

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

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

Brother Roger L. Decker ..... Editor  
Workers Too Numerous to Mention

**THE CHURCH OF GOD BELIEVES IN:**

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

**SOME SPIRITUAL FACTS  
PERTAINING TO THE CHURCH**

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

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# Guest Editorial

## The Four Beasts and the Truth Concerning the Great Tribulation Part 2 of 2

Daniel 7:1 In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon Daniel had a dream and visions of his head upon his bed: then he wrote the dream, and told the sum of the matters.

2 Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea.

3 And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another.

4 The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it.

5 And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh.

6 After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it.

7 After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns.

In the last issue we began to examine this prophetic vision. By properly understanding this Scripture text, we can refute a false and damnable interpretation of the Great Tribulation. In the previous article we learned that Daniel saw four beasts, representing four kingdoms. The first beast represents the Babylonian empire, the second, the MedioPersian empire, and the third, the Gracian empire.

Now let us look at this fourth and final beast in Daniel, Chapter 7. Verse 7 reads, "After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong

exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns." This fourth beast was much more diverse than all the rest. The other three were given some type of animal image from the wild kingdom. This beast was so diverse and such a hideous beast that no animal attachment was made to it.

Notice its identifying factors. It had great iron teeth and ten horns. The ten horns of this beast in Daniel 7:7 are the same ten horns that we find on the great red dragon in Revelation 12:3 and the first beast in Revelation 13:1. Those horns are an identifying factor so that we might know what entity this is. The horns denote political power. Again, Daniel 8:20 says, "The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia." Those horns denote political power, or political entities. Therefore, the ten horns that we find in Daniel 7:7 as well as in the Revelation are the ten minor kingdoms, or political powers, of which this vast empire was comprised. Again, each one of those kingdoms was

in direct chronological succession with no gaps between them. What was the fourth kingdom, which chronologically succeeded Grecia and was ultimately divided into ten minor kingdoms? It was the pagan Roman empire. I repeat, those ten horns are the same ones portrayed in the Revelation. This beast made a transition between the old economy and the new economy, because its time spanned both dispensations, or eras. There was the pre-Christian era pagan Rome and the Christian era pagan Rome, but it was the same entity.

Another identifying factor was that it had great iron teeth, which corresponds with the iron we found in Nebuchadnezzar's image in Daniel 2:33, where it tells of the legs of iron, referring to the Roman empire. Daniel 2:40 says, "And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron." Here we see the same symbol for the fourth kingdom that we see in Daniel, Chapter 7, for this fourth beast.

Iron was the fourth portion of that image. Daniel 2:33 says, "His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay." The fourth kingdom that verse 40 says was strong as iron was

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*Ephesians 6:1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.*

*2 Honour thy father and mother, (which is the first commandment with promise;)*

*3 That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.*

# A Christian Father



***Brother Roger L. Decker***

## **God's Standard for a Godly Father**

Each June a day is set aside by the world to honor fathers. The world has its opinion of what a good father should be, but God has a much higher standard of what a good father should be. The only one that we should take seriously is God's. The world's opinion of what a good father is will vary, but God's standard is true for all generations. If one does certain things, then the world classifies that person as a really good father.

In the world's eyes, people feel that if a father provides for his family by having a good job and giving his children lots of material things, perhaps things that he was unable to have as a child, then he is a good father. Also, they feel that if he is a member of a church, takes his child to Sunday school, is involved in all the social and religious activities of the church,

and makes sure his child gets a chance to be involved in sports, he is a good father. These things in themselves are good attributes. However, one attribute that the world does not mention that towers above the others is that all fathers ought to be born again. As a father, you can do all the things that the world praises men for, but if you are unsaved, your family does not have a solid foundation for future generations. The godly teachings in the home make the world a fit place to live.

Not everyone who is a father is one with whom God is pleased. The Greek definition of a father is "a nourisher, a protector, and an upholder." The Hebrew father was known for respect, reverence, and affection. He was considered to be the head of the family. Today our world has traveled a long way from that. A father who pleases God is one who loves his family, but he loves God even more than he does

his family. God is first in a godly father's life. He loves God supremely and shows his love to God through obedience. Also, he is concerned that his family obeys the Word of God. A godly father shows his children how to worship the Heavenly Father. He takes them to Sunday school and makes sure they are on time.

Six hundred teenagers in a New England prison revealed some startling facts. Six out of ten had fathers who drank excessively, and many of them had mothers who drank excessively as well. Three out of four were permitted by their parents to come and go as they pleased; there was no parental oversight. Seven out of ten had homes where no group or family activities were enjoyed. None of them had a family altar, and none of them attended Sunday school.

I read about a meeting in Illinois, and a man by the name of Gypsy Smith was to be the guest speaker.

Only men were present. When the moment arrived for him to speak, he lifted up his well-worn Bible and had this to say: "How many of you present today can recall a saintly mother and father who loved this Book—they read it, they lived it, and they instilled it into your life?" Most of the men, with moist eyes, raised their hands and wept; they could relate to that. Gypsy Smith went on and asked another question: "With all the influence that you have had, how many of you are so living that your children will remember you for your faithfulness to the same Book?" Not one hand was raised.

I read an article that stated: It was Sunday morning. A father sat in his easy chair reading the Sunday newspaper. Then he said to his boy, "Put down that funny paper and get ready for Sunday school."

The boy replied, "Daddy, aren't you going with me?"

"No, I am not going with you, but I want you to hurry up and get around and get ready."

"Daddy, did you go to Sunday school when you were a little boy like me?"

"Certainly, I did. I went every Sunday," said the father.

As the little fellow walked away sadly, he said, "I bet it won't do me any good either."

### **Leading by Example**

A Christian husband loves his wife and children. The more he loves God, the more he loves his wife and children. We read in Ephesians 5:25-28: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself." Verse 33 states, "Nevertheless let every one of you

in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband."

A Christian father does not treat his wife like a piece of dirt or as a slave. Also, he does not treat his wife as though she has no part in the decisions of the home. A Christian husband bestows love upon his wife, and if she is a godly woman, she will return that love. Colossians 3:19 says, "Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them."

Although a Christian father loves his children, he does not uphold them when they are wrong. He is there to help them and work with them. Colossians 3:21 says, "Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged." In other words, he should not be harsh and severe with them all the time, but he should exercise some love and kindness. At times God corrects us when we are wrong, but other times He bestows love and kindness upon us. God is not harsh with us all the time. Why is that? We would become discouraged. If you hold the reins too tight on children, that is not done in love.

What else does a godly father do? He puts out some commands. Proverbs 6:20 says, "My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother." The father needs to see that the commandments of God are carried out in his home by all. He commands with love and respect, and he leads by example. He also exercises firmness as needed. A Christian father instructs in the home. Proverbs 1:8 says, "My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother." God expects mothers and fathers to instruct their children. They are not born into the world saved. They need an earthly mother and father to train them until they reach the age of accountability so they also can be saved and live for God.

A Christian father guides, encourages, and warns. Paul,

speaking in 1 Thessalonians 2:11, said, "As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children." A father should encourage his children in the things of God. If a child should fall, his father should be there to encourage him to get up and go again. If a child should lose a battle and become defeated, a godly father will encourage and instruct him, pray for him, and do his best to lift him up out of the dilemma into which he has fallen.

### **Training a Child in the Way He Should Go**

What else does a father do? He trains his children. Proverbs 22:6 says, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." He trains them to be faithful Christian Soldiers and to have fear and reverence for God. Some people today are caught up in things such as division. Often that trait is passed down to children from parents who did not fear and reverence God as they ought to have.

As a godly father, you will train your children in the way they should go if you love them. You should not train them in the ways of the world. You should not impress upon your children that sports are number one in their lives. A godly father will not instill the thought that success is being a good athlete. To be successful, God must be number one in their lives. A godly father trains his children to be good Christian soldiers. I would rather have my children know how to win against the devil than to win every ball game. A Christian father should teach his children how to whip the devil rather than how to hit a home run. They could make it to Heaven and never play a game of sports, but they cannot make it into Heaven if they do not know how to pray and get hold of God. It just depends on how you are training them.

Training children takes time. You need to teach them to pray, teach them to read and study God's Word, teach them to fear and reverence the Lord, and teach them to love the Lord. Also, you should teach them to respect their elders, the church leaders, the saints, the church, and their pastor. In our home, if any question ever came up concerning the pastor, we always took the pastor's part. I wanted my children to have reverence and respect for the pastor and the saints of God.

A father needs to rebuke when his companion or his children are wrong, and there is a way to do that. Job 2:9-10 reads: "Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die. But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not job sin with his lips." That is the duty of a father, and God will hold him responsible. In the Old Testament you can read that Eli did not restrain his sons, so God took care of the situation for him.

### **Disciplining Children**

Parents should train their children when it comes to finding the right companion and how to conduct themselves in courtship. The Bible says in Proverbs 18:22, "Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the LORD." Young person, one thing you need to know about dating is this: if you cannot date and stay spiritual, then you have the wrong one. A young couple ought to respect each other. If you cannot date and be close to God, something is wrong in the courtship. One is pulling the other down. A father should chasten, or correct, his children. The Bible says in Proverbs 3:12, "For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth." Hebrews 12:9-11 says this: "Furthermore we

have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." Deuteronomy 8:5 says, "Thou shalt also consider in throe heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the LORD thy God chasteneth thee."

If a child needs to be corrected, there are ways of doing it. Today many people are against spanking, but God ordained that parents administer the rod of correction. Now, I am not talking about child abuse. Parents should not slug or punch a child. I am talking about spanking the child. That is in the Bible, and that is the correct way to discipline a child. You should not discipline a child the way that communists, bachelors, or feminists say to do it. You should discipline a child the way the Bible says to do it. There is a Bible way, and it will yield the fruit of righteousness.

