you may try to work it up, but you find that it is just not there, because there is a spiritual deadness and lethargy in your soul. You need to flee from that condition and get help quickly. If the Lord has shown you that is your condition, He did so to awaken you, and you need to do something about it. That is the only way you will get help for your soul. The Lord is the One who can deliver you. If you have a need, won't you listen to the Lord?

(Cassette C-2816M)

"Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man."

Proverbs 6:9-10

Matthew 25:31 When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory [Now He is sitting on the throne of grace as our mediator; then He will be sitting on the throne of His glory]:

32 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:

33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

35 For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye

took me in:

36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?

38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?

39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared

for the devil and his angels:

42 For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink:

43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.

44 Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?

45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.

46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.



OR



For Which Place Are You Preparing Yourself?

Brother Esau Brooks

Only Two Groups of People

I want you to consider which place you are preparing yourself to spend eternity. This is something that concerns every one of us. No doubt, you are aware that you are going somewhere, but where? Well, finding out which place you are preparing yourself for is easy. Life is not just a time to enjoy the good things of life or a time for temporal pursuits. In reality, life is the

process of preparation.. Every day of our lives, we each are engaged in the work of preparing ourselves for eternity.

In our Scripture text, given to us by our Lord and Savior, He began verse 31 by saying, "When [we do not know exactly what time it will take place, but whenever it happens] the Son of man shall come in his glory" That is what we are supposed to be looking forward to. Too many people are finding

enjoyment in everything else but in considering the coming of our Lord. I am not that old, but I have seen a drastic change along that line among religious people.

Some years ago people were thrilled at the thought of going to Heaven. Now you can talk about Heaven or going to Heaven as much as you like, but you can hardly get an amen from some people. Verse 31 of our Scripture text continues, "When the Son of man shall come in

his glory [His coming will not be in humility as in His first coming], and all the holy angels with him, [What a day that is going to be! Do you think or meditate about it? How does it affect you?] then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory."

Verse 32 is where you and I come in: "And before him shall be gathered all nations. [There is going to be a gathering. We sing a song that says, 'What a gathering of the faithful that will be.' I am counting on that. Thank God, living the Christian life is not a drag to me. I thank God that I have some expectations as a Christian.] and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats."

Today we all mingle freely; however, whenever that day comes around, when the Son of Man comes in His glory and sits upon the throne of His glory, we all will be gathered before Him, and then He will separate us. That is the only kind of separation God upholds. Nowadays people are separating for all kinds of reasons and with all kinds of feelings, but on that day there is going to be a final separation, which He likens to a shepherd dividing the sheep from the goats.

Verse 33 tells us, "And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, [Is that going to be the place where you are going to stand? I am not talking about hoping so; I am talking about knowing so.] but the goats on the left."

Friend, you need to very seriously consider that there is going to be only two groups of people. Today people have them categorized much differently. Often they label people as either "bad Christians" or "good Christians." Also, we hear about different kinds of "supposed-to-be Christians." Nevertheless, there are only two groups of people: the sheep and the goats. No matter what your persuasions or beliefs are, and no matter what your contention might be, you are either a sheep or a goat,

and I say that respectfully.

We unconsciously class children as goats, for we have stopped calling them "children." We often call them "kids," but only goats have kids. So whenever you call your children "kids," you are saying indirectly, "You are goats." Humans do not have kids. You may say, "Oh, that is only a form of expression." I realize that, but it is an expression that we need to reexamine. In the light of the Scripture text, God is saying that when this whole thing is brought to an end and Christ descends in His glory with His holy angels, sits upon the throne of His glory, and all the people of the world are assembled before Him, they will be separated according to how they have lived. It is not going to matter then how folks see you. What is going to matter then is how God sees you. Life should be taken up in ascertaining that God sees you as a sheep and not as a goat.

Being Righteous Before God

I sometimes think of when the antediluvian world was coming to a close. No doubt, it is typical of where we are heading. In most cases, when people go to church, they are more concerned about when the service is going to end than what they can receive from it. We read in Genesis 7:1, "Arid the LORD said unto Noah [this was near the end of that age, and of the many people who were on the earth at that time, God spoke to Noah], Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation."

Often when an individual takes a stand for God today, people question and cause that person to feel that it is not possible for only him or her to be right. As far as the antediluvian world was concerned, when the final analysis came, God said, ". . . thee have I seen [or found] righteous before me in this generation."

If there should be a repetition of that in the day when our Lord comes, will you be that one? Many people have a good profession of religion and talk about things that the Lord has done for them; but how does God truly see them? Of all the people of the antediluvian generation, God saw only Noah as being righteous before Him. Undoubtedly, others were righteous in their own eyes and righteous in the eyes of their friends and neighbors, but not when it came to God. Only Noah and his household got in through Him.

Now I am talking about the end of this world. Some question, "Do you really believe that the world is going to come to an end?" The Bible says it will. As far as I am concerned, God said it and I believe it, and that settles it. I cannot help what scientists are telling people. I cannot help what the intellectual people of the world are saying. The Word of God says that heaven and earth shall pass away. That is the reason I am preaching to souls. Friend, do not stake your all on this world. Do not consume your time in accommodating yourself to this world, because it shall pass away. In our Scripture text Jesus was telling us how it is going to happen. The Son of man is going to come in His glory with His holy angels. Before Him all the nations of the earth will be gathered, and before He does anything else, He will divide the inhabitants of the world into two groups: the sheep and the goats. That is how He is looking down upon us now. It is for each individual to see to it that He sees him or her as a sheep and not as a goat. It does not matter how you see yourself or how folks see you, but it is how God sees you that matters. Suppose He should come right now. Would you be a sheep or a goat?

The Final Day of Judgment

Our Scripture text is a profound declaration and description of what it will be like on that final day.

Friend, you need to seriously consider what it is going to be like on that final day. People need to quit talking casually about going to Heaven and counting on going to Heaven if they do not have the qualifications required to go. On the final day when Christ takes the throne of His glory, there will be no more interceding, no more praying. All men will be gathered before Him. Why will everyone be gathered? Each one will be sentenced or rewarded according to all that he or she has done. The Scripture text declares in verse 40, "And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." According to verse 34, Jesus is going to say, "Come, [Now He is saying 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest' (Matthew 11:28), but on that final day He will say 'Come' for a different reason. He will say to those who are on the right hand, 'Come'] ye blessed of my Father, [To go to Heaven, you have to be blessed by God, not merely because you have joined a church or because you have shaken a preacher's hand. You must be blessed by the Father.] inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

Now, since the kingdom has been prepared for you, don't you suppose that you ought to be prepared for it? That is what the message is doing now. That is what the preaching is for. Are you letting it prepare you? How many times has God brought to your knowledge and understanding things about you that He is displeased with and exhorted you through His Holy Spirit in the proclamation of the Gospel, yet you have refused? Some people have refused to go to an altar of prayer because they are ashamed or embarrassed. It would be quite easy to brush aside and ignore this message, but on that final day it is

going to be quite different. It will be exactly as the Word says. Jesus was not speaking in figurative or symbolic language in our Scripture text. He was speaking of absolute facts. Before Him shall be gathered all nations, and He (not even a preacher will be allowed that privilege) will separate them. He alone will be qualified to do it.

The Psalmist David, in his prayer to God, said in Psalm 139:23, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me [He knows your down sittings and your uprisings], and know my thoughts." You may think that you have something well hidden, but God knows all about it. If He does not bring it out in the light before you get to the judgment bar of God, He will bring it out there, and you will be rewarded accordingly. That is the reason you cannot afford to be casual or indifferent about this. You need to be concerned, because this very thing that I am preaching about to you can take place tonight.

Jesus said in our Scripture text in verse 41, "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me" You need to be looking forward to hearing, "Come ye" rather than "Depart from me." It is going to be on condition of whether you are a sheep or a goat. If you are not a sheep, you are not going to hear Him say "Come."

Jesus said in Matthew 7:22, "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 done many wonderful works?" It is the devil's job to deceive you along this line. He will try to blind your eyes to these conditions. The administration of that great day of judgment will be committed to Christ and no one else. When He comes in His glory and sits upon the throne of His glory, that is where your rights will end. It will then be His will. That is what you need to realize and prepare for now.

