

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

THE GOSPEL TRUMPETER

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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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Fall 2003 Camp Meeting Report

"The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad." (Psalm 126:3) These words of the inspired Psalmist well describe our sentiments concerning the recent Fall Camp Meeting at God's Acres. The meeting began Sunday morning, August 3, 2003, with a sobering message by the host pastor, Brother Roger L. Decker, entitled, "Set Thine House in Order."

During the evening services different brethren filled the pulpit and brought rousing, stirring messages. Sunday night Brother E. David Stegmeier from Canby, Oregon, preached a thought-provoking message concerning "Our Need of God." Monday evening Brother Ula Bland of Chicago, Illinois, challenged the saints with the thought, "The Vessels of the Lord." During the Tuesday morning service, the Lord moved in a glorious manner and souls were saved during the song service. Wednesday morning we were privileged to hear Brother Joseph Mbui Kibuchi from Kenya, East Africa, bring a message on "Pulling Down the Strong Holds of the Devil." This was a precious opportunity to hear how our brethren in foreign fields deliver the Gospel.

The Thursday morning service was a beautiful reminder of the biblical truth concerning "Forgiveness," brought by Brother Charles H. Ferguson from Phoenix, Arizona. Thursday night Brother E. David Stegmeier used the Revelation chart and delivered a beautiful message on "The Church in Its Present Location." The music portion of the Saturday morning service was presented by the children and the young people. It was followed by a very clear teaching message on "The Spirit of Antichrist" by Pastor Roger L. Decker. All the messages were divinely anointed and ordered in such a manner that they fit each service. The messages and the brethren who brought them cannot all be listed in this short report; however, each one was deeply appreciated and ordered of the Lord. We appreciate ministerial brethren who have an ear to hear what the Spirit saith. The meeting was saturated with a sweet spirit of harmony, unity, and humility among the brethren. I know of two cases where brethren tried to yield to other brethren to fill the pulpit, exhibiting such a sweet spirit of humility.

If you were unable to attend the meeting, I encourage you to obtain the tapes. I also want to encourage you to begin making plans to be in the next meeting. Tapes will never give you the fellowship or the opportunity to see the love, unity, and humility in the midst. The next meeting is scheduled for December 28-31, 2003. Begin making plans now to attend what we expect to be a glorious event.

Ecclesiastes 12:8 Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher; all is vanity.

9 And moreover, because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs.

10 The preacher sought to find out acceptable words: and that which was written was upright, even words of truth.

11 The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd.

12 And further, by these, my son, be admonished: of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh.

13 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.

14 For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

2 Corinthians 5:1 For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house

not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

2 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven:

3 If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.

4 For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.

5 Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.

6 Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord:

7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)

8 We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

9 Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.

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.

Hebrews 9:24 For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:

25 Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others;

26 For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation [When He appears the second time, He is not coming to deal with sinners repenting and receiving salvation; He is coming as a judge].



Four Types of Judgment (Instant, Future, Preliminary, and Final)

Brother Roger L. Decker

Instant Judgment

In our Scripture reading one word that stands out above all others is the word *judgment*. That word in the New Testament means "tribunal," and in the Old Testament it means "verdict" or "justice." Each writer of the Scripture text said

there is going to be one. The Old Testament writer proclaimed it, and the two texts in the New Testament also state the same thing. The word *judgment* is used 294 times in the Bible, mostly in the Old Testament.

Considering the different types of judgment is important, because we all are heading for the final

judgment. When speaking of judgment, there are four different types. First, there is instant judgment, which you can read of throughout the Word of God. Second, there is "future judgment." Third, there is "preliminary judgment." Fourth, there is "final judgment." Often in the Word of God you can read of

God bringing instant judgment. He did not wait a day, a week, or a month, and He did not wait to counsel with someone.

We read in Daniel 5:1-6: "Belshazzar the king made a great feast [that was not something out of the ordinary in those days] to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand. Belshazzar, while he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father [or grandfather] Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem; that the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein.

"Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which was at Jerusalem; and the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, drank in them. They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone. In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another."