Much slipping from God's way is going on in homes. People should never let the home duties of being a father and a mother lay on the shelf while they are busy with other things, because soon the little ones are going to be twelve or thirteen years old. Then when parents try to bend the children the right way, they will be like an old pine tree: one can bend them over, but they are going to spring back. It is best to start setting the right example and doing the bending while you have them on your knees. When you have them right there on your knee, when you are holding them, when you are nursing them and bathing them, those are the times to put that training into effect. The time to start administering discipline is when a child is a baby. There are ways that

you can discipline a small child. You should not spank them as you would an older child, but there are ways that you can correct a very young child and get the idea across.

Parent, you need to teach your children to respect you, the church, the pastor, other leaders in the congregation, and church property and equipment. The government of the church is necessary. If a child needs to be corrected and it warrants a spanking, then that is what you should do. Again, I am talking about correcting a child, not abusing a child. You do not have to abuse a child to get something across to him. You should not wait until you are extremely angry before you correct a child. Some parents yell and scream at a child until they finally lose their temper.

A Christian father nourishes his children. He raises them and takes care of them. He is the one who should provide for the home. He should work and bring home the paycheck. A young man ought to be able to do that before he marries a wife. The Bible says in Titus 2:5 that women are to be "keepers at home." Someone may say, "You can wait until you have children to do that." The Bible does not say that; it says "keepers at home." The husband ought to be able to provide for the wife. Now, if a need should arise, there are things a wife can do to help supplement the income, as long as it is a need and not greed. You can build up treasures in Heaven that will go much further than the treasures that you put in the bank. People need to get back to the blessed old Bible.

### **The Teachings of the Bible**

A Christian father is truly pained or grieved if his children go astray. It sends a deep burden to his soul and causes a sense of urgency to take hold of him. A godly father is considerate of his children's needs and requests, considerate of their burdens, and considerate of their decisions in life. He should be like

his Heavenly Father in this respect. He should be holy and righteous.

The fathers that the world honors are not always the ones that God honors. God honors those who honor Him. Fathers should live holy and righteously all the days of their lives. All the attributes of a good earthly father dwell in our Heavenly Father.

God has a Book that tells you exactly how to raise your children, what kind of husband to be, what kind of father to be, what kind of wife to be, and what kind of mother to be. Nevertheless, people have gotten far away from the Word of God. Instead they go to some doctor's book. Many of those who have written such books are bachelors or divorced and others are communist inspired. Often when someone has a problem with abusing a child, he will say, "My father abused me," "My mother was mean to me," "My father was an alcoholic," and so on. I suppose many can point back to something, but what does that have to do with you at the foot of the Cross? God holds you accountable for what you do wrong, not what your father or your mother did wrong. God will

take care of them at the Judgment.

Today many fathers have gotten so far away from the Word of God that sometimes their children become disgraceful and bring them to shame. Now, sometimes you can do your best, yet a child will go astray. God understands that. Still, you should train up a child in the way he should go. If you train a child the Bible way and he goes out in sins at least he knows how to get to God, because he was taught right in the home.

A father should be considerate. Although he does not always have the patience that a mother has, he should work at it. He may not always have the patience to sit down and listen to a long discourse like the mother does. My father used to say, "Let's get to the point. What's the problem?"

Parents need to get back to the teachings of the Bible. You should not expect Sunday school and the worship services to be the only spiritual training for the child. He must have more training than that. Yes, those are necessary activities, but those are not the only training that God was talking about. He was also talking about the training that

comes by way of the parents in the home. Children are never going to get around that.

A godly father commands his household, gives instructions and guidance, and rebukes wrong. He chastens and corrects. That is a full-time job. A mother or a father may be tempted to say, "Well, if the child wants to go that way, let him go." What if God did that with you? He does not do it. He keeps working with you, correcting and chastising, to get you back to the way of holiness where you belong. We have to learn the patience that God has in working with our children.

Father, if you have been lax in any of the areas that I have spoken of in your life, God will help you. God is not going to cast you away. He will be right there to extend a hand of mercy to you. Just because you might have done things wrong in the past, do not continue that way. God will be right there to help you turn things around. He loves you. Fathers who honor God should continue to honor Him. That is the right thing to do, and it will be well with you.

*(Cassette C-4658M)*

*DON'T LET YOURSELF . . .*

*WORRY WHEN YOU'RE DOING YOUR BEST.*

*HURRY WHEN SUCCESS DEPENDS ON ACCURACY.*

*THINK EVIL OF ANYONE UNTIL YOU HAVE THE FACTS.*

*BELIEVE A THING IS IMPOSSIBLE WITHOUT TRYING IT.*

*WASTE TIME ON TRIVIAL MATTERS.*

*IMAGINE THAT GOOD INTENTIONS ARE A SATISFYING EXCUSE.*

*HARBOR BITTERNESS TOWARD GOD OR MAN.*

*2 Samuel 14:28 So Absalom dwelt two full years in Jerusalem, and saw not the king's face.*

*29 Therefore Absalom sent for Joab, to have sent him to the king; but he would not come to him: and when he sent again the second time, he would not come.*

*30 Therefore he said unto his servants, See, Joab's field is near mine, and he hath barley there; go and set it*

*on fire. And Absalom's servants set the field on fire.*

*31 Then Joab arose, and came to Absalom unto his house, and said unto him, Wherefore have thy servants set my field on fire?*

*32 And Absalom answered Joab, Behold, I sent unto thee, saying, Come hither, that I may send thee to the king, to say, Wherefore am I come from Geshur? it had been good for me to have*

*been there still: now therefore let me see the king's face; and if there be any iniquity in me, let him kill me.*

*33 So Joab came to the king, and told him: and when he had called for Absalom he came to the king, and bowed himself on his face to the ground before the king: and the king kissed Absalom.*

# Setting Our Fields on Fire



*Brother C. H. Dickerson*

## **God Wants Your Attention**

The Scriptures tell us that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. The main reason that everyone has sinned is due to our fleshly nature. It is a human desire to follow that fleshly nature when one is without God. When one is short of Christ, he is graceless and powerless, unable to resist the flesh. The Scripture lets us know that "grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17). Many people refuse to accept Jesus Christ.

God gave His Son to die an awful death to redeem us and bring us back to Him. Then He sent the Holy Spirit to put us under conviction, to get our attention,

because every one of us needs God. When the people failed to recognize that they needed God, He proved to them that they needed Him by sending things to try to awaken them.

We are living in a day when famine is on every side, not only spiritual famines but also physical famines. Many people are dying of starvation, both physically and spiritually. The Prophet Samuel spoke of the Word of the Lord being precious in those days, or scarce. It is also scarce today. We are living in a time when wars, earthquakes, tornadoes, and other disasters are on every side. These things are to try to get people's attention, to show them that they need God. However,

as people look at things that are happening today, they come up with the idea, "That is just one of those things that happens." My friend, God is using those things to awaken people. He is trying to wake up America. He is also trying to get the church back where it should be, where the glory of God is flowing.

Our text of Scripture tells us that Absalom tried to get Joab's attention, but Joab would not heed him. Backing up a little to 2 Samuel, Chapter 13, we can read that Absalom commanded his servant to murder his brother for raping his sister Tamar, and then he was exiled to Geshur for three years. After that, David had Joab bring

Absalom home. He was permitted to reenter Jerusalem, but he was not allowed to be in the king's presence for two years. Absalom wanted to be restored completely to the former favor that he once enjoyed, so he sought Joab to act as a mediator for restoration to his father David. However, Joab refused to come, so Absalom sent for Joab a second time, but to no avail. Absalom thought of a remedy to that situation: he had his servant set Joab's barley field on fire.

Absalom sent for Joab two times, but he could not get his attention, so he did something drastic. That brought Joab into Absalom's presence. Joab came to Absalom and asked him why his servant had done such a thing. Absalom did it because he wanted to get into the presence of his father, the king, to try to get in good standing with him, so he needed someone to intervene. He wanted Joab to be a mediator to help to restore him to his father.

Bringing this lesson up to date, God is doing everything He possibly can to bring man back in fellowship with Him, because He does not want anyone to be lost. God is so good that He has called men to the ministry to preach the Gospel. He has tried conviction, and He has tried disaster, but most of these things have been to no avail. Sometimes God reaches right down into a family and takes a family member to try to awaken some. Sometimes people say, "I have to get back in church," but it is not long until they forget all about that, and you never see them come.

God is good to each of us, and He is doing everything He can to awaken people. It is not God's will that anyone is lost, but He wills that all come to repentance and be saved. If anyone is lost (more people are going to be lost than saved), it is going to be because they have overridden the saints' prayers and the conviction of the Holy Ghost and done what they wanted to do to satisfy the flesh.

Nevertheless, God wants every sinner to be saved. Also, God wants the saints of God to draw closer to Him than they ever have before.

### **Hearken to the Lord's Voice**

We are living in a careless age. People are backsliding and becoming more careless than they ever have before. God has called and saved people to work in His vineyard. Christian friend, if you are not careful, you will get yourself to the place where you will overlook that. You see, you can enjoy your salvation and fail to carry a burden for the lost and the sick. My friend, God wants the church to be on fire for Him. He wants the saints of God to be fervent and to labor in His service. You can only work where you have been called to work.

We are living in an age when people just want to roam, but there is only one way that you are going to get a heavenly reward, and that is to work where God has called you to work. When you fail to do that, then you are not going to make Heaven your home. First Corinthians, Chapter 12, tells us God has placed us in the body as He sees fit, and we cannot move unless God says so. The only place you can do a work for God is where He has called you. He has not called you for His profit, but for your profit.

We get paid for what we do. God is fair. Psalm 81:10-16 tells us: "I am the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt: open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it. But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me. So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust: and they walked in their own counsels. Oh that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways! I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries. The haters of the LORD should have submitted themselves unto him: but their time should have endured for ever. He

should have fed them also with the finest of the wheat: and with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied thee."

The Lord told Israel to open their mouth wide and He would fill it, but the people would not hearken to His voice; so He gave them up unto their own hearts' lust, and they walked in their own counsels. The Lord would have subdued their enemies had they stayed true to Him. Also, He said He would have fed them with the finest wheat and honey from the rock if they had only stayed true to Him.

Christian friend, God wants to take you through some things to prove you. He wants you to be a witness to this lost and dying world. Sometimes when things get a little on the rough side, people turn away from the Lord and go back to the old life. If you will just stand true and let God have His way, He will subdue your enemies. He said He would take care of them, and certainly He will do that very thing.