Today people come and hear a message, and if it suits them, they

praise it. On the other hand, if it is not to their liking, they despise it, reject it, and rebel against it. On that day, however, no one will have such rights. The Lord will determine whether each individual is a sheep or a goat, and He will not need anyone to tell Him, for He will know. The One who is now our Savior and merciful High Priest will on that day sit as our Judge. It will be a day when all men will appear before Him.

The Process of Preparation

Some try to picture His coming down and physically separating people, but He will not do so. There will not be any need to do so. Right now, you know to which group you belong. Your heart is telling you, and the Holy Spirit is witnessing to you. You may not acknowledge it, but you know. When Paul wrote to the church at Corinth, he said in 2 Corinthians 5:10, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

Please remember as you live from day to day that the process of preparation is going on. At no time of your life will this process be suspended. Where you prepare yourself to go, that is where you are going. It is not going to be where you say you are going or where you believe you are going. It is going to be where you have prepared yourself to go.

You have to watch yourself in this life. Demons are everywhere, working to pull you down, attract your attention, preoccupy your mind, and influence you against the message of God. If you are not watchful, you will fall into the devil's trap. Then you will die believing that you are going to Heaven, only to wake up on the Judgment Day to find yourself among the goats rather than the sheep. What happens to you depends on what you are preparing

yourself for. We have been warned: God will divide the world's inhabitants into only two groups. Now people have all kinds of groups. They say, "You are not of our group. Come; be of our group." In selecting these groups today, you need to make sure that it will not be a group that will put you among the goats. What you have prepared for will determine the results of that day. As you live from day to day, for which place are you preparing yourself? This is extremely important.

You need to be aware that your eternal future will be determined by what you have spent your time on in this life. Some people suspend all their Christian activities the moment they walk out of the church building, only to pick them up the next time they go back into the church building. You cannot afford to do that. You must take your Christian activities along with you on the job and to the grocery store. They must remain with you at all times.

There must not be a day or an hour when you forget, "I am a child of God, and I am under orders to live as a child of God, feel as a child of God, think as a child of God, and be a child of God." It is easy to profess. It is easy to talk, and it is easy to claim to be a child of God, but whatever you really are that final day is going to determine where you will end up in eternity. The King will consign you to whichever place you have prepared yourself. The devil is working hard today to make people forget all about this, and as a result they are going on as if their actions do not mean anything and do not amount to anything.

To make the situation worse, false prophets are telling people that God is too loving and too merciful to execute justice. I once heard an individual talking to someone else about Heaven, and the person said, "God says him who I find trying will I pity and take into My Kingdom." I was shocked to

know that people felt that way. That person was passing that idea on as if it were a Bible fact. Contrariwise, no such thing is right. Matthew, Chapter 25, does not say anything like that. If that is the kind of idea that you are building on and relying on, you had better forget it, or you might as well kiss Heaven good-bye. Jesus let us know that eternity has made preparation for only two classes of people: the sheep and the goats. We each belong to one or the other of these two groups. Friend, you need to make sure that you are a sheep. I am not going to get into the natures of these two creatures, but I believe it suffices to mention that there is quite a difference between a sheep and a goat.

The Final Separation

We are facing the greatest division ever: the dividing of the sheep from the goats. This is a solemn thought. The goats are facing an eternal separation, not only from God but from all that they hold dear. That separation will be a separation of parents from children, husbands from wives, but it will not be to get married again. The separation will be eternal.

We are going to get out of line with the order of things as we know them today in the religious world and get in line with what the Bible has to say. There will not be any compromising on that final day: It will be a day when relatives will be separated from relatives. Those who have prepared themselves for the Kingdom of Heaven and those who have prepared themselves for hell will be separated for all eternity. Are you preparing for Heaven or hell? There is a way in which the church resembles the kingdom, for it is within the church that the rule of God is maintained. What makes one a child of God is being born of God, ruled by God, and governed by God.

All the conditions that we are seeing today, where someone pulls

one aside and speaks against a brother or a sister to turn that person against another will not be tolerated on that day. Since it is not going to be tolerated on that day, we should not tolerate it today.

Notice that our Scripture text is not saying that God will ask which group you belong to. He will not ask: "Where did you worship? Who was your preacher?" He will do the separating, and He is not even going to ask, "Do you think you are a sheep or a goat?" He is going to tell you. What is going to determine that? He said in verse 40, "Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." In verse 45 He said, "Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me." This is the way it is going to be. There is no question about it. I am preaching Bible doctrine. This is the way it is, and the quicker you come to terms with it, the better it is going to be for you. You are going to the place where you have prepared yourself. Every day of your life, you are making this preparation. Therefore, you need to see that it is for the better right now that you stop and seriously consider this. The right place on that great day will be on the right hand. It is to them that He will say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father. Enter into the joy of your Father." To those on the left hand, He will say, "Depart from Me, ye cursed into everlasting fire." That is a different kind of fire from the fire that we know about here.

Occasionally we meet people who say, "I don't believe in that stuff about burning forever. Hell is going to burn up." No, it will not burn up; it will be an everlasting fire. The word everlasting means that it is going to last forever. The Scripture speaks of the smoke of their torment ascending forever and ever: "And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and

his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name" (Revelation 14:11). Friend, this is very serious, and you need to give it serious consideration. Most people are ignoring it. Some say, "We don't have time for it. We are too busy."

Dear one, unless you take the time and get into a serious relationship with God, you are going to be eternally lost. Do you know how many people profess to be saved based on an experience they had ten, fifteen, or thirty years ago? They can go back to only when they went to an altar. Since then, nothing has changed or developed. They do not even know about meeting God today in the way of prayer, yet they go on professing, "I am saved because I was baptized" or "I am saved because I went to an altar fifty years ago." Well, they could have, and maybe they were saved then, but they lost that a long time ago.

Friend, you need to check yourself every once in a while. One reason that God ordained the preaching of the Gospel was to bring each of us face to face with ourselves so that we might know what condition we really are in.

One day you will see the importance of making the right preparation, but it may be too late. The process on the Judgment Day will be quick and final. He is going to separate everyone and set the sheep on the right and the goats on the left. He is going to say to the sheep, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you," but to the goats, "Depart from me, ye cursed into everlasting fire." Before tomorrow morning, we could well be experiencing this in reality.

The Importance of Preparing Yourself for Eternity

The saints will be admitted to the kingdom prepared for them. Notice how long it was in preparation. From the foundation of the world, God has been preparing

this kingdom for us. Yet people are grasping at everything they can grasp after in this life and wallow in whatever comes along the way. When the preacher dares to get up and preach the Truth and tell people exactly how they stand, many just go on and say, "Well, I don't see it that way." Because they do not see it that way, they feel that it will not be that way. Well, you may not see it this way either, but this is the way it is.

The place God has made for us has been long in being prepared, from the foundation of the world. Therefore, we need to prepare ourselves for it. Today everyone is preparing for something. Each morning when you get up, you prepare yourself for that day's activities. Occasionally, if you take a vacation, you prepare yourself for that. I have even heard people say, "When I take my vacation, it will be in Heaven." I am sure glad that Heaven will not be any vacation. If you get there, you will not want to come back, so it will not be any vacation. You will be there forever or not at all.

Let us sober up and start thinking about the importance of preparing ourselves. God is affording us the privilege to get that much more work done on us to be prepared. Instead of resisting, you need to move up. On that day if you should be found as a goat, you are going to hear, "Depart into everlasting fire." Dear one, will you do the moving that you need to do before it is too late? All who are unprepared will go to hell, and the prepared will go to Heaven.

This work of preparation is Not done in one trip to an altar of prayer. It is not done in one application of the blood of Jesus Christ to your soul. The Bible says in 1 John 1:7, "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light . . ." You need to maintain that fellowship, not only with your individual brethren but also with God. When we have fellowship with God, we will have fellowship with our

brethren. People are so callous today, so hardened in heart, so hardened in feelings toward their brothers and sisters in the Lord, yet they still talk about going to Heaven. Before the Son of man comes in His glory, sits upon the throne of His glory, and the whole world comes before Him and He starts His work of separation, you need to make certain that He will find you prepared for the kingdom. Death is not going to make you ready. Death will either seal your doom or open the gateway to bliss and happiness. You need to beware that you can become too earthbound, too accommodated in this life.