In the same hour that the wine touched their lips, God moved on that situation. He did not move by having a loud trumpet blow or by sending in a runner with a message. He just used the fingers of a man's hand. That is all it took to sober the king. God did not have to get violent or fierce or send a hurricane. He did not have it announced, "I am going to send judgment upon you, Belshazzar." No, He just wrote on a wall in the palace where the light was shining the brightest. What happened? Instantly the king's countenance was changed. The Scripture says that his thoughts troubled him. He knew that handwriting on the wall had to be a divine work of God, and he also knew

that anything God had to say was not going to be good.

Verse 7a reads, "The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers." He called for the great men of Babylon, and he even offered a reward to anyone who could give the interpretation of that writing. God was about to bring instant judgment. That message from God was, in essence, "You have been weighed in the balances and found wanting." There are times when judgment is not delayed. Belshazzar's time had come.

Instant Judgment Brought Upon Jeroboam

First Kings 13:1-2 says: "And, behold, there came a man of God out of Judah by the word of the LORD unto Bethel: and Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense. And he cried against the altar in the word of the LORD, and said, O altar, altar, thus saith the LORD; Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burnt upon thee."

Here is a prophecy that he was putting out in the future. Though he was prophesying of something that was to take place in the future, at the same time God moved instantly. The chapter begins with a man and a mission, and that man brought with him the Word of God. Both of those had their origins with God: a man with a mission and the Word of God. The judgment was public. He did not call Jeroboam off to the side.

In threatening the altar, the man of God was letting it be known that this idolatrous worship had come up before God, and it was going to come to an end. This prophecy was so pointed that it named the man who was to bring judgment, and it told what the judgment was going to be. The one who was to bring judgment was Josiah, and he was

going to do two things: "offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burnt upon thee." All of this came to pass many years later.

Second Kings 22:1-2 reads: "Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty and one years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Jedidah, the daughter of Adaiah of Boscath. And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in all the way of David his father, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left."

This is the prophecy that was given by the altar in front of Jeroboam. Second Kings 23:15-18, 20 reads: "Moreover the altar that was at Bethel, and the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, had made, both that altar and the high place he brake down, and burned the high place, and stamped it small to powder, and burned the grove. And as Josiah turned himself, he spied the sepulchres that were there in the mount, and sent, and took the bones out of the sepulchres, and burned them upon the altar, and polluted it, according to the word of the LORD which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these words.

"Then he said, What title is that that I see? And the men of the city told him, It is the sepulchre of the man of God, which came from Judah, and proclaimed these things that thou hast done against the altar of Bethel. And he said, Let him alone; let no man move his bones. So they let his bones alone, with the bones of the prophet that came out of Samaria. . . . And he slew all the priests of the high places [this is the second part of that prophecy] that were there upon the altars, and burned men's bones upon them, and returned to Jerusalem."

The Scriptures let us know that when that prophecy was given (in 1 Kings, Chapter 13), a sign was given: the altar was split and the ashes of the sacrifices were poured out (verse 3). However, that is not

all that took place. Jeroboam went into a rage; he got angry as the man of God cried against idolatry. In his anger he put forth his hand to take hold of the man of God, and as he did that, his hand withered. (You want to watch coming against a man of God.) Jeroboam had ordered his men to seize him, and with his own arm extended, it began to shrivel. Jeroboam knew better than to have done that. You can tell that by what he did. He did not turn to his gods of idolatry and ask them to restore his withered hand. He called upon the man of God and asked him to pray for him, not for repentance or to pray for his soul, but to pray that the use of his hand would be restored.

Often people in the hospital want the preacher to come right away to pray that they will get better physically, yet they have no concern for their souls. They make many vows and promises to come to the house of God and get their souls straightened out, but when they are no longer lying on a bed of affliction, they forget their vows and promises. The Bible says to be a doer of the Word, not just a hearer only.

Instant judgment came upon Jeroboam. When he put forth his hand, it shriveled. Then he called upon the man of God to pray that his hand would be restored. First Kings 13:6 tells us, "And the man of God besought the LORD, and the king's hand was restored him again, and became as it was before." The prophecy of the man of God was carried out to the letter nearly three hundred years later.