### **Becoming Stiffnecked and Rebellious**

God wants you to live for Him and work for Him. If you do not hearken to what God tells you and walk afar off from His presence, then you have lost the fear of God. Are you not afraid to close your ears to God's commandments or His wishes? When you do not do what God tells you to do, you are telling God that you are not afraid to disobey His commandments. When you do that, only God knows, this might be the last time He will ever speak to your heart, and you could go into eternity lost.

Paul told us in Romans 1:28, "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient." We are living in a day when people want an alternate lifestyle. My friend, the only reason we are seeing this is that people do not want to retain God in their

knowledge. They want to have their own way, so God has turned them over to reprobate minds, to do those things that are not convenient. They are going to pay for it, just as Sodom and Gomorrah did. The people of Sodom got themselves in trouble, and America is in trouble, because many so-called churches are recognizing them and the government is recognizing them. My friend, God does not recognize them. You had better not recognize anything that God does not recognize if you are going to please Him.

In general, people have lost the fear of God today. There was a time when God spoke to people, and they would run to an altar of prayer, but today they stand and tremble and even break out in a sweat, yet they say no to God. They get their minds on something else to distract their attention so that conviction leaves them. Well, it might go away and leave them permanently. They cannot get saved on their own terms. God must draw them.

Friend, if you fail to draw close to God and do as He directs, that is rebellion. In fact, Paul wrote in Acts 7:51-53: "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it." He called them a stiffnecked and rebellious people because they would not obey.

In the text of Scripture Absalom had one of josh's most valuable possessions torched, his barley field. I want you to see that one of the most valuable possessions that you have as a Christian is God Himself. We can read throughout the Word of God that people have gone on in their rebellious conditions until they

got to the place where God let them go and gave them their way. My friend, God has not changed His mind along this line.

### **"What Lack I Yet?"**

Matthew 19:16-26 reads: "And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments [if you want eternal life, then the first thing you have to do is keep the commandments]. He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

"The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.

"Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved? But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible."

Many people today do not follow the Lord because of their possessions. When the young man inquired about what he could do to obtain eternal life, Jesus let him know that he lacked one thing and

that he needed to go and sell everything he had. You can read in the Book of Revelation about the Ephesian church age. Jesus pinpointed nine good points about them, but He told them that He had one thing against them. That one thing led them into total darkness. In our day, in this Laodicean church age, Jesus did not have one good thing to say about this age, because it is a lukewarm age.

Many people will not serve God because of pride. They are too proud to walk down an aisle and kneel at an altar of prayer and cry out to God. Others will not serve God because they are rebellious in the home, in the church, in the schools, in the work force, and toward God. God tells them what to do, and they rebel.

Friend, if you ever get to the place where you ask God, "What can I do to be more useful to You? How can I be a child of God?" He will tell you how you can get saved and how to be spiritual. When God shows you what to do, will you turn and walk away because you do not want to do it?

The young man to whom Jesus spoke had many riches, and he did not want to give them up. Now, God does not ask you to go out and sell your home and quit your job, but He does ask you to lay it all on the altar. How many to whom God has spoken refuse to do as He says because of pride and rebellion? However, the Word of God lets you know that day they will seek God but will not find Him.

### **The Furnace of Affliction**

God wants His church to be a gazing stock, so that people can see something entirely different from what is out in the world. He wants our dress standard to be as the Word of God tells us. Yes, you can look in the Word of God and see exactly how you need to dress. Also, He wants our hair, our actions, and our conduct to line up with the Word of God. Then when the world

comes in and hears the preacher preach the Word of God, they can look around and see the living Word of God. The Lord wants us to be a city set on a hill that the world can look upon and see that it is entirely different from anything else they have ever seen. You cannot overlook a city set on a hill.

God also wants His people to be witnesses of how He can change an individual when he or she gets saved. A person can be bound with habits of life, and can dress, and act like the world; but when he kneels at an altar of prayer and seeks the Lord wholeheartedly, he will be a changed man. He will not have the same attitude or the same spirit, and he will be a testimony to show the world that something has happened. When such a change has taken place, one is entirely different. I think it is sickening when people claim to be Christians, yet when you see them out on the street, you cannot tell them from the world. They dress like the world, look like the world, and talk like the world.

The Lord, through the Prophet Isaiah, said in Isaiah 48:10, "Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction [in other words, in calamity and suffering]." The furnace of affliction is where the test comes. When everything is going well, anyone can be sweet. On the other hand, when things go wrong, that is when it takes more power. God's people are going to go through trials. Paul wrote in 1 Thessalonians 3:3, "That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto."

When you go through afflictions, you should not become upset and quit serving God. You are going to go through trials. God has been good to us; nevertheless, He said that He was going to take you through the furnace of afflictions and through calamity. My friend, you need to be prepared for it.

Saint of God, we have something to tell the world. Serving God is

more than just having a religion. It is more than tucking a Bible under your arm and walking down the street. A change takes place in the heart and life. God has the saint as a testimony to this lost and dying world, to show that He can and will take us through. He wants to show the world that someone can help them. There is comfort associated with the cross that God has asked us to bear, or that furnace of affliction. Sometimes the cross may be heavy. It may seem as if the devil has been turned loose on us, but the devil is a chained enemy.

### **Seeking First the Kingdom of God**

Back in Job's day, when the saints went to worship God, the devil went along also. God asked Satan a question. In essence, He said, "Have you considered My servant Job, that no one in the land is like him?" The devil said, "Yes, but You have a hedge around him, so I can't get to him." God said, "All right, you can get to him." My friend, Job stayed true to God.

When the three Hebrew children refused to bow down to King Nebuchadnezzar's image, he had the furnace heated up seven times hotter than ever before. In fact, it was so hot that it burned up the men who threw them in, but God took the heat out of it and delivered them. When Daniel was thrown into the den of lions, God shut the lions' mouths, and they could not bother Daniel. It should be a comfort to know that when things happen, it is only to bring us closer to God. Romans 8:28 tells us, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God." We are going to suffer some disasters. Sometimes things will happen to us, but we need to remember one thing: what happens to us is only to bring us closer to God. Perhaps a neighbor or your children need to be saved. Sometimes things happen to us to bring people to God. When God calls, we should flee to Him

quickly. Too many cares of life and too much pleasure is robbing people of being close to God. However, Jesus let us know that our first requirement is to seek first the Kingdom of God. We read in Mark 12:28-29: "And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all? And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord."

When the preacher preaches, when the Sunday school teacher teaches, and when the singers sing, the first thing you must do is hear. God speaks to people in the singing and the preaching. When He said there is only one Lord, He meant there is just one standard. God has given us one standard, and there is no other.

Verses 30-31 read: "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Loving God is the first and most important commandment, and the second is to love your neighbor as yourself.

The cares of life are going to pass away. John tells us in 1 John 2:15, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." No matter how much you are in love with the things of this old world, one of these days they are going to lose their value, because they will pass away. Too often the Spirit of God talks to people time after time, but they love the world so much that they want to stay there. However, when they see they are ready to pass away, then they get the preacher to pray for them.

Once a man told my wife, "I don't believe that all these church organizations are as bad as what Brother Dickerson says they are." My wife said, "Why don't you go out and see then?" And he did. A

year or so later, his wife called on the telephone and wanted me to come to the hospital immediately. He had cancer, and he was down so low that he could not speak above a whisper. His wife had to get her ear down close to him to hear him say, "Call Brother Dickerson," I went to the hospital, and God assured me on the way that He was going to raise him up. God healed that man, and he went back to work and later retired. He came back to church and testified. He was a witness from then on that there was only one church and one salvation and that the world did not have that to offer.

### **God's Requirements**

My friend, God has some requirements, and the first one is to love the Lord thy God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength. When the Bible speaks of loving God, it is talking about loving the Word of God, or loving the Truth. Today too many people ignore God's summons. We read in Psalm 27:8, "Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek." God is summoning every one of us to seek His face, but many have refused. They do not come when He bids them because of unbelief and ungratefulness. Friend, you need to thank God from the depths of your heart when He speaks to you. Christ suffered a horrible death so that you and I could have this great salvation. People have refused to get close to Him because they do not believe it is necessary. Other people are ungrateful for what He has done. Nevertheless, God is taking measures to make them responsive. God is doing His best so that souls will not be lost.

Often trouble comes to try to get people's attention. You read in our Scripture lesson that Absalom tried to get Joab's attention so that he could get to the king and get back in good standing with him. When Joab's barley fields went up in smoke, that finally got his attention,

and he went to Absalom to see what was going on. The Psalmist warns in Psalm 32:10-11: "Many sorrows shall be to the wicked: but he that trusteth in the LORD, mercy shall compass him about. Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart."

The Bible also warns us not to be like the horse or the mule that have to be pulled and tugged, but we need to let God have His way. God does not allow trials and sicknesses to come upon us to punish us, but to bring us closer to Him or to help someone. God has let people get sick because of a son or a daughter who was not saved. God allows something to happen to some people so that He can bring them down to the place where they will think upon the things of God. God does not do it to punish, but only to get their attention. At times God lets something outstanding happen to get people's attention, not to punish anyone, but to win souls. I have seen people won to Christ because someone passed away.

God wants us as saints of God to live holy lives and to look as God would have us to. We are to copy after the pattern that God has given so that we might win souls and cause people to come to the Truth. Someone once said that diamonds require many cuttings, but every cutting increases their value. The same is true spiritually.

### **Forsake Not God's Law**

The Bible lets us know that we are not to kick against God, forsake Him, or lightly esteem the Rock. Psalm 89:30-32 reads: "If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes." Job said in Job 10:2, "I will say unto God, Do not condemn me; show me wherefore thou contendest with me." In other words, Job was saying,

"Show me why these troubles came upon me."

Our world is plagued today with storms of all kinds. Some places have gotten so much rain they cannot handle it all, and others have not gotten any. Also, we are seeing lots of tornadoes, cyclones, and earthquakes. Thousands have died from these disasters. Once when something happened to David, he got down and asked God why, and God showed him why it happened.