If you go back to your Bible, you will find that the Christians of yesteryears regarded themselves as pilgrims and sojourners through this land. I was reading not long ago the Scripture that reads in Hebrews 11:13, "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." The trick of the devil is to get you to be so at home down here that you will hate to leave. Many talk about Heaven, yet they say, "Who knows if it is going to be there?" Well, thank God, we can know before we get there.

Salvation is the beginning of the enjoyment of Heaven. That is the reason Jesus, in that model prayer, taught us to pray, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Today we are that much closer to our eternal home than what we were yesterday, but God has not finished working on us. Therefore, He has further instructions concerning how to be ready for the change. Many people look at salvation as an end, but salvation is the means by which we will achieve to the end.

Paul, in his testimony, said 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." You see, Heaven is a prize. Heaven is promised to the faithful, not just those who have made a trip to an altar of prayer. You do not have a mortgage on Heaven. You can go to an altar of prayer and even enjoy the good things of God, and yet go on and miss Heaven.

Consider the many who once stood up and testified of the good things of God, but where are they

now? They have gone by the wayside. That is the reason God requires that you diligently apply yourself, day by day, to the things of God. Peter said in 2 Peter 1:10, "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure."

If you are not prepared for the kingdom, you must go to a fire prepared for the devil and his angels. If you join in rebellion with the devil, that is where you must spend eternity. However, you can change that now. Whatever needs to

be straightened out in your life, you can do it now, while you are yet living. If something is between you and someone else, you need to get that straightened out. You cannot afford to lose another moment in rejection, postponement, or procrastination. Now is the accepted time. Today is your day of salvation! May God help you to respond to His Word is my prayer. God bless you.

(Cassette C-4255E)

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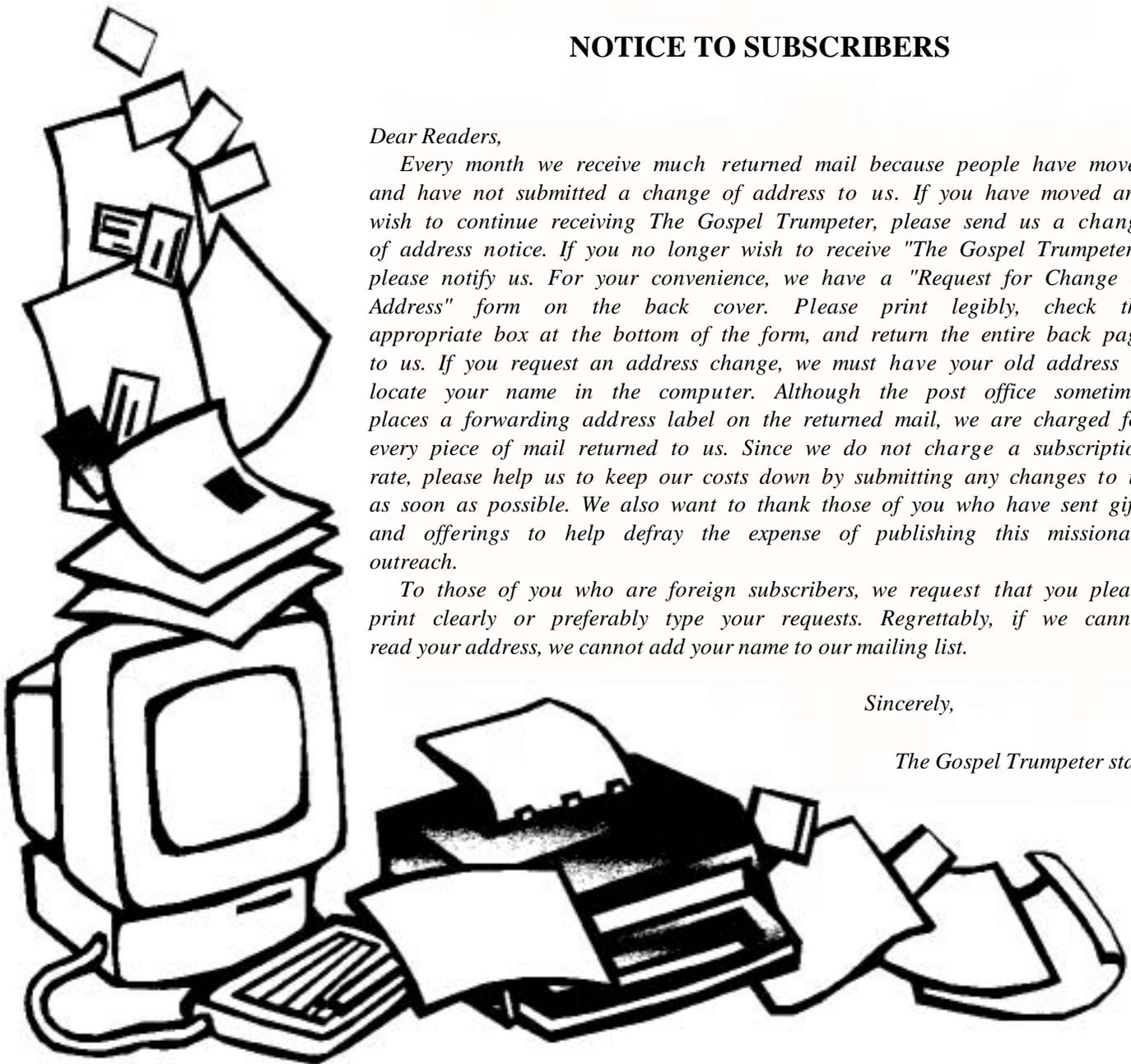
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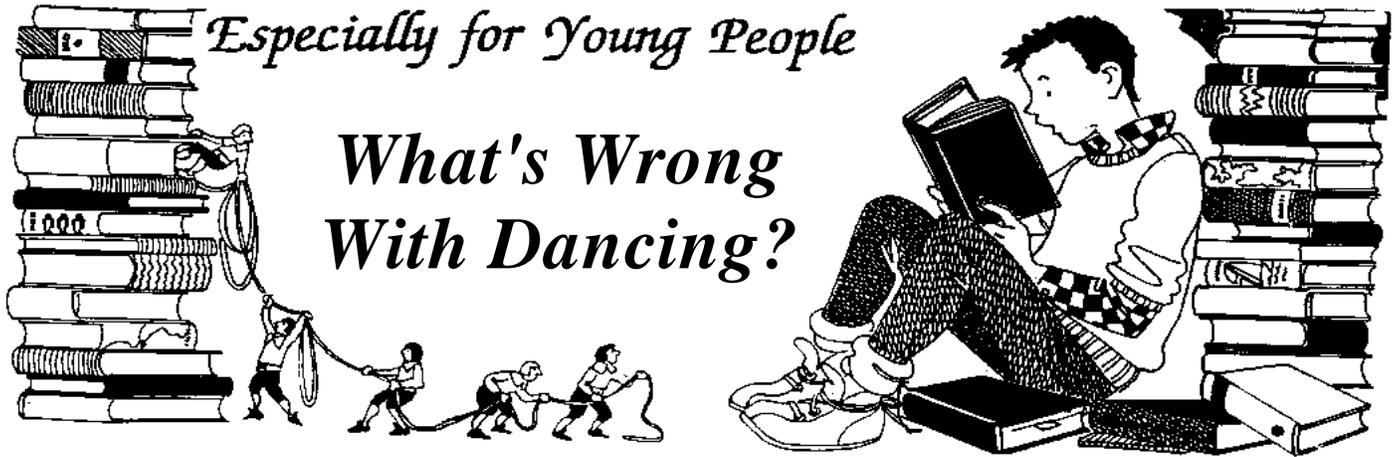
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Sincerely,

The Gospel Trumpeter staff





More than two hundred merry-makers died in a dance hall at Natchez, Mississippi, where flames swept through the moss-draped converted blacksmith shop, described as the worst fire trap imaginable. Physicians said that most of the dead had been suffocated by the thick smoke in the hall or crushed in the stampede to escape. The fire lasted only fifteen minutes. Spiritually speaking, all dance halls are like that—an eternal fire trap that suffocates modesty, propriety, and virtue. The chances of escape from its fascination and thrall are few.