More Examples of Immediate Judgment

Another example of instant judgment occurred under Moses' leadership when Aaron and Miriam, Moses' brother and sister, spoke against Moses. Who heard it? The Lord did; He hears everything. God did not even let it get out into the congregation. It only went as far

as God's ears. God moved on the situation before it got out into the congregation, so He struck Miriam with leprosy instantly.

Moses, the interceder for the children of Israel, cried out to God to heal her. Nevertheless, that did not change God's mind. Miriam was struck with leprosy and put outside the camp where the lepers had to dwell. She had to be shut outside the camp for seven days as the Law commanded. The congregation loved Miriam, so they never moved while she had to be outside the camp. When was the judgment carried out against Miriam? Immediately.

Now let us go to the New Testament to read of another instant judgment. Acts 12:1-2 reads: "Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword." In these verses we see that Herod was used mightily of Satan to persecute, kill, and vex certain people of the church. He was not after just anyone. He wanted the leaders of the church. Herod was a real tyrant, killing some and casting others into prison.

Herod loved the praises of men so much that he took glory that belonged to God. You can read in verse 3, "And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.)" Herod was a cold-blooded killer, and he was out to destroy. His philosophy was, "If I can get the leaders of the church, I can wipe out the church." So Herod had James killed with the sword.

Josephus, a historian, wrote about something else that happened, and it lines up with the Word of God. In Acts 12:21 (Josephus recorded this as well), you can read that Herod put on a garment of bright silver, and it was marvelous to look upon. Herod, loving the praises of men, came to the theater before a large crowd of people. In verse 20 of the same

chapter, you will find that Herod was not getting along well with Tyre and Sidon. So when he went to the theater, he wanted to make a big impression, as though he was some god to whom they were going to have to bow down.

In his garment of silver, Herod entered the theater early in the morning, and the early morning sun's rays illuminated the silver. Verses 21-23 state: "And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them. And the people gave a shout [the people stood in awe when they saw his garment shining and heard his voice], saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man. And immediately [not the next hour or the next day] the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost."

Josephus wrote that the worms came right up out of his stomach. Herod died in severe agony and pain, crying out as he died. He knew that he had overstepped when he took glory that belonged to God. He could have rebuked the people and said, "I am not a god," but he took the glory to himself because he loved the praises of men. The Bible lets us know that immediately the angel of the Lord smote Herod.

Dear one, you need to be careful that you do not walk against light. These things in the Word of God were written for our ensamples and for our admonition. Sometimes God brings judgment instantly.

Future Judgment

The second type of judgment we want to consider is "future judgment," which sometimes comes as a result of sowing to the flesh. Often people think that things will continue as they are. They just go along from day to day doing the same sinful things, and they think that nothing will happen. So they partake of a little drugs here, a little

alcohol there, and watch a little filth occasionally. Friend, if you do that, you need to watch out. Future judgment comes from a present sowing to the flesh. There is a time to plant and a time to harvest. Paul wrote to the Galatians in Galatians 6:7-8: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

Some wonder why many things go wrong and reversals come in their lives. They wonder why things suddenly change and tragedy comes. It could be because of the seeds that they have sown. If you plant tomatoes, you know it is going to take a while to harvest tomatoes. Also, you know that when you plant tomato plants, you do not expect potatoes. There is no confusion when it comes to sowing literal seeds. Why should you be confused about the sowing of spiritual seeds? You also know that when you plant a garden in the spring, it is going to take a while to reap the benefits.

In the days of Jesus the Jews had this saying: "Fruit like root, and root like fruit." That is a law that was set up from the beginning. We read in Genesis 1:11, "And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so." Matthew 12:33-35 reads: "Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit. O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things." He said to make the tree good and the fruit good or else make the tree corrupt and its fruit corrupt, for the tree is known by its fruit.

Solomon wrote in Ecclesiastes 11:9-10: "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment. Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh: for childhood and youth are vanity." He wrote in Ecclesiastes 12:13-14: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing [or everything that is covered], whether it be good, or whether it be evil."