If America would wake up when disasters happen instead of merely taking them for granted and saying, "This is just one of those things," and ask God why, God would show people that they need to do some repenting. God would show America that she needs to get back to the blessed old Bible, not these modernistic ideas that people have today. Friend, you need to be careful of these modern Bibles today that have been written, supposedly so people can better understand the Scriptures. They want to do away with the King James Version. My friend, God said He had His Word written so the wise and the prudent could not understand it, but that just the babes in Christ could.

The Psalmist wrote in Psalm 139:23-24: "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Friend, if God has burned your barley field, so to speak, you need to go to Him and get close to Him. The closer you get to Him, the more firmly you can cleave to Him. You need to seek a foundation that cannot be shaken.

Paul said in Hebrews 12:26, "Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven." God shook the earthly, Babylonian organizations, and He is also shaking the church and getting everything out that should not be in the church. He is going to get rid of everything that is a reproach. God's church is pure.

Paul went on to say in verses

27-29: "And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire."

Paul was letting us know that God is going to shake everything out of the church that has no business being there. He said we will receive a kingdom that cannot be moved. God has a church that is not going to be moved to fit you or

anyone else. His standard for the church is not going to be changed to fit us because we are living in the year 2002. God is still the same, and His law is still the same as it was before the foundation of the world. It has never changed. His Truth is the same, so you might just as well pray that God will give you the grace to walk in the light that He has given in the day and age in which we are living, because you are not going to change it. You need to pray that God will give you the grace to walk in it, because His kingdom is not going to be moved.

I pray that when God tries to get

your attention that you will listen to Him. Friend, you ought to listen to God, because He might not speak to you again. You may say, "Well, I have a small thing that the Lord spoke to me about." There is no such thing as a small thing when it comes to your soul. When God speaks to you and draws your attention to a need, it is not a small matter. When He draws your attention to something, you must either move or lose your soul in a lost eternity. It is either obedience or disobedience.

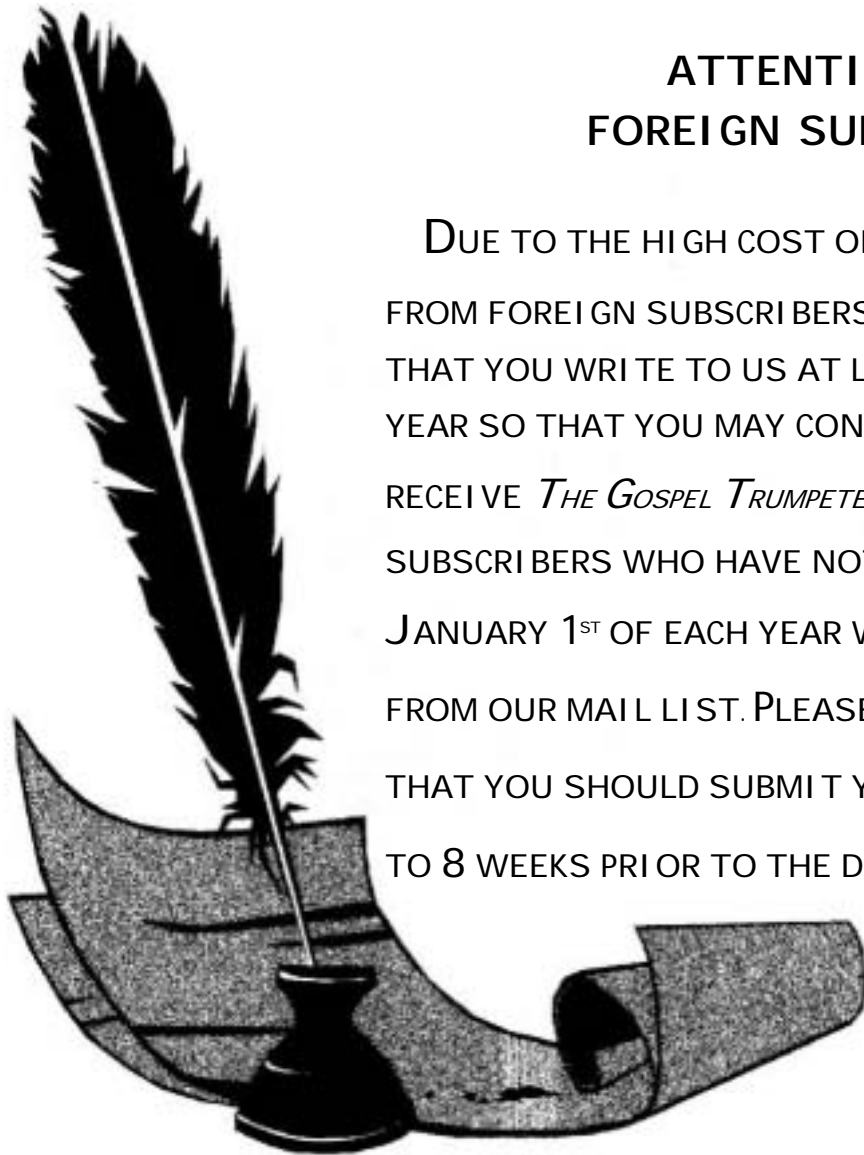
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# Understanding God's Plan

I was passing through Columbus, Ohio, some years ago and stopped to eat in the restaurant in the depot. My attention was called to a slice of watermelon, and I ordered and ate it. I was so pleased with the melon that I asked the waiter to dry some of the seeds that I might take them home and plant them in my garden. That night a thought came into my mind—I would use that watermelon as an illustration

So the next morning when I reached Chicago, I had enough seeds weighed to find out that it would take about 5,000 watermelon seeds to weigh a pound, and I estimated that the watermelon weighed about forty pounds. Then I applied mathematics to the watermelon. A few weeks before, someone (I know not who) had planted a little seed in the ground.

Under the influence of sunshine and shower that little watermelon seed had taken off its coat and gone to work; it had gathered from somewhere 200,000 times its own weight and forced that enormous weight through a tiny stem and built a watermelon. On the outside it had put a covering of green, within that a rind of white, and within that a core of red, and then it scattered through the red, little seeds, each capable of doing the same work over again.

What Architect drew the plan? Where did that little

watermelon seed get its tremendous strength? Where did it find its flavoring extract and its coloring matter? How did it build a watermelon? Until you can explain a watermelon, do not be too sure that you can set limits to the power of the Almighty or tell just what He would do or how He would do it. The most learned man in the world cannot explain a watermelon, but the most ignorant man can eat a watermelon and enjoy it.

God has give us the things that we need, and He has given us the knowledge necessary to use those things, and the truth that He has revealed to us in it is finitely more important for our welfare than it would be to understand the mysteries that He has seen fit to conceal for us.

So with religion—if you ask me if I can understand everything in the Bible, I answer, "No." I understand some things today that I did not understand ten years ago, but if I live ten years longer, I hope some things will be clear that are now obscure. But there is something more important than understanding everything in the Bible—it is this: if we will only live up to the things we do understand, we shall not have to worry about the things we do not understand.

Selected

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## ***When Father Prays***

*When Father prays he doesn't use  
The words the preacher does;  
There's different things for different days,  
But mostly it's for us.*

*When Father prays the house is still,  
His voice is slow and deep.  
We shut our eyes, the clock ticks loud,  
So quiet we must keep.*

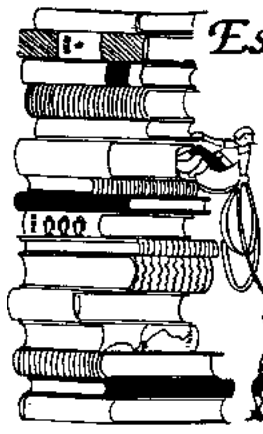
*He prays that we may be good boys,  
And later on good men;  
And then we squirm, and think we won't  
Have any quarrels again.*

*You'd never think, to look at Dad;  
He once had a temper too.  
I guess if Father needs to pray,  
We youngsters surely do.*

*Sometimes the prayer gets very long  
And hard to understand  
And then I wiggle up quite close,  
And let him hold my hand*

*I can't remember all of it,  
I'm little yet, you see;  
But one thing I cannot forget,  
My Father prays for me!*

Selected



*Especially for Young People*

## Almost a Martyr



He was converted at the age of sixteen, and within six months shipped on board a sailing vessel with a crew of twelve. He was the only Christian on board and had previously promised his mother that would meet her three times a day at the throne of grace. To accomplish this, he would go below and feeling that he was not making a satisfactory prayer unless it was audible, he made it a point always to pray aloud. This brought terrible persecution upon him from the sailors. They tried to get him to give up praying, but he would not. They sang and danced around him while he was engaged in his devotion, but he would pray. They threw wood upon him and bruised him, and poured buckets of water upon him, but they could not put out the fire in his soul.

Then the sailors tied him to the mast and laid thirty-nine stripes upon his back, the marks of which he carries yet today. Yet, still he prayed. Finally they tied a rope under his arms and threw him overboard. He struggled and swam as best he could, and when he would take hold of the side of the ship to climb up, they would push him off with a long pole.

At last his strength gave way and, supposing they really meant to kill him, he made a final effort, prayed that God would forgive them, and called to the sailors, "Send my body to my mother and tell her I died for Jesus." He then sank into the deep, and the water poured over him; but he was pulled out and up on the deck. After being worked with for some

time, he came to.

Conviction then began to seize hold upon those sailors. Before night two of them were gloriously converted, and while they were praying down below with the young martyr, the others thought they were up to their persecutions again, and called for them to desist, saying that they had persecuted the boy enough. Inside of a week everyone on board the vessel, including the captain, was blessedly saved.

In a little while the vessel put into Provincetown Harbor, near Cape Cod, on account of an approaching storm. Other vessels gathered in to the number of nearly three hundred. The boy had been conducting religious services every Sunday on board the ship. Unbeknown to him when the vessels were lying at anchor, the captain sent word around that at 10 o'clock Sunday, there would be services on his ship, and a boy would give his experience of how he was persecuted and nearly killed for Jesus' sake.