Then, to think of it, they are teaching dancing in the public schools under the guise of physical culture and wholesome amusement, although leading physicians claim that it is a harmful exercise for both sexes. It robs its devotees of sleep, the employer of a day's work, the husband and wife of their companionship, the girls of their modesty, and the boys of their propriety. It should have no place in our public schools.

Children of godly parents have been persecuted for refusing to dance. Do not complain later on if your children go to the public dance if you allow them dancing instructions in the school. What is going to be the result of a nation that educates its young people for the dance hall?

Not every dancer is immoral, but every dance is a provocation to immorality and sensuality. Dancing would not be so popular and fascinating if women danced together. No dance hall would be able to keep its doors open very long. Its appeal is sexual and immoral.

The dance floor is a place of immodest liberty and suggestive motions of the body. The passionate embracing, nudity, and familiarity are commonplace there. And, think of it! Married women allow men to take liberties on the dance floor which would be considered criminal if attempted on the street or in the home. At the dance proper standards of behavior are forgotten. Surely it is no place for a Christian, though many professing Christians dance—but remember they are just professors. First Timothy 5:6 tells us, "But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth."

Beatrice Lewis, while practicing dance steps at the top of a 520 foot cliff near the Pacific Ocean, plunged to her death on a highway below. Ocean beach sightseers, who had been watching her as she postured and swayed, saw the blond dancer slip and hurl to her death. Spiritually speaking, every dancer is at the edge of a precipice. The next step may take them into eternal death and the lake of fire.

Dancing is immoral and leads

to irreverence and sacrilege. In Dallas, Texas, irate farmers threatened vigilante action to halt wild parties in a community church and graveyard. Fun-loving youths of the Dallas High School set wrecked the old church, lugged its pulpit into the yard, and stacked the pews in a corner. Flat tombstones in the adjoining 75-year-old graveyard were ripped up and laid side by side for a dance floor.

Churchmen, lying in wait for the youngsters, said the youths knocked over the gravestones, cursed and shouted, and tore boards off the church to build bonfires. Then they dragged the tombstones together and danced on them.

The dance is spiritually binding our youth, but Jesus said in John 8:36, "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

Selected

The best way to know God's estimate of sin is to realize the tremendous price it took to atone for sin—the death of His Son.



Romans 11:22 Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.

The Goodness of God and the Perils That Accompany It

Brother E. David Stegmeier

Continuing in the Goodness of God

Many people talk about the love of God. God is love, and His people manifest His love, but we are also serving a God who can be very severe. We have many examples throughout the annals of history and recorded in the pages of God's Word where He was very severe. Consider the account of Korah. God dealt severely with him, his wife, his family, and his associates for his rebellion. Also, God dealt severely with the children who made fun of the Prophet Elisha. However, God is a God of love as well. I believe that our Scripture text sums it all up: "Behold therefore the goodness and

severity of God: on them which fell, severity. . . ." I fear God, and I respect Him and His Word. I also respect the house of worship and the people of God.

Church, we have some responsibilities for the privileges that God has given us as His people. I fear to say anything against the Church of God or against a man of God. I often tell people that one would be better off getting hold of a line of electricity than to speak evil of God's ministry or His people. People should have more fear upon them today.

We need to look at all the blessings that God has bestowed upon us and count them. One songwriter wrote, "Count your

many blessings and see what God has done." Another song says, "He's always come through, . . . and He'll do it again." God has always come through for His people. He has always met our needs at the right time. He is never too early and never too late; He is always on time. Many times when I am in a low spot, I look back at the blessings. I am not looking back to go back, but as I begin to recount the blessings, I say, "God, You have always come through for us, and I know that You will again." And He always has!

The word *behold* means "to examine, to look intently at, to look fully, or to consider." That is what we must do. The Spirit that permeates the people of God is

beautiful. We must let brotherly love continue. If each of us operates where God intends us to be, the church operates beautifully.

God requires you to continue in His goodness. I intend to continue right where I am traveling. I do not want to go to the left or to the right or go backward. I want to go forward for God. I know that I am on the right path. We can be men and women of confidence if we live as His Word tells us to live. With every promise we must meet certain conditions to be blessed. We must continue in the goodness of God.

The Perils of Prosperity

Some perils accompany the goodness of God. Let us consider them. Deuteronomy 6:10-11 reads: "And it shall be, when the LORD thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildedst not, And houses full of all good things, which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not; when thou shalt have eaten and be full." The Church of God is a spiritual smorgasbord. In the worship services we have songs that bless, and those songs contain messages. We do not just go through a form and sing, but those songs prepare us.

Verses 12-15 state: "Then beware [There are some perils, so we need to beware. I think this is good admonition for America.] lest thou forget the LORD, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name. Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the people which are round about you [the people of the world are going after all kinds of gods]; (For the LORD thy God is a jealous God among you) [and He is; He wants your whole heart] lest the anger of the LORD thy God be

kindled against thee, and destroy thee from off the face of the earth." These Old Testament Scriptures really have a lesson and a message for each of us.

Verse 17 reads, "Ye shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, and his testimonies, and his statutes, which he hath commanded thee." What are some perils that come with our blessings? With the blessings of prosperity comes the preoccupation with prosperity. The more people possess, the more they want, and the busier they become. The Bible lets us know that it is vanity and vexation of spirit. You need to be careful of wanting and wanting. You need to be a satisfied person. I believe spiritual people are satisfied people.

Many people are very prosperous and preoccupied with their prosperity. They are always working and never seem to have time for church. They are always busy getting more. Church ought to be the first thing on your schedule. Are you allowing enough time? You should never let anything crowd but God and the things of God.

Next, prosperity brings the peril of idleness. Many people want time to go on trips here and there, but they are idle when it comes to working for the Lord. They have time for pleasure, but no time for God. Another peril that prosperity brings is independence from God; in other words, they feel that they do not need Him. Often when individuals first get saved and come to the church, they are very humble and very dependent upon God. However, after He begins to bless them, some become a little independent. That has happened in our country. When the settlers first came here, they were very dependent upon God, but with prosperity many felt that they did not need God anymore. Prosperity brings independence.

Another very serious peril that comes with prosperity is pride. Pride is a terrible thing. It keeps

people from using that reverse gear, so to speak. We all have had to back up. A real man or woman uses that reverse gear occasionally. Sometimes the husband might have to ask his wife to forgive him. You may say, "That is demeaning to a man. A man should not have to do that." That is not demeaning to a godly man. Prosperity brings pride. We should never take our blessings for granted, dear one. God is concerned about our actions and our attitudes. He will not stay with us if our attitudes and our actions are not right. We each are accountable to Him in all things. We must live so that God, in His infinite mercy and love, will continually bless us. We have a responsibility to Him.

The Blessings of God

We have talked about some perils. Now we are going to talk about our responsibility to Him for His blessings. Psalm 100 reads: "Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands. Serve the LORD with gladness: [I am glad that I can serve God. I recommend Him to everyone. Working for the Lord is wonderful. The dividends are great, and the retirement is out of this world.] come before his presence with singing. Know ye that the LORD he is God: [Sometimes people feel so big and so puffed up, but God is going to have the final word. You ought to walk very humbly before Him.] it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; [It is God who blesses His people; therefore, we should stand back and give Him the glory. As we do that, He will continue to bless us. It is He who has made us, not we ourselves.] we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thank ful unto him, and bless his name. For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations."

God has been so extremely good

to us as His people. He has blessed us with many temporal and spiritual blessings. His goodness is universal: wherever we go, we can see the goodness of God. Psalm 145:8-9 says: "The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy. The LORD is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works." No matter where we go, we can see the goodness of God.

The blessings of God are material and spiritual. Matthew 5:45 says, "That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." The material blessings that we enjoy come from Him. How many times have you seen a beautiful sunset? God created all things for us to enjoy.

Acts 14:16-17 says: "Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." God's people are such beautiful people, and what makes them beautiful is the goodness of God and the joy emitted from their hearts and lives.