Many times in the Scriptures God's prophets foretold of judgment to come. The Book of Daniel is one of the most pointed prophecies in the Bible. Daniel dealt with the seventy weeks, showing us when Israel of old would cease to be God's people. Then in the Book of Jonah, we can read that Jonah gave the message that Nineveh was going to be overthrown in forty days.

Paul prophesied in the Acts of the Apostles concerning what would happen after his departure, stating, "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock" (Acts 20:29). He went on to say that men would arise from within the congregation and draw away disciples after themselves. We know that happened in the morning-time church and has not ceased to reoccur throughout the ages, right into the evening-time church today. Grievous wolves still arise within congregations to draw away disciples to themselves. Saint, you want to watch out for these wolves. They will trip up your walk. Where do wolves hit? They hit right at the feet to bring you down. If they can knock you down, then you are easy prey to be devoured.

Preliminary Judgment

The third type of judgment we want to consider is preliminary judgment, and it comes before the final judgment. The word preliminary means "introduction" or "beginning." It lets us know what is coming; in other words, it is an introduction to what is coming in the future. What brings preliminary judgment? It is the Word of God. Jonah told the people of Nineveh that they would be destroyed in forty days. Jonah was not speaking what he himself wanted to say, but he was speaking, "Thus saith the Lord."

Revelation 14:1-7 reads: "And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God."

"And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." The hour of His judgment *is come*; the Scripture does not say "is com-

ing."

Preliminary judgment occurs when the man of God gets up and speaks "Thus saith the Lord." It helps you and me to prepare for the final judgment. It is the preliminary judgment where there is a breakdown in many areas. God does not want you to sit around and take it easy. He wants to stir you in your soul, so He sends preliminary judgment. It will help you to make it through the final judgment. In those verses in Revelation we can see a picture of the evening-time church and its ministry pouring out judgment on those who worship the beast and his image. God's ministry was saying, "You don't need to fear that which man started, but rather you need to fear God and give glory to Him."

God warned Abraham and Lot about Sodom and Gomorrah. He used the Law to warn Israel of old about what they needed to do to obey Him. God uses the Gospel to warn and to prepare you for what lies ahead. The Gospel takes away all excuses. It brings the Word of God down to every soul. It is an individual message to each person. Some say, "I'm going to follow my husband" or "I'm going to follow my wife." Some young people say, "I will follow my boyfriend" or "I will follow my girlfriend." Would you want to follow him or her into hell?

The Final Judgment

The fourth type of judgment we want to consider is the final judgment. Hebrews 9:27 says, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." What does that tell you? It tells you that the judgment has been set up by God; the appointment has been set up by God. Why did He not leave it to you or me? Jesus knew we would not set it up, so He took care of that. He did not even tell us when it is going to occur. If He were to tell you when it was going to occur, those who are weak would live in sin

until almost their hour to die and then try to repent. Therefore, God does not tell you when it is going to take place.

At the final judgment there will be no mercy, and there will be no excuses. You will not be able to blame others for your condition. If you are doing that now, God have mercy on your soul. Some give reasons for what they do by saying, "Someone else is doing it." No one will be able to say that to God at the final judgment. You cannot deceive God. He is not mocked. You cannot slip around and get by as if God does not see you, and you are not going to get away with something because you think someone else got away with it. No one gets away with wrongdoing.

Second Corinthians 5:10 says, "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." No sin will escape the judgment of Christ. All must give an account. The Jew, the Gentile, the old, the young, the rich, the poor, the religious, the atheists, the preachers, and the teachers—all will be there. We all must give a personal account. At the final judgment no one will be able to stand up for you and say, "Lord, wait a minute! I am a witness; it did not happen that way," because God already knows. He does not need anyone to witness to Him concerning what took place. God does not forget. A thousand years are as a day to God. The good that you might have done will not outweigh the bad.

If you are not clear in your soul, God is sending preliminary judgment your way. I want to remind you of one thing: life is very short, and it will soon be over. For your soul's sake, you cannot afford to wait to do something about your soul. God will help you make it through the final judgment if you will earnestly seek His face. Preliminary judgment lets you know that your sin will destroy you.