While the boy was down below, preparing something to say in the meeting as usual, the people began to gather in. They filled the ship's deck, climbed into the rigging, filled every available space, and also sat in boats all around the ship. When the young preacher came on deck, this was the sight that met him. The crew formed a ring around him, and they sang, and he prayed. Then, he look for his text, "Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish." The Holy Ghost began to

work, and after the message an invitation was given for all who wanted to be prayed for to manifest it. In every direction came the response to be prayed for. The work of grace broke out, and people began to get saved, until by careful estimate, there were about one hundred conversions that afternoon.

It did not stop there, for after that, while the vessels lay in the harbor and out on the ocean, vessels would come and those on board would tell of someone being saved. They had the young man's vessel keep their colors at the masthead to distinguish it from the other vessels. People were getting saved, and word kept coming in that on such-and-such a vessel they had a meeting and someone was saved. So, it continued for weeks.

In this boy's experience we have an illustration of how the Holy Spirit may work in convicting power, through those who are wholly surrendered to God, those "who love not their lives unto the death."

We all cannot be great preachers, but we can do some of the little things for our Master. We can pass out God's Word in the form of tracts or through our holy living.

May our God mightily stir up His saints everywhere to do what they can. The time is short and the days are evil. Satan's hosts are exceedingly active in filling the land with that which leads souls down to perdition.

Selected

*Luke 11:27 And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked.*

*28 But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.*

*29 And when the people were*

*gathered thick together, he began to say, This is an evil generation: they seek a sign; and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet.*

*30 For as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation.*

*31 The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and condemn them: for*

*she came from the utmost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here.*

*32 The men of Nineve shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.*

# The Responsibility of Privileges Given



**Brother Esau Brooks**

## **The Greatest of All Privileges**

I want you to focus your attention on verse 29 of the Scripture text where the Lord said, "This is an evil generation: they seek a sign; and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet." It is our privilege to end up as those people did or to benefit from the ministering of the Word of God. Jesus, our Savior, was speaking to those people about the danger of looking for what is not there.

Today everyone is pursuing something, but they do not really know what it is. Those who are seeking riches feel that as long as they can get all the money they

want or need, everything will be fixed. However, once they get some money, to their surprise it does not bring the satisfaction they thought it would.

In the early days of my ministering, I was talking to a young man about choosing the right way. His remarks to me were, "If I can get this certain young woman and marry her, I will be fixed." So he got her, and then he got saved and started to live for the Lord. One day he came to the house and said, "Brother Brooks, I would like to talk to you. It is regarding my family. I am going to divorce my wife. We can't make it."

I said, "Now, just a minute. You are the one who told me just a few

years ago that once you had gotten this young woman, you would be fixed."

"Well, yeah, that was then."

I said, "Do you know what my counsel to you is? You said you were going to be fixed, now you are fixed. Stay with her."

Men and women today are in the dark as to what life really consists of. Friend, the worldly pleasures and the worldly things that Satan is playing up before your eyes are only to deceive you. Somewhere down the road, you are going to wake up to the reality of the facts of life. You are going to want out, but if you are not careful, you will find yourself beyond help from God.

The people in our Scripture

lesson were enjoying the greatest of all privileges extended toward them. They had the Christ of God in person ministering to them, disclosing and revealing the solemn facts of life and the importance of living for God. However, they were looking for greater privileges; that was not enough, they claimed. Therefore, our Savior was pointing out to them that with privileges come responsibility. God help us all to realize and reckon with this fact and take advantage of it.

### **No Other Signs of Deliverance**

Back in Jonah's time, God looked down upon Nineveh and decided that He had had it with them. He called on Jonah to go and tell those people that He would give them forty days, and then Nineveh would be destroyed. At first, Jonah tried to evade his responsibility. He tried to take a boat to another destination, but God wanted that message delivered to the people of Nineveh; so He sent a storm and was about ready to wreck the ship that Jonah was on. The captain of the ship asked, in so many words, "What are you doing down here sleeping when all of us are despairing of our lives?" Then Jonah told them the facts. In essence, he said, "I am the cause of it all. I am a backslidden preacher trying to get away from God." Jonah suggested that they throw him overboard, and they did. When he hit the water, a great fish was ready for him. God gave him a submarine ride in the fish's belly to bring him to himself.

While down in the stomach of that fish, Jonah repented and got saved. He cried out to God, and the Lord spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah out on dry land. Imagine what a picture he was when he hit the land with the sea weeds around his head. He entered the city and warned the Ninevites. He gave them the message from God, and they graciously received it. God is warning people today. He has faithful servants who are

delivering the message from God, but hard heartedness is causing the majority to reject it.

Those Ninevites appreciated having someone come to them with the message from God. They repented, from the king down to the last peasant. The king even called a fast that he made the dumb animals share in, and God repented of the act that He was about to perform. In our Scripture lesson, our Savior was reaching back to those days and times, addressing another people, telling them that Jonah's deliverance and message to the Ninevites was a sign of what God was expecting of them. Today He is expecting the same of you.

As Jesus was speaking to those people, they were lost in this expectation of a great Messiah that would come and deliver them from the tyranny of the Roman occupation. However, Jesus made it known to them that they would have no other sign of deliverance but that which Jonah was to the Ninevites. Now God is proclaiming the same facts to you: "This is an evil generation: they seek a sign; and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet" (Luke 11:29).

You should not read this as something outdated, meant for a people who have long since passed away. Yes, it was meant for them back then; however, God has preserved it and is presenting it to you. No other sign will be given than the sign of the Son of Man. "For as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation" (verse 30). Friend, you need to beware of the serious consequences of lightly regarding the things God is sending your way. They reach back to another example.

### **Giving Earnest Heed to the Gospel**

Jesus stated in verse 31 of our Scripture text, "The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment

with the men of this generation, and condemn them . . ." We read about Jonah and his ministry to Nineveh, and we read about the Queen of the South and her visit to Solomon. Today God is saying this queen and the people of Nineveh shall arise in the Judgment and condemn you if you fail to heed the message of God.

Sinner friend, you are unsaved, and you know you are unsaved; furthermore you know that you need to be saved. The Lord, through the Holy Spirit and the Gospel, has condescended many times to deal with your heart, but what have you said? "Not now; a little later I will get things settled with God;" not understanding that your rejection of Christ will bring about a consequence that you are not going to enjoy. Time is running out for you, friend. Are there truths that you need to measure to? Are there things you need to get straightened out? The time to do it is now. You cannot allow yourself to put it off any longer.

The Bible says that now is the accepted time. Today is the day of salvation. The Holy Spirit warns, "If you will hear My voice, harden not your heart." There is too much hardening of the heart going on today. You are not where you ought to be with God, and when God has witnessed to you, you have hardened your heart. You need to give up the life you are leading. You should not go on with a life of wasted years. What kind of sign are you looking for? God's Word declares, "And when the people were gathered thick together, he began to say, This is an evil generation: they seek a sign; and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet" (Luke 11:29). That means as the Ninevites gave heed to Jonah's preaching, God is expecting you to give heed to the preaching of the Gospel.

God has not missed the mark. You are not living in sin because God is unable to save you, but because you have chosen to attend to matters of lesser importance. If you insist on

ignoring the Gospel of Jesus Christ, you are going to end up in hell.

When Paul wrote to the Hebrew church, he said, "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip" (Hebrews 2:1). Friend, you owe it to yourself, your family, your community, and the church to give the more earnest heed to the Gospel. Why? Lest it should be taken away from you. Are you procrastinating? If you are, you need to wake up! You are walking down a dangerous road. Sooner or later you will arrive at a place where God will take you in hand, but crying out for God to have mercy will be too late. Now is the time to ask God for mercy.

### **Call Upon the Lord While He Is Near**

Had the rich man, spoken of in Luke, Chapter 16, cried out for mercy while he was living instead of in hell, it would have done him wonders; but he was too busy gathering money and enjoying life. It was not until he opened his eyes in hell and saw Abraham afar off and Lazarus in his bosom that he became awakened to his need. Then he cried, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me," but it was too late.

Often people waft until something drastic happens to them before they realize they need mercy. Friend, you need mercy now. You cannot afford to go on rejecting the counsel of God as you have been doing. Things could have been so much better for you and so much better for the church had you been obeying God's Word. It is still left to be seen what all God could do with you if you were fully committed to His ways.

You might go as far as to say that God has been good to you, but what have you been to Him? If you are a sinner, you have no business being a sinner. You ought to be a Christian. Like those people of old, you are still wafting and looking for something, but you do not even

know what you are looking for. Jesus pointed out to those people in our Scripture text that with privilege comes responsibility. When Jonah warned the Ninevites, they did not wait for another or look for another. I do not know what kind of smell Jonah carried with him, but I do not suppose it was pleasant since he had just come out of a fish's belly. The people of Nineveh had no time to notice that. The message that he declared to them got hold of their hearts, and they repented. Friend, that is all God wants from you. In the Acts of the Apostles, Chapter 17, it says that God commands men everywhere to repent. Acts 3:19 says, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." Continuing to pursue a course of rebellion against God is dangerous.

Think about the Queen of the South. She heard about Solomon's wisdom and became fascinated, so she decided to embark on a journey to witness it for herself. She did not have the modern transportation that we have today. She had nothing but a donkey or a camel to ride all the way, but she went. God is saying that the Queen of the South will rise in the Judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them, for she came from the uttermost part of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, without expecting anymore. The Queen of the South and the people of Nineveh took advantage of the privileges extended to them.

Now we have much greater privileges. We are honored so much more than they, and yet people insist on remaining unimproved. This is dangerous. Friend, is your life what God wants it to be? Are you fully satisfied in your soul? If you are not, then why not? God has provided the means for you, and He has extended the opportunities to you. Perhaps you have your job, your house, and your family to look

after, so you feel, "Once I get all of these taken care of, then I will serve the Lord." The antediluvians did so and failed; the people of Sodom and Gomorrah did so and failed; and you need to beware, lest you do the same And fail.