God's Abundant Mercy

God's people are blessed with spiritual blessings, and there are so many. Psalm 31:19 states, "Oh how great is thy goodness . . ." I can look back upon our lives and see how God has provided for our needs one day at a time in such a beautiful way, both materially and spiritually. God has been so good to us. If you will be all that He would have you to be, you will prosper. I like to see people work together. I do not like strife. When people begin to have strife and contention, they are not far from being outside the Kingdom of God. The Bible says they will not hurt or destroy in all

His holy mountain.

Psalm 31:19 continues, "Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee. . . ." Notice the condition. In other words, you ought to respect God and the man of God. True men of God have never been popular. They locked the Prophet Jeremiah in a dungeon, and he suffered many things. Jesus was hated, abused, spit upon, slapped, beaten, humiliated, and then killed. All the Apostles came to violent deaths except John, and they tried to destroy him too. True men of God are not popular with people. No matter how straight we walk or how close we live to God, some people are going to criticize us.

Again, Psalm 31:19 reads, "Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men!" This is not merely a statement. Notice that it ends with an exclamation point, which means there is much feeling behind that. When I tell my wife, "I really love you," she likes for me to place some feeling behind that. This verse of Scripture was meant to be spoken with feeling. "Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men!"

David wrote in Psalm 86:1-7: "Bow down thine ear, O LORD, hear me: for I am poor and needy. Preserve my soul; for I am holy: O thou my God, save thy servant that trusteth in thee. Be merciful unto me, O LORD: for I cry unto thee daily. Rejoice the soul of thy servant: for unto thee, O LORD, do I lift up my soul. For thou, LORD, art good, and ready to forgive; [God is ready to forgive everyone who asks. If you have made a mistake or done something wrong, all you have to do is ask God to forgive you, and He will. However, stubbornness and pride keep some people from asking.] and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.

[God is abundantly merciful no matter what you have done. You may say, 'Oh, I could never be saved.' Paul said that he was the chief of sinners. Each of us should have felt that way.] Give ear, O LORD, unto my prayer; and attend to the voice of my supplications. In the day of my trouble I will call upon thee: for thou wilt answer me."

God blesses us materially and spiritually. In this spiritual experience, we enjoy the fullness of Christ. God brings us to a wealthy place. My mother used to say, "Hard work brings on a good appetite." Spiritually speaking, sometimes people have been eating junk food, and when they come to the house of God, they do not want to eat the good, wholesome, healthy food the pastor puts out. God has blessed us in so many ways, and He raises us up to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

Our Responsibility

What should your attitude be toward God's blessings? First, God wants you to acknowledge and recognize them. They have come from Him. He has given them to us. Second, God wants us to rejoice in them. When you give someone a gift, you can tell by the look on that person's face whether he or she enjoys it or appreciates it. God wants us to rejoice. Exodus 18:9 says, "And Jethro rejoiced for all the goodness which the LORD had done to Israel, whom he had delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians." I rejoice with the people of God. We rejoice when we acknowledge God's goodness, and we rejoice in His goodness.

Third, we should remember the goodness of God. Psalm 145:7 says, "They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness, and shall sing of thy righteousness." Had it not been for the Church of God, I would not have the wonderful wife that I have, and no doubt my father would not have been

saved. We have wonderful memories, and we are still making them. You should remember God's goodness as you lie down at night before you fall asleep. Rather than counting sheep, you can count your blessings. We should recognize the goodness of God, we should rejoice in His goodness, and we should remember His goodness.

Last, we should be satisfied with the goodness of God. Jeremiah 31:14 says, "And I will satiate [or satisfy] the soul of the priests with fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, saith the LORD." God's people are a satisfied people. They recognize His goodness, they rejoice in it, and they are appreciative. They remember how good God has been to them.

I want to read a song written by one of the most prolific Christian songwriters who ever lived, Fanny Crosby, a blind sister. I have read her story and listened to it on a Christian radio station that airs stories of great Christians. I enjoy the story of Fanny Crosby. They say she wrote more than eight thousand

hymns. God blessed her with a companion who was also blind. He also blessed them with a child, but when the child was not very old, God took their child. When God took the child, late one night she went to the piano in her home and sat down and composed a song that we sing yet today entitled, "Safe in the Arms of Jesus." She also wrote a song entitled, "Unsearchable Riches." I believe she had a genuine experience with God. Something that I prize more than anything in all this world is to keep my relationship with God clear.

*O the unsearchable riches of Christ!
Wealth that can never be told;
Riches exhaustless of mercy and grace,
Precious, more precious than gold!*

*O the unsearchable riches of Christ!
Who shall their greatness declare?
Jewels whose luster our lives may
adorn,
Pearls that the poorest may wear.*

*O the unsearchable riches of Christ!
Freely, how freely they flow,*

*Making the souls of the faithful and
true
Happy wherever they go!*

*O the unsearchable riches of Christ!
Who would not gladly endure
Trials, afflictions, and crosses on earth,
Riches like these to secure?*

*Precious, more precious;
Wealth that can never be told:
O the unsearchable riches of Christ!
Precious, more precious than gold!*

Friend, do you have the unsearchable riches of Christ? If not, you need to secure them now. God is a merciful God, and He will forgive you if you will ask Him.

(Cassette C-4269E)

**He who makes God
first will find God
with him at the last.**

Radio Log



LOCATION	STATION	DAY	TIME
Newark, Ohio	WCLT-AM 1430	Sunday	8:15 a.m.-9:00 a.m.
Anderson, Indiana	WQME-FM 98.7	Sunday	8:00 a.m.-8:30 a.m.
Gaffney, South Carolina	WAGI-FM 105.3	Monday	8:30 p.m.-10:00 p.m.

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

Genesis 3:1 Now the serpent was more subtle [or crafty] than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

2 And the woman said unto the

serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:

3 But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

4 And the serpent said unto the

woman, Ye shall not surely die:

1 John 3:4 Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.

Proverbs 14:34 Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.



SIN

THE DECEIVER

OF MANY

Brother Irwin Seshier

Sin's Alluring Power

Seasons come and go, but God's Word always stays the same; it never changes. We are living in a world in which Satan is trying to do all he can to deceive and bring down the Christian. Nothing has changed from the beginning of time to this present day. Even in the days of Adam and Eve, Satan tried to convince Eve of a better way.

In verse 1 of our Scripture lesson, the devil came to Eve with a question, to plant a little seed of doubt in her mind. The devil is a liar, and he is the author of lies. He does not mind if you prosper financially or in other ways, but he does not want you to prosper spiritually. He is against everything good. He wants you to spend your time and money on the things of

this world.

Can you see how the devil was working to try to get Eve to partake of something that God said not to eat of? Sin is still sin, and wrong is still wrong. No matter how you look at it, sin is against God's way. Some people once spoke against sinful ways and the alluring power that sin has, but now they look at sin and think, "It's not as bad as it once was." Friend, if it was wrong then, it is wrong today. Things do not change overnight. God does not change His mind about the things He once told you were wrong. That is not the way God is. The Lord is not going to come down and say to you, "Well, I made a mistake. What I said about sin, you can take that back, because that is not what I really meant." If He said it was wrong then, it is still wrong today.

In art class we learned how to mix different colors together to make other colors. For example, if you need gray, you can mix black and white together. However, with God there is no such thing as a gray area. It is either black or white, right or wrong, sinful or righteous. Friend, you are either saved or lost.

If you are not careful, the devil will cause you to believe, "Oh, I am such a good, moral person. I don't drink or smoke, I don't go to the movie theaters, and I don't run around all hours of the night. I go to church occasionally. I donate money to charitable organizations and give to the needy. I will be fine." You would be surprised if you knew the number of people who base their salvation on their charitable giving and being good, moral people. The question is, Are you saved? Is your

name written in the Lamb's Book of Life?

So many people were all stirred about Y2K as we got closer to the end of 1999. We heard about it on the radio and read about it in the newspapers. My thinking was that God's people should be the most calm about the whole situation. It is so easy for the devil to get people worked up about such matters. Do you know why so many people were so concerned about that? They did not have anything else to hold to. God was not at the center of their lives. They were reaching for and grasping other things, hoping that the material things would take them through. Dear one, if you have God, you have everything. The world does not understand that because their hearts have not been changed. God is the One who put this old world in motion, and He will take care of it. Do not listen to all the hype of the media. When the Lord says it is enough, then it will be enough. We do not have to worry about it.

I am glad that I know the One who holds the future, and He holds my hand. The world has no stability and no direction. The deceitfulness of sin will lead you to believe that everything is fine. You may be in your own little world now, but down deep there is an emptiness and a longing to do what is right. Satan will paint a beautiful picture of the life of sin, but it is just as a mirage. If you are out driving on a really hot day and you look ahead, sometimes it appears that water is on the road ahead. The heat coming up from the asphalt gives an illusion of water on the road. You might have heard about people who were in a desert and saw mirages of an oasis ahead. It looked good from a distance, but once they got closer, they could see that it was not what they thought it was.

The Deceitfulness of Sin

Friend, once you start dabbling in the pleasures of sin, you will

become deceived and bound by it. Now, I am not going to tell you there is no pleasure in sin, because there is seasonal pleasure in sin. If there were no pleasure in it, people would not be enticed to partake of it. However, the pleasures of sin are only temporary, because you must reap the things that you did in sin. What if you were to stop paying your electric bill for a while? You might think, "Well, no one is going to know whether I pay my electric bill." Then one day you would wake up and find that your power had been shut off. You might have enjoyed not spending your money on your electric bill for a while, until you started to reap for not paying.

There is a reaping time that takes place in sowing to the corruptness of sin. What you plant in the ground is going to come up. The farmer does not put corn kernels in the ground and harvest apples. He is going to reap a harvest of what he puts in the ground. When the crop comes up, there is more than what went in. Do not think that you can live a sinful life full of corruption, and then when it comes time to die, God is going to overlook everything that you have done. It is not going to do that. Nevertheless, some have been deceived into thinking that very thing. They may think, "I am a good person, and my name is on a church book" or "I shook the preacher's hand and signed a pledge card" or "I was baptized when I was a baby." Friend, Is your name in the Lamb's Book of Life? So many people have all their hopes wrapped up in a religious move that they once made; however, none of those things will get you to Heaven. The thing that matters is that your name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life. When individuals sin, why is it that they think they can pull the wool over someone's eyes, so to speak? Why is it that they think to themselves, "As long as no one sees me, I will be okay?" There is an all-seeing eye watching you who knows exactly what you do, where you go, what

you say, and everything else about you. Just because man may not see you does not mean that it goes unnoticed. Achan took something that God said to destroy. Although no one else saw him do it, God did, and He revealed it to His chosen leader. Today some disobey God and think they can get by, but they cannot hide it from God's eyes. There are so many examples in the Bible of what happened to people when they disobeyed God, and those incidents are written there for our example. We can know exactly what will happen to us if we do the same things. What God says is still true today. The deceitfulness of sin is that people think they can go on in sin and not reap the consequences.

In Joshua 7:19-21 we read: "And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the LORD God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me. And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel [Achan had to come clean right then and there], and thus and thus have I done: When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it."

Achan saw it, coveted it, took it, and then hid it. That is exactly what the devil wants you to do today. He wants you to look, covet, and then take what you should not have. Dear one, sin is a deceiver. It will let you think everything is going along fine until you get really comfortable; then the reaping comes. Next, it will not be long until you seek others who will rally behind you, because you get so comfortable in your sin. You will start to gather together with others in the same condition and question things: "Why are we having another revival?" or "Why are we singing that song again?" or

"Why is the pastor preaching on that again?" Sin will blind your eyes to spiritual realities and godly leadership. It will let you believe a lie and be damned.

The Fiery Serpents

Again, sin is a deceiver of men's souls. It is a gradual process. You do not wake up one day and say, "I am going to go out in sin." One thing leads to another. Bank robbers do not start robbing the first bank they see. Often they start stealing little things, such as a nickel or a dollar from Mom's purse. The drug addict does not wake up one day as a drug addict. Sin does not stop with little things; it has a snowball effect.

In Numbers 21:1-9 we read: "And when king Arad the Canaanite, which dwelt in the south, heard tell that Israel came by the way of the spies; then he fought against Israel, and took some of them prisoners. And Israel vowed a vow unto the LORD, and said, If thou wilt indeed deliver this people into my hand, then I will utterly destroy their cities. And the LORD hearkened to the voice of Israel, and delivered up the Canaanites; and they utterly destroyed them and their cities: and he called the name of the place Hormah. And they journeyed from mount Hor by the way of the Red sea, to compass the land of Edom: and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way.

"And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth [that means 'great hatred or disgust'] this light bread. And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died. Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD, and against thee; pray unto the LORD, that he take

away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people.

"And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived."

This is a picture of what can happen to people who are blessed of God and then become disgruntled and let sin into their lives. When people turn their backs on God and Truth and let down on the standard of the Word, they are bitten by sin. If you have not turned your life over to Jesus Christ, you have been bitten.

Many "serpents" are biting people all around us. There is the serpent of jealousy, the serpent of hatred, the serpent of backbiting, and the serpent of evil thinking, just to name a few. Just because you cannot literally see these serpents does not mean they are not real. There are spiritual serpents that are biting people. Some people like to go around and spread gossip. What will happen to them if they continue in that path? Romans 6:23 says, "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Eternal destruction will come upon those who continue down the path of sin. God's people were complaining. People complained back in Moses' day, and people complain today. Those people thought about the food they had in Egypt and said, in so many words, "We hate this manna that we have been given to eat." (Today some who once loved the Truth no longer want it.) Through Israel's disobedience, God still provided for them. God was faithful. Think about how good God was to those people. They kept saying, "Remember the food we had down in Egypt?" They forgot that they were slaves in Egypt. When you are a slave, you do not have

much to say about what happens to you. Eating hamburgers in freedom is better than eating steak in bondage. There is no choice when you are in Egypt, or bondage.

God Is Not Slack Concerning His Promise

In sin the devil will lead you around. Sin is deceitful. Complaining about God's man and God's Word is never the answer to your problems; doing that will only multiply them. The wrath of God is stirred when people speak against His messenger. The only way you can receive help and strength is from the Lord, so you dare not speak evil against the man of God, because he is the one through whom the Lord is speaking.

Today some profess to be saints of God, yet they say such evil and hurtful things against the pastor, thinking that no evil will come upon them. They need to be careful. They are letting things spew out their mouths and do not care who hears them. Do you think the boss on the job would put up with that kind of treatment? If you were to do that to your boss on the job, you would be looking for another job. It is sad that some people show more respect to the boss on the job than to the pastor; that is a shame. If you have said things against a man of God or done hurtful things behind his back, you are not going to prosper with God unless you back up and ask for forgiveness.

A man of God preaches as he does because he loves the people and has a burden for them. If he did not love them and carry a burden for them, he would preach any old way just to get more people in. There is too much of that today. None of us wants to be criticized, put down, falsely accused, or have slanderous remarks made about us. However, when one preaches the Truth to people to get them to see their needs, that happens sometimes. If you ever want to get anywhere with God and make

Heaven your eternal home, if you have spoken against a man of God, you must back up and ask God for forgiveness and make things right with the pastor.

God used the fiery serpents to bring judgment on those people, but He also gave them hope. The Lord instructed Moses to make a serpent of brass and put it on a pole. Then if anyone was bitten by a fiery serpent, he could look upon the brass serpent and live. Therefore, the instrument of judgment became an instrument of salvation. God is a merciful God, and He will be right there if you make a wrong turn, if you are willing to turn to Him. In 2 Peter 3:9 we read, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." When one repents, God sends His grace.

I read an article several years ago about a person who had smoked all his life and was in Intensive Care. His condition was caused by smoking tobacco, and he had to have a tracheotomy. His mouth was eaten up with cancer. He was so bound by the smoking habit that they had to stick cigarettes in that tracheotomy. That is sad, but that is the deceitfulness of sin. Satan will paint you a beautiful picture. He will make the billboards and the lights look alluring, but he does not show you what life is like on the other side of that. If he were to show you the other side from the beginning, you would not even try it. I repeat, sin is a deceiver.