Some are still looking for a sign. We have the Gospel and the Holy Spirit, yet they are looking for more. Friend, are you out of fellowship with God? It is time to turn around and seek the Lord while He may be found; call ye upon Him while He is near. Isaiah 55:7 admonishes, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

You can be a good church member and still go to hell. The people to whom this message was delivered originally were not heathens, but religiously inclined people. Yet, with all their religious inclinations, they failed to take that one necessary step to put them in fellowship with God. The only sign that is going to be given is the sign of the coming of the Son of Man, and we have that all around us. The responsibility to heed the warning is in your hands.

### **The Time of God's Visitation**

Jesus made it very clear that He was their last chance to be saved. To reject Him was to choose to be lost forever. Jesus was not just an ordinary person witnessing to them; He was the Son of God. In Luke 19:10 He said, "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Today you are confronted with the same proposition with which they were presented: to accept Christ or to be lost. There is no other name given under Heaven whereby you can be saved but the name of Jesus. Too many ignore this fact. Though you do not hear people say, "I don't believe this is going to be my last chance to be saved" or "I don't believe this is the last message

I will ever hear or read," it could well be. During a revival we had in Honduras several years ago, on the very first night, after I preached, I felt inclined to walk down the aisles and witness to the people individually and personally. I stopped before a middle-aged individual and began to entreat her, "Come and be saved. Come and give your heart to God." Her reply was, "Not tonight. I am going to get saved, but not tonight." When I insisted, she said, "Brother Brooks, before this revival is over, I am going to be with you all. I am going to get saved." After a few more insistencies, I left. Early the next morning, the telephone rang, and the person on the other end said, "Do you remember that person to whom you were speaking in the service?"

I said, "How could I forget?"

"She is dead."

I said, "What?"

"She is dead. After service last night, she went home and suffered a massive heart attack and died." Instead of that person getting saved before that revival was over, we had her funeral.

My friend, you just do not know how soon it is going to be too late. Therefore, the Bible exhorts you to seek the Lord now. The world is filled with people going by what they think, just as those people back in Jesus' time did. They felt that they should have another chance, so they were crying, "Give us a sign that You are our last chance." He said, "There will be no other sign given than this ministry that I am ministering to you."

Jesus wept as He looked out into the future and saw what was going to befall those people. He said in Matthew 23:37-38: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate."

Jesus said in Luke 19:43-44: "For the days shall come upon thee, that thins enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, And shall lay thee even with the ground, . . . because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation." Dear one, you are at a time of God's visitation, and He is presenting an opportunity for you to get right with Him. Beware that you do not ignore and reject it. This could be your final call.

### **The Goodness of God Leads to Repentance**

The people in our Scripture lesson were putting more faith in signs than they were in Jesus. No doubt, if God had complied and given them another chance, it would not have done any good.

Friend, how long have you said you were going to serve the Lord? How many times have you said you were going to turn your life over to God? What is standing in your way? You are looking at this and that, complaining about this and that, and you are not beholding the goodness of God. The Bible tells us it is the goodness of God that leads to repentance. God's Word declares in Hebrews 9:27, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Solomon wrote in Ecclesiastes 12:14, "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" The Apostle Paul 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."

Serving the Lord is really wonderful! I have had to wonder how anyone could resist this privilege that is theirs. I suppose some would say, "Well, I don't feel anything in that." That is because they are walking too far away from the Lord. Believe me, God is doing

all He can wisely do to get you to see that the best thing in this life is to serve Him. I am glad to tell you that Jesus is the best thing that ever happened to me.

I do not see anything that the devil has that I would give up the Lord for. It is settled with me that I am going to continue to live for God. You see, I love Him, and I love Him because He first loved me. When I was out in sin, heading toward destruction, not even knowing what was good for me, God reached down His mighty hand, got hold of me and lifted me up, fumed my life around, changed me from head to toe, and made a new creature of me. Back then, I did not quite understand what it was all about. However, as the years have come and gone, He has become more precious. Believe me, I would not insist that you give yourself to God if I did not know that it really pays.

I know it is hard, living in the kind of world in which we all are living, to fathom what serving God is all about. Occasionally I sit down and try to imagine what it is going to be like when I can live in a place where there will be nothing but righteousness, where the angels will be my next-door neighbors. I marvel at what a condescension it was on the part of God to grant me this privilege. By His grace, I intend to be true to Him.

### **Now Is the Accepted Time**

Dear heart, let me exhort you not to stay too close to the land, spiritually speaking. You need to reach out and get into the depths of serving God. It is more than a habit of going to church, and it is more than a mere religious exercise. It is a life, it is a joy, and it is a pleasure! I am glad that I got this experience when I did. I would not want to be unsaved today for all the money in the world. I pity the man, though he has riches untold, if he knows not the Savior in his heart.

It is coming around to that day

and time when we all will be convinced, and people are going to wish they had been Christians all their lives. If you are resisting and rebelling, you are going to regret it. Every day with Jesus is better than the day before. I am enjoying living for God. Even if there were not a Heaven to go to, I would still live for God. What God is doing for me and what God has done for me is worth it, even without Heaven. But, bless God, I can look forward to the glorious day when I will join the saints over there, rejoicing in His presence.

Every once in a while I think back on the many people whom I have met since the Lord placed me in His ministry, the many stalwart and valiant soldiers of the Cross with whom I have had the privilege to rub shoulders. They all have gone

on. Sometimes I wonder, "What am I doing here?" But I have not yet completed the work that God has for me. I am steadily progressing toward that end, and I am going to be happy when that day arrives. I am going to be happy when I will be able to wave goodbye to this world. All the heartaches will be ended, all the sorrows will be gone, all the trials will be past, and I will go where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary will be at rest. Believe me, the things you read about in the Bible are real; they are genuine.

Many get so carried away with formalities, religious activities, and the make-believe that they are allowing the devil to play a number on them. Friend, if you will just let go and let God have His way with you, you will never regret it. Mark

8:36-37 states: "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Believe me, you are going to regret it if you do not live for God and meet His expectations.

Dear one, are you going to be satisfied to leave this life as you stand before God now? I beg of you, do not let this opportunity pass. Do not let this chance slip through your fingers. As I said before, now is the accepted time; today is the day of salvation. If you hear God's voice and surrender to His will instead of hardening your heart, you will be happy that you did. May God bless you.

*(Cassette C-4254E)*

*Life with Christ is an endless hope;  
without Him it is a hopeless end.*

# Radio Log



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

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

*Mark 1:14 Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God,*

*15 And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.*

*16 Now as he walked by the sea of*

*Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.*

*17 And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men.*

*18 And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him.*

*19 And when he had gone a little farther thence, he saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the ship mending their nets.*

*20 And straightway he called them: and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after him.*

# Fishers of Men



*Brother Jeremy Hupp*

## **A Divine Call**

In the last few years the ability to take telephone calls anytime has increased dramatically. Not many years ago, cellular phones were rare. At first they were quite costly, but the price has come down to where many people can afford them. Nowadays we have many modes of communication. We have cellular phones, pagers, voice mail, answering machines, e-mail, call forwarding, and call waiting. One way or another, you can communicate with people. You can get a call just about anywhere. However, that is not the kind of call with which I am dealing in this message. There are other kinds of calls, and those are the calls we make to Heaven and the calls that God sends down to us. Although

the calls that we make to Heaven are important, I want to deal with God's calls to each of us. Our Scripture text displays God's call to man, not just to be saved but to be used of Him, to become His tool, available for His use anytime. It is God's plan and desire for each of us to do a specific work to further the Kingdom of God. Keeping a keen ear for God's call is very important so that He can tell us what He wants us to do.

We need to put forth as much effort into hearing God's call as we do into ensuring that we do not miss calls from people. Often we put great effort into making sure that we receive all our calls. I know of individuals who have driven several miles and realized they had forgotten their cellular phone, and then drove back to get it. Saint, how

much effort do you put into making sure that you get God's call telling you what He wants you to do every day? Child of God, you received and answered the call to be saved, but that is not the only call you receive. God sends out a call daffy to tell you what He wants you to do. Too often individuals are so busy on the telephone taking other people's calls that they fail to hear what God has for them to do that day. Being used of God is serious, and it is a serious responsibility to spread the Gospel to other people.

It is God's plan and desire that each of us does a specific work to further the Kingdom of God. Our calling does not stop at being called into holiness. We are not called to live our lives to ourselves. I have heard people say, "I can barely take care of myself." Sometimes you may

feel that way. At times you may think, "I can hardly make it myself. How can I help others?" God help each of us not to be selfish and to pull ourselves into a shell, worrying only about ourselves making it to Heaven and forgetting about others. God is putting out a call to every child of God to be a fisher of men. God help us not to keep this glorious salvation to ourselves.

### **Witnessing to Others**

Church of God, we have the very best. What about this plan of salvation? It is better than any vehicle that you could own or any job that you might have. We have no problem telling people about all our physical blessings, but what about telling them about the Lord, the Church of God, and deliverance from sin? We should be more willing to tell people about the good Lord than a good vehicle, a good meal, or a good job. Think about how much we talk about everything else that is good and how little we talk about the goodness of the Lord. God help each of us to examine where we are.

Saint, you need to have a serious burden for souls. Time is running out. Do you live as if you really believe it? Do you reach out to others as if you really believe it? If you knew for certain this was going to be the last day before Jesus comes, you would be calling everyone you know, saying, "The end is near. You need to get saved." Church of God, you should portray to the world that we have the best. Something is wrong with the Christian who does not want to share this glorious salvation with others. If you claim to be a Christian and cannot tell people about salvation, something is wrong.

Often the devil works through embarrassment. He does not mind your being friendly to people as long as you do not talk about God. Befriending other young people is easy for Christian young people. They can talk to them about sports,

having fun, and other things. Yet, when it comes to inviting them to camp meeting and telling them that you believe in living right, it is not so easy.

Young people follow the example that is set before them in the home. If the parents are not willing to tell others about Jesus, will their children be willing to tell others? God help us to take the opportunities presented to us to witness to people. Why do so many people have trouble telling others about this glorious salvation? They receive the call to holiness, they answer it, and then they stop. However, God's call does not stop at holiness; it continues right on.