I thank the Lord that I have never gone after any of that. It is not in my own strength; it is the power of God. I thank the Lord for the power of God that can keep us, lead, and direct us. Christian friend, if you did not have God in your life, you would be out in the middle of the big ocean of life just going around with the ocean currents, having no direction. I thank the

Lord that the Christian has a Pilot, not a copilot. He can guide you and take you through life safely. Seeing ones with no direction in their lives is so sad. They do not know which way to turn. The Truth is what sets you free. Jesus is like that brass serpent. You cannot do anything in this life unless you look to Him for help. The devil will try to tell you that you do not need anyone in your life to help you. Many curriculums in the public schools teach self-sufficiency.

Are You Missing the Mark?

Throughout the Bible and history books we can read of incidents where people tried to prosper without God in their lives. However, it was not long until they fell. One example is the mighty Roman Empire. They had magnificent buildings, their own language, their own money system; they had everything but God. Without God a nation will go down every time. Dear one, where are you looking for your help? You may say, "My job will get me through." Well, who gave you the strength and the mind to do that job? Someone may say, "I have plenty of money in the bank to see me through." Friend, a sudden illness could wipe out your bank account in no time. If you do not have Jesus Christ in your life, you have nothing.

We can read accounts of prominent people in the world who had everything that money could buy. They had wealth, luxurious automobiles, real estate investments, fine homes, and whatever else they wanted, but they died without God because they were poor spiritually. Dear one, you do not know what will come your way in the future.

When you start using your own thinking and your own reasoning, you will become confused. Human reasoning will lead you away from the highway of holiness. The children of Israel despised those fiery serpents that we read about in

the Book of Numbers. Today people are no different. They can run down the Word of God, God's man, their brothers and sisters in Christ, and anything or anyone who lives a life acceptable to Him. If they expect to receive any help for themselves, they must go the very same way. They must look to the Cross and Jesus Christ for their salvation. They must come to Jesus, confess their sins, and ask Him for forgiveness.

So many people do not want to accept responsibility. We are living in a world where everyone wants to blame everyone else for their condition. They want to make excuses for everything. It is only through Christ that one can gain the help he needs for his soul. Nothing material can help us.

Too many people are trying other avenues, and they are missing the mark altogether. Many religious people today want to know what seminary the preacher went to, how many letters he has after his name, where he had his training, and how many people he can attract to their assembly. Dear one, it is not in all of that; it is simply whether you have been born again. Aren't you glad it is that simple? Too many religious people today want to make it so complicated that it is no wonder that people are sick of religion. They need to get back to the point: you must be born again, just as Jesus said to Nicodemus in John 3:3, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." That is just as plain and simple as it can be. If more people could understand that they must have an individual relationship with God, more people would receive the help they need.

Too many are trying to see the Kingdom of God through their natural eyesight when they need to have a heart change. You cannot see it with the natural eyes. When you see the Church of God in its true beauty and holiness, you will lose your desire to try anything else. You will no longer want to go down and

flirt with Babylon and partake of her wine. I have no desire to go down there; there is nothing there. God has already turned His wrath on that.

Some used to testify about how the Lord brought them out of Babylon, but where are they today? Some of them are right back where they were, but in worse shape. You may ask, "Why do some go back?" Because they did not keep a love of the Truth. There was a letting down, and when there is a letting down, people go back and partake of things that they once said they would have no dealings with. Dear one, that can happen to you if you take that same attitude toward Truth. The love of the Truth and a burning desire to do God's will needs to be set before the people constantly.

When people start saying, "Well, Truth doesn't matter" or "I don't want to hear the Truth"; they will end up in the very same condition. That is sad when people cannot tell where the world ends and the church begins. We need to be reminded of what the martyrs went through to secure this Truth and of the ridicule the ministry has gone through to keep the Truth marching on.

Some people have quit serving God just because someone did not look at them right or whispered something to someone else that they thought was about them. How is that excuse going to appear when you compare it with what the martyrs and the ministry have gone through to preach God's Word? Are you going to give up because of a wrong attitude? People need to have stronger spiritual backbones when it comes to standing for the right. People of the world let you know where they stand. We should not be afraid to stand for the Truth. Someone will always be around to say something about you if you live for God. If not, you need to check your experience. During the Christmas season, some people who live on my block say, "I thought he

was a Christian, but his house is one of the darkest houses on the street." No, it actually has a lot of light inside: the Gospel light. When you have Truth, you have the light.

You need to consider what people said about Jesus. Did He throw in the towel and say, "I quit"? No, He kept going. What an example for us to follow! The religious leaders of that day stirred up the people, and when they gave them the choice of releasing Jesus or Barabbas, a murderer, they shouted, "Barabbas!" They spit upon, tortured, and mocked Jesus. Today if you live for God, people often ask, "Why do you dress that way? Why do you wear your hair that way? Why do you constantly go to church?"

How Do You Look Upon Truth?

How do people look upon Truth today? How do they look at true men of God? How do they look upon the true Christian? Many people call themselves Christians. Almost everyone professes to be Christians and on their way to Heaven. Yet, when you get right down to reality, how many true Christians are there? There are not many according to the Bible.

People can only look upon the outward man; they cannot see the inward man. First Corinthians 1:47 says, "The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven." How can we live this Christian life? In Galatians 2:20 we read, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Let us keep in mind that sin is a deceiver of men's and women's souls. We need to constantly keep that before our minds. You do not want to get so used to going to church, sitting in a pew, listening to the prayer requests, the messages, and the songs of invitation and yet go your way. The devil could use

that and say, "You are just going through a routine. Why don't you go ahead and stay home? You know what the service is going to be like." Thank the Lord, in the true Church of God, there are no programs handed out in the vestibule.

The devil will use any circumstance or conversation for his benefit. If it is something that he knows will aid him in getting someone to fall, he will use it. He is constantly scheming. Sometimes no matter how innocent something may seem, he will use it for his benefit. You need to ask the Lord to help you. He is there, and He will help you. He does not want to see you go your own way.

If you are going through trials and persecutions, that is not the time to give up on God. That is the time to seek His face in a greater way. It seems that the first thing some people do when they become discouraged is to stop going to church. When you start having problems, you need to be in church, because you will not get any help from the world. The world is against God and God's man. The place where you are going to receive help is in the church services where the saints can pray for you and you can hear the Word preached.

If you read a little further in Numbers 21:16-20, you will see that those people had a change of heart after those fiery serpents came upon them. Verse 17, speaking of when they were looking for the water, says, "Then Israel sang this song, Spring up, O well; sing ye unto it." They knew better than to complain. If you become discouraged, remember that well is right there; just keep digging for it. They received water from the rock, but that time they had to dig for it.

You may ask, "Where is the living water that Jesus promised?" Just dig a little deeper; move the dirt away that tries to get into your life, the discouragement and the unbelief, and you will start seeing that well of water spring up. Remember what the dear Savior

went through for you and me to enjoy this beautiful salvation.

Dear one, sin is the deceiver of many. You do not have to be one of the many who become deceived by it. You need to ask the Lord to help you. No one else can do it for you. However, you have to take the first step, and then the Lord will be right

there to help you the rest of the way. No one cares for you as much as Jesus cares. So many in the world say they will be there for you, but when times get tough, where are they? Often they are nowhere to be found. There is Someone who will stick closer than a brother. He will be right there to help you through

your needs.

What do you want to place your faith and confidence in? If you place your faith and confidence in man instead of God, you will fail every time. Dear one, if you have a need, take it to the Lord in prayer.

(Cassette C-4298A)

Light From Heaven

*O Jesus, I have promised
To serve Thee to the end;
Be Thou forever near me,
My Master and my Friend.
I shall not fear the battle
If Thou art by my side,
Nor wander from the pathway
If Thou wilt be my Guide.*

*O let me feel Thee near me;
The world is ever near;
I see the sights that dazzle,
The tempting sounds I hear;
My foes are ever near me,
Around me and within;
But Jesus draw Thou nearer,
And shield my soul from sin.*

*O let me hear Thee speaking
In accents clear and still,
Above the storms of passion,
The murmurs of self-will.
O speak to reassure me,
To hasten or control.
O speak, and may I listen,
Thou Guardian of my soul.*

*O Jesus, Thou hast promised
To all who follow Thee,
That where Thou art in glory
There shall Thy servant be;
And, Jesus, I have promised
To serve Thee to the end;
O give me grace to follow
My Master and my Friend.*

Selected

PLEASE NOTE THE DATE CHANGE
IN THE MEDINA REVIVAL
ANNOUNCEMENT BELOW

Revival
October 15-21

The Church of God

6745 Wooster Pike, Medina, OH

Service times:

Monday-Friday 7:00 p.m.

Saturday 7:00 p.m.

Sunday 6:00 p.m.

For more information contact:

Pastor C. H. Dickerson

(330) 725-6853 or (330) 725-5993

[Guest Editorial--continued from page 2]

makes it even more explicit and pinpoints what portion of the Gospel Day this was to occur. In our companion text in Revelation 20:7-8 we read: "And when the thousand years are expired [speaking of the Dark Ages from A.D. 530 to A.D. 1530], Satan [the actual Greek word is *adversary*, reverting us to verse 2, which says, '. . . laid hold on the dragon, the old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan.' The Greek says 'the accuser and the adversary.' This is not speaking of the devil personified but an instrument that the enemy was using. This dragon is a symbolic representation of Rome in its pagan form, which was the first opposing force to morning-time Christianity. Therefore, when Revelation 20:7 says, 'Satan,' it refers to the dragon, paganism] shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog."

In those two verses of Scripture, we see three characters. Verse 7 speaks of Satan, the adversary, the dragon (verse 2), or paganism. Then we see two other characters. This is the only place in the new Testament that those names are used for these particular characters. In verse 8 the writer styles them as "Gog and Magog." Who are they? Well, consider what they do. Verse 8 says, ". . . to gather them together to battle." Verse 9 says, "And they went up on the breadth of the earth."

Where else do we see these or similar phrases employed? Revelation 16:12-14 declares: "And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. 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."

Verse 14 says, ". . . which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world." This is similar to the expression in Revelation 20:9, which reads, ". . . went up on the breadth of the earth." Here we find that they have the same field of labor, or operation. Also, Revelation 16:14 tells us, ". . . to gather them to battle;" which is the same phrase employed in Revelation 20:8, which says, ". . . to gather them together to battle." We see that their purpose and performance are the same.

What is the timeframe? Notice that Revelation 16:12 says, "And the sixth angel poured out his vial." This occurred when the sixth vial was being poured out. When were these seven vials poured out? Revelation 16:2 tells us, "And the first [this is the first of the seven angels] went, and poured out his vial upon the earth." The very first vial was poured out upon the earth. The last phrase in verse 2 says that it was "upon them which worshipped his image." The image is a representation of Protestantism; therefore, the very first vial was poured out on Protestantism. This lets us know that these vial angels operated in a time subsequent to the Protestant era. We know that because the very first one poured out his vial on Protestantism. When we look in Revelation 16:1-7, we see that the first three vials were poured out in the sixth seal. Every one of these were poured out in the evening of time, in a period of time subsequent to the Protestant era. The first was poured out on the earth, upon "them which worshipped his image," according to verse 2.

These first three vials in Revelation 16:1-7 were poured out in the sixth seal. How do we know the time delineation? The fourth through the seventh vials are poured out in the seventh seal. Revelation 16:8 says, "And the

fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun." The sun is figurative of when the morning-time church came on the scene in her pristine glory, in Revelation 12:1. She was a woman clothed with the sun. Therefore, this vial was poured out on something representing itself as the New Testament church. What was that? It was the Anderson movement, wherein people took the glory to themselves. Revelation 16:9 tells us "they repented not to give him glory." They took the glory to themselves and to that movement and represented themselves to be the New Testament church.

Starting with the fourth vial, the vial had to be poured out in the seventh seal, because God had to set His hand a second time and get a second remnant and raise up a new ministry to pour out Truth on those who had fallen away. When you understand that the fourth through seventh vials were poured out in the seventh seal, then this tells us that our time setting for our lesson text, in the sixth vial, is in this seventh-seal period of time in which we are living today.

Our lesson text has its setting during the seventh seal period of time. Revelation 16:13 speaks of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. The dragon is paganism, the beast is Papalism, and the false prophet is Protestantism. These three have the same field of operation and labor as Satan and Gog and Magog of Revelation 20:7-8; they have the same purpose and the same performance. In reality, they are merely different figures of the same entity. When Revelation 20:7-8 speaks of Satan, Gog, and Magog, it is another representation for paganism, Papalism, and Protestantism.

The nature of this prophetic language that we are studying is figurative. Ezekiel 37:1 states, "The hand of the LORD was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones." Verse 11 reads, "Then he

said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel." We know this had to be a figurative expression, because Ezekiel was of the house of Israel, and he was not dead and in the valley full of bones. Had this been a literal interpretation, he would have been dead and among the bones lying there. However, it was a figurative expression to portray a truth. The nature of our lesson text, the nature of prophetic language, is figurative. What is the lesson? We are seeing these three powers (paganism, Papalism, and Protestantism or Satan, Gog, and Magog) not in their original state, but rather we are getting a revelation of how they are working in this seventh-seal period of time and how we are being confronted with them today.

Let us examine these texts to see what they reveal to us. What do these forces do? Their ultimate goal is deception. Revelation 20:8 says, "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." What are these forces working to accomplish? They are doing a gathering work. Revelation 16:14 says (speaking of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet), "For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world [why?], to gather them to the battle." What are these forces doing? Their move is to gather, to amalgamate, or consolidate, to bring together every force against Truth.

Ecclesiastes 1:9 says, "There is no new thing under the sun." Those who were adamantly opposed to one another in times past came together to oppose Jesus Christ. Luke 23:12 says, "And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves." Opposing forces often come together for a common purpose when it is to oppose Christ and Truth. The Sadducees (who did not

believe in angels, the Resurrection, or spirits) and the Pharisees (who believed in each of those) were opposed adamantly to one another; yet they came together and laid down their differences to fight against Christ, or Truth.

This gathering together will make some very strange bedfellows. This gathering, or amalgamation, is a picture of the eighth beast. It is nothing more than an amalgamation of all previous opposing forces for the common purpose of standing against Truth. Revelation 17:11 (speaking of the eighth beast) reads, "And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, [What is he? Remember, there is no new thing under the sun.] . . . is of the seven." Daniel's prophecy, in Chapter 7, speaks of four beasts, representing the kingdoms of Babylon, Media-Persia, Grecian, and pre-Christian era Rome; then, in Revelation we have the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet: those are the seven. The eighth beast is made up of nothing more than an amalgamation, or a consolidation, of the seven.

Why are these forces gathering? What is their purpose? Revelation 20:8 tells us, ". . . to gather them together to battle." Their purpose is to battle, or to oppose, attack, and attempt to defeat Christ and Truth. Revelation 19:19 says, "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." Their purpose, or their intent, is to war against Truth.

Revelation 17:14 says, "These shall make war with the Lamb." John 1:29 tells us that Jesus is the Lamb of God: "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." How could any person or any system make war with Christ? The Apostle Paul said in Galatians 1:13, "I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it." When he met

Christ on the Damascus Road in Acts 9:4, Jesus said, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" When you work against the true Church of God, you are warring against the Lamb, because you cannot separate Christ from His body; they are one and the same.

The way to make war with the Lamb is to make war with the saints, the church, the man of God, and the Truth. In Matthew 25:40 Jesus stated, "Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." According to 2 Corinthians 10:4, the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, or fleshly: "(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds.)" When Peter got out a sword and cut off Malcus' ear, Jesus told him to put down the sword. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal. What type of battle are we fighting? In 1 Timothy 6:12 Paul admonished the young minister Timothy, "Fight the good fight of faith." The battle is over the faith. It is not over you or me or any other personality. The Apostle Paul, when he was getting ready to appear before Nero the second time and go into eternity by martyrdom, penned in 2 Timothy 4:7, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." Paul let us know very plainly in Ephesians 4:5 that there is one faith. In speaking of the faith, the word actually means "the doctrine or the Truth." This battle is over Truth.

In the next issue we will go back to our prophetic text where it gives us an explicit account of what is occurring and what is going to occur.

Brother Earl R. Borders