Verse 17 of our Scripture text states, "And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me [that is no problem, but it does not stop there], and I will [not 'I might' or 'if I feel like it,' but 'I will'] make you to become fishers of men." God's call to us is not just for salvation. Yes, that is the first step, but He has also called us to be fishers of men.

The phrase "fishers of men" is appropriate, because we are trying to get people hooked on salvation. Getting them to accept God's offer of salvation is not always easy. I am not a professional fisherman, but I have fished quite a bit in my life. When I was a child, we fished about every day. I still fish occasionally. As a young boy, if after fishing for an hour or two, I did not catch anything, I did not say, "Forget it! I am never fishing again." The next morning I would go out with the fishing pole and try again. Sometimes I would do that for a couple of weeks and never catch anything. Nevertheless, I never stopped fishing. Just because I was not catching anything was no reason to give up.

You may ask, "How does that relate to the call to win souls?" It has everything to do with it. When we are fishing for souls, often we do not win anyone. However, we cannot let that deter us from fishing again the next day and the next. Winning

souls is the most important task in a Christian's life. It is not always going to be easy, but do not give up. You need to hang right in there.

### **Marks of a Good Fisherman**

What are the marks of a good fisherman? A good fisherman is patient. Often while fishing, I have watched the bobber float for hours. I knew my bait was there, because I could see it. I would watch and watch. Fishing requires much patience. Saint, just keep throwing out the lifeline and saying, "This is the best way. Come to church."

Sometimes fish bite because they become irritated; it is not always because they are hungry. There may be times when you can get people to come to church, not because they are hungry for salvation, but because you have irritated them enough. They think, "If I go this once, maybe he will get off my back." Keep inviting them. At times you might have to change the hook. A good fisherman knows that if the bait is not working, he should try something else. Instead of inviting someone to church, you may need to tell that person your personal testimony. You can tell them how the Lord delivered you from cigarettes or drugs or tell them how one can live free from sin. You can tell them how God changed your life, gave you a happy home, and gave you joy.

Church, we are fishers of men. Too often we take the same, old, dead minnow and cast it out there for them repeatedly, and then we wonder why they do not want that. When fishing, you need to use a live minnow. The fish are not going to eat a dead minnow. They want something alive. That is how it is in the spiritual. We have to put something alive on the line. The key is to keep working, keep showing people things, and keep giving them little bits and pieces. As fishers of men, we have to get things out there to draw them. It might agitate them; but they might bite

eventually, so we cannot give up. A good fisherman is consistent, patient, and persistent; he keeps working at it. Sometimes he has to keep casting. He might fish all day and not catch anything. What does he do? He tries something that day, and he takes a different approach tomorrow.

Once I was out on the river fishing, and I could see many fish in the water. As I was casting my line, it looked as if I was hitting them on the head, trying to get them to bite. I stood there for nearly an hour without catching anything. I tried changing bait, and I tried using a different hook, but I could not catch anything. Yet, I just kept casting consistently. It is the same in the spiritual. Honest souls are out there, so we must throw out the lifeline. If we throw out the lifeline and they do not take hold of it, we should not say, "Well, forget them. Let's go fishing somewhere else" Do you invite people once and then give up if they turn you down?

Sometimes when I go fishing, the water is clear, and catching fish is easy. Other times the water is mucky, and the bait does not work. Circumstances are different from day to day. If I am going to be serious about it, I have to go a different route to be successful. That is exactly the way it is when we are fishers of men. Some days will be bright and sunny, and people will be receptive to what you have to say. Other days will be cloudy, and people will not be interested in what you have to say. You have to work at it, pray, fast, and be earnest. Your prayer should be, "Let me find something else that will work. Lord, help me to find what they need." We need earnestness in fishing for the souls of men.

When the day seems wasted, the good fisherman learns from his day, and he tries again the next. Proverbs 11:30 says, "He that winneth souls is wise." Sometimes you have to offer different bait. Sometimes it is an invitation, a kind word, a card, or a testimony. You must do whatever it

takes to get the job accomplished. Too many give up after the first attempt. The first time they throw the net in the water and get an empty net, they give up. When you work and invite people and they do not come, it is tempting to say, "I am going to put my energy somewhere else." However, that is not the mark of a good fisherman. A good fisherman always strives to catch that big fish. We should not give up when someone does not seem interested. We need to pray and keep trying.

### **Launch Out Into the Deep**

Luke 5:1-10 reads: "And it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, so he stood by the lake of Gennesaret, And saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets. And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship. Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net.

"And when they had this done, they enclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake. And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord. For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken: And so was also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto

Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men."

Again, verse 5 states, "And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing." How many times have you felt that way? Some pull in the nets, clean them up, and forget it. What did Jesus say? He instructed the disciples to cast out the net one more time. Jesus was teaching them a lesson, and when they obeyed, the nets were so full that they were breaking. What is the lesson? Do not give up.

It might seem as if you cannot catch anything. You might toil all night and catch nothing, but one day you might cast out the net and reap abundantly. That is the example the Word of God is showing us. Jesus Christ was saying, "Throw out the net." When the disciples obeyed, the net was overloaded with fish. Then He said He would make them fishers of men. He was not speaking of catching only one at a time, but of catching many. It is exciting to think that if we will continue to strive and fish for souls that one of these days we might see a harvest that will burst the walls of the church building. None of this will happen if we all sit down with our fishing poles. We have to launch out into the deep. Jesus said to quit hanging around the shore and launch out into the deep.

Why should you launch out into the deep? That is where people are who need help. We need to reach people who have great needs in their souls, people who are in deep bondage. Out in the deep is where you are going to get the net full of people. Too many times it is a little easier to witness to religious people. They are already somewhat in tune to the Gospel. They are not so bold against you, but when you try to tell sinners about Jesus, it is a little different. They might cuss at you, call you foolish, or even hit you. Who knows what they might do? Nevertheless, Jesus is telling us to launch out into the deep and reach

out to people in deep sin.

Before I was saved, I was not hanging around the fringe edges of religion. Church, God help us to be willing to launch out into the deep. One of these days there will be a big catch, to the place where the nets will almost break. Galatians 6:9 says, "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." It is easy to go out and fish for just a little while; however, you can become weary when praying for the same people every day. You should not get weary of inviting sinners to come in. God help us not to faint. If we do not faint, we will reap in due season.

You may say, "I am not a preacher, a pastor, or a teacher. What can I do to reach souls?" Friend, we all have a place in the body of Christ. Although there are different positions in the kingdom, God calls all Christians to be fishers of men. Each member of the body of Christ is a fisher of men

### **"Our Uncomely Parts Have More Abundant Comeliness"**

Every child of God needs to know his place in the body. Too many want to be in charge of the operation, but we all cannot be up in the front. We all cannot be preachers or teachers or pastors, yet God has a place for everyone.

First Corinthians 12:4-23 states: "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of

tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

"For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness."

Because you cannot be up front, does that mean you are not important? No, it is quite the opposite. Again, verses 20-22 tells us: "But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary." Those unseen members are necessary. Preachers and evangelists are important; pastors

are vitally important to the body of Christ. However, the one who can only pray and fast is also necessary. Too often people think the man standing behind the pulpit or the one playing the piano is more important than those sitting in the pews. Without praying and fasting, nothing is going to be accomplished.

Verse 22 says, "Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary." The key word in this verse is seem. In our own human eyes, some may seem to be more feeble, but they are prayer warriors and quite necessary to the kingdom. God is going to bless them abundantly because of their comeliness.

Child of God, that ought to encourage you to be in your place in the Kingdom of God. God knows where you are, because He has placed you there. You are going to receive more abundant honor if you will stay where He has placed you. We each must do our best to stay in our place. Often the hidden parts of the body do a great work. The physical body has many comely parts. The heart, the kidneys, and the liver are all unseen organs, and even if you saw them, they are nothing to look at. Yet, they are working, and they are vital. When I pillow my head at night and rest the outward man, those comely parts are still working, doing their jobs. That is exactly how it is in the Kingdom of God.

The pastor preaches and works hard. Sometimes he has to rest, and while he is resting, others are on their knees praying, doing their part in the kingdom. They are hidden members, but so necessary. Although the pastor is very important, without the prayer warriors and others doing their parts, nothing will be accomplished.

### **Persistence Pays Off**

We all cannot be a Paul or a Peter or a John, but we all can be used of God. Have you ever

considered the people in the Bible whose names were not mentioned? They had no great positions, and no special honor was bestowed them; nonetheless, they were very important. In Mark Chapter 3, they were the ones who pressed upon Jesus, just hoping to touch Him. The Bible does not say who *they* were; it just says *they*. *They* were hoping to touch Him so they could be healed of the plagues upon their bodies. They wanted to touch Him so that the unclean spirits would leave their bodies. We were not told who *they* were, but without those people, there would have been nothing to write about.

Mark, Chapter 4, tells of the great multitude that followed Jesus. The disciples were there, but other than that, we do not know who was there. The Scripture tells us that *they* and the disciples gathered around Jesus, desiring to know the meaning of the parables that He taught them. We have no idea who "they" were, but one thing we do know is that they had a desire to know more about the Word of God.

My favorite example of the *theys* is in Mark 2:1-11: "And again he entered into Capernaum after some days; and it was noised that he was in the house. And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door: and he preached the word unto them. And *they* come unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was born of four. And when *they* could not come nigh unto him for the press, *they* uncovered the roof where he was: and when *they* had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay. When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.

"But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only? And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned

within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts? Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house."

While we have no idea who the *theys* were, we do know they had answered the call to help a brother in need. Again, verses 3-4 read: "And they come unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy. . . . And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay." Their names were not recorded in the Bible, and no special honor was bestowed upon them in the Bible. Nevertheless, they had a burden for their friend or loved one to get healed. What did they do? They tried to press in at the door, but they could not get in. So they went upon the roof, tore up part of the roof, and lowered the man down. By reading the Scripture, the only thing we know is that they had a burden for this man.

Those men were not numbered among the twelve disciples gathered around Jesus, yet they did the greatest work that day. Why? They got someone to Jesus. They had a burden, and because of their persistence, a man's sins were forgiven and he was healed. They could have quit when they tried to press through the door unsuccessfully. They could have said, "We will have to forget it; we can't get through," but they did not do that; instead they pressed.

Church, God has put out a call to each of us today to be a fisher of men. You do not need to have a position in the church to be a fisher of men. I have shown you that there were unknown people in the Bible, people whose names we will never

know until we get to Heaven, yet they did a work for God. They led people to God for salvation and healing. Christian friend, you can do the same thing if you will carry the burden for souls. Too many times people get to the press in the doorway, and it becomes too much. They cannot get through it, so they turn around and go home. They feel, "It is not going to work out." When that happens, you need to jump on the roof and rip through it if you have to. Sometimes you have to try something different.

It is time to become more serious and get under a heavier burden. It is time to quit giving up the first time someone says no. It is getting too late to be weak when God needs you to be strong. You cannot take the easy way. The first time someone challenges you on a Scripture or says something against the church, you should not back away, but try to help that person. That is the time to press on. That is what the men in Mark, Chapter 4, did. When people were holding them back, they did not give up. They went up on the roof.

What is the roof symbolic of? The roof symbolizes a high place. Sometimes you have to go to a high place. You are not going to get there easily. The only way you are going to get to a high place is to get down on your knees. You will have to pray and fast. You will have to pray more than you have ever prayed. Once you do those things, God will take you to a high place. You will be able to rip the roof open and help souls to get into the Kingdom of God. God help each of us to take this very seriously.

Mark 1:17 states, "And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men." Church, let us examine our tactics in the work of winning souls. We all need more help in this area. If you are not praying, fasting, and doing the things you need to do to help souls get saved, then ask God to put a burden on you like you have never had in your life.

(Cassette C-4699A)

[Guest Editorial-continued from page 2]

the kingdom represented in Daniel 2:33 with legs of iron and feet part of iron and part of clay. That was the kingdom in power when Christ, the Stone, came on the stage of action. Daniel 2:34 says that the stone cut out of the mountain smote the image in the feet, which were part of iron and part of day, while this kingdom was in power.

What political entity, or world kingdom, was in power at the time of Christ's First Advent? Luke 2:1 tells us, "And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed." Christ made His advent when Caesar Augustus, the Roman emperor, ruled the then-known world. Therefore, pagan Rome was in power when Christ made His First Advent.

Let us look more closely at that fourth beast, as it reveals a truth to us that much of religion fails to see today. Our Scripture text states in verse 7, "After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth." Again, be reminded that both here and in Daniel, Chapter 2, this iron represents pagan Rome.

Now let us go back even further in prophecy to B.C. 1451. We read in Deuteronomy 28:47-49: "Because thou servedst not the LORD thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things; Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the LORD shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things: and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee. The LORD shall bring a nation against thee from far." Verses 50, 52-53 tell us: "A nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor show favour to the young. . . . And he shall besiege thee in all thy gates. thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughter, which the LORD thy God hath given thee, in the siege, and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee."

In this passage of Scripture, we have an account that is very sobering and astonishing. What was the instrument that was going to commit these atrocities? Again, verse 48 reads, "Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the LORD shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things: and he shall put a *yoke of iron* upon thy neck." What did we find that *iron* represented? It was pagan Roman, and it was the iron in the dream concerning the image revealed in Daniel, Chapter 2. Then, there was the iron in the beast in Daniel 7:7. In Deuteronomy 28:48 it refers to a yoke of iron.

Why is this prophecy important? Because in these verses in Deuteronomy, Chapter 28, biblically we can see what the Great Tribulation is. Described in graphic detail in Deuteronomy, Chapter 28, in B.C. 1451, is a prophecy speaking of how Rome would be the instrument to commit the atrocities that the Bible would call "the great tribulation." In verse 53 we read, "And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body." The famed Jewish historian Flavius Josephus tells us that this was literally fulfilled when Titus and the Roman armies besieged Jerusalem in A.D. 70. He tells of a mother named Mary, the daughter of Eleazar from the country beyond Jordan, who killed her child for food and then publicly confessed it.

Jesus said in Matthew 24:15-21: "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be."

I want you to notice that Jesus employed the phrase "great tribulation." This is where much of religion lifts this term and teaches a future worldwide time of tribulation. However, we must ask several questions concerning this: Is this still a future event? Is this a worldwide event? and Does the tribulation have a seven-year duration as dispensationalists claim? Let us examine these questions. First, is this a worldwide tribulation, as many teach? Jesus said in verse 16, "Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains."

If it were a worldwide, universal tribulation, where could one flee? No matter where one would go, he could not flee. Jesus was the One who mentioned the thought of fleeing, letting us know it was possible and also advisable. If this were a worldwide tribulation, no one could flee.

Second, is it of seven years' duration as millenarians teach? Again, look at Jesus' words in verse 20: "But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day." If it were of seven years' duration, what would it matter about fleeing on the sabbath or in the winter? If it were of seven years' duration, it would take in many sabbaths and seven winters. Again, we can see that this is contrary to what the Scriptures teach. As a matter of fact, Jesus said in verse 22, "And except those *days* should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those *days* shall be shortened." It is not a period of some supposed seven years, but rather it lasted days.

What was Jesus speaking of in this text? In verse 21 He calls it a "great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." When was this to take place? Notice that in verse 15 He referred to it as "the abomination of desolation."

Do the Scriptures make dear what this desolation is? Certainly so. Luke 21:20-24 reads: "And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let

them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the *days* [not years] of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those *days*! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

Jesus said in verse 20, "And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh." Here He referred to the same *desolation* that Matthew penned in Matthew 24:15 when he called it the "abomination of desolation." However, in Luke 21:20 He gives us insight. He let us know it is when Jerusalem was compassed with armies. Now when did this happen? Do you remember the prophecy we read in Deuteronomy 28:48? It happened under the yoke of iron, under pagan Rome. This fourth dreadful and terrible beast that had great teeth of iron was the one that God used to surround Jerusalem. The Great Tribulation took place when Jerusalem was surrounded with armies. It is an historical event, not a future event.

Those armies spoken of were Roman armies. This was in direct fulfillment of the prophecy of Deuteronomy, Chapter 28. Notice how dearly and how closely the historical record mirrors the prophetic account in Deuteronomy, Chapter 28. When we read the historical account written by Josephus, we see how right Jesus was about that terrible event.

Josephus wrote of those fearful days of siege and famine and said this: "Then did the famine widen its progress and devoured the people by whole houses and families. The upper rooms were full of women and children that were dying of famine. And the lanes of the city were full of the dead bodies of the aged. The children, also, and the young men wandered about the marketplace like shadows, all swelled with famine and fell down dead wheresoever their misery seized them.

"As for bearing them, those that were sick themselves were not able to do it. And those that were hardy and

well were to turn from doing it by the great multitude of those dead bodies and by the uncertainty that there was how soon they should die themselves. For many died as they were burying others, and many went to their coffins before the fatal hour was come. Nor was there any lamentation made under these calamities, nor were heard any mournful complaints. But the famine confounded all natural passions, for those who were just going to die looked upon those who were going to the rest before them with dry eyes and open mouths; a deep silence also and a kind of deadly night had seized upon the city. And every one of them died with their eyes fixed upon the temple."

Josephus told the dreadful story of a woman who in those days killed, roasted, and ate her suckling child. He tells us that even the Romans, when they had taken the city and were going through it to plunder, were so stricken with honor at the sights they say that they could not but stay their hands. When the Romans were come to the houses to plunder them, they found in them entire families of dead people. The upper rooms were full of corpses. They stood in such horror of this sight that they went out without touching anything. Josephus himself shared in the horrors of the siege, and he tells us that ninety-seven thousand were taken captive and enslaved, and one million one hundred thousand died.

The Great Tribulation that religion is yet looking for accused in fulfillment of the prophecy in Deuteronomy, Chapter 28, in A.D. 70. Jesus said in Matthew 24:24, ". . . such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." Josephus wrote in his book, *War of the Jews*, "I shall therefore speak my mind here at once briefly that neither did any other city suffer such miseries nor did any age ever breed a generation more fruitful in wickedness than tiffs was from the beginning of the world." Josephus told of bodies being piled five feet deep and of the ground being so full of crosses where the Romans crucified those who remained that there was no room for any more crosses. The Romans had no regard, just as the prophecy in Deuteronomy said, for the young or the old. They used their swords on women who were with child and cut out the unborn babies, threw them up in the air, and

caught them on the tips of their swords in sport.

The atrocities are almost unspeakable. It is no wonder that Jesus called it a "great tribulation" in Matthew 24:21. He said there was never one like it before and would never be another one like it. No wonder Daniel described the Roman beast in Daniel 7:7 as "dreadful and terrible." *Smith's Bible Dictionary* tells us that this desolation of Jerusalem took place on Friday, August 9, A.D. 70, the same day that centuries earlier Nebuchadnezzar went in and took Jerusalem. Why was Nebuchadnezzar able to take Jerusalem and carry away the sacred vessels? The people failed to stand for Truth. Why was the desolation of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 allowed to transpire? Because Jesus came to His own, and His own received Him not.

When we are entrusted with precious Truth, it puts us in an extremely responsible position. Jesus was trying to let us know many truths through these lessons. One truth that we want to get across to you is that each of those beasts represents a kingdom, and that those kingdoms were in chronological sequence, with no splits or gaps. Those beasts were used as a prophetic time line to reveal truths that God, in His infinite wisdom, knew that men would misappropriate and misapply.

I trust that you can see, through the avenue of these four beasts as a prophetic vehicle to get us from Daniel's day down to the New Testament era, that this Great Tribulation that false religion touts as a future event came in direct chronological sequence in our Scripture lesson. It was foisted upon Jerusalem by that dreadful and terrible beast known as the pagan Roman empire. Though those of the dispensational persuasion take those Scriptures and apply them to some future age, when we lay line on line, precept upon precept, and rightly divide the Word of Truth, we can see that the Great Tribulation is not a future event, but an historical occurrence. The Truth of God's Word sweeps away the refuge of lies.

Brother Earl R Borders



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