When Jonah pronounced judgment on Nineveh, the king did something about it. He proclaimed a fast and the people of Nineveh put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least of them. What happened? When they repented, God repented of the evil that He was going to do to them. That is a picture of the mercy that you can find in Jesus Christ.

The wrath of God is stirred against every sinner. You might not be feeling any judgment from God, but the Bible tells you that God is angry with the sinner every day. If you are living in sin, the wrath of God is stirred against you, just as it was against Nineveh. Such a change came over the king and the people of Nineveh that God said He was not going to destroy them. That is what happens when one comes to Jesus Christ. God repents of the evil He had planned to do to that person.

Are You Prepared for the Final Judgment?

Dear one, if you will turn from your sin and repent, God will accept the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for your sins, forgive you, cleanse you, and set you free from the bondage of sin. Friend, do not go to the final judgment having turned down the Gospel and the outstretched hand of Jesus Christ. He is reaching out to you through His Word, or through the Gospel.

We read in Matthew 14:25-32: "And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear. But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid. And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boister-

ous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased."

Friend, do not look at the depths of your sin, or that which is about ready to take you under. If you will believe Jesus Christ and come to Him, He will lift you up out of sin. He will stop the howling winds of

destruction and put you safely in the old ship of Zion, where the storms of life cannot touch your soul. You need to do what Peter did when He heard the voice of Jesus Christ. Do not stop until you make contact with Jesus Christ. He can lift you out of the quagmire of sin and put you in the Church of God. God wants to help you today.

If you have a need in your soul, you need to be wise and obey God. Things may be going well for you now, but things have a way of

changing. Truth will always come to the forefront. You might not have that much longer to be on this earth, and you do not want to miss Heaven. The final judgment is going to be severe. You need to forget what others around you are doing or what they might say and be concerned about your own soul. You have only one life.

(Cassette C-4964E)



WHAT THE BIBLE CAN DO

The Bible is a book you can recommend. It is really a wonderful book that has accomplished great things and is still working miracles in the lives of those who read it. Here are some facts of what it did in a prison:

There was in one of the cells a man who had been five times convicted of burglary. He was most troublesome, and the prison punishment and the chaplain's warnings and persuasions seemed to have no effect whatever on his hardened conscience. On one occasion the chaplain was going round the cells, and when he came to this one, he was wondering what he would say. Opening the door he greeted him by name and, in a cheery tone, said: "I'll tell you what is the matter with you, you want making new inside."

The remark seemed to strike the prisoner as a good joke, and he answered, "Well, sir, I think you are about right." The chaplain was rather surprised at this answer and asked him if he knew how it could be done. "Not likely," he replied. The chaplain said, "But you could. Listen to this," and read to him that verse in Ezekiel 36:26, which says, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh. . . ."

The prisoner admitted that would be making a new inside, but that it was not possible for him. "You are wrong, my lad," answered the chaplain. Then he told

the prisoner that he knew men who had been so changed and reminded him that the words were God's words. He handed him his own Bible, and turning down the leaf at the third chapter of John's Gospel, left it with him to read for himself.

Three days later he saw the man again and was struck with the change in his face and manner. "What is it?" he said. The prisoner replied, "What is it? It is the Book!" Then he told how he had read the verses over and over, and every time they seemed to be more wonderful than before. Then there came back to him recollections of what he had heard when he was a boy and his bitter, hard heart was broken. With prayers and tears he cried for mercy and soon found forgiveness though the blood of Christ.

Now for the change—the harvest of the little seed. Whereas he had been a hopeless case and a constant anxiety to the officials, now he was willing to do anything for anybody. One day he remarked: "I'm glad my sentence is a long one, because the prison is the happiest place I have found on earth."

"Is not my word like as a fire? said the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces" (Jeremiah 23:29)?

Selected

Psalm 78:1 Give ear, O my people, to my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth.

2 I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old:

3 Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us.

4 We will not hide them from their

children, showing to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done.

5 For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their

children:

6 That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children:

7 That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments.



Upon What or Whom Is Your Faith Set?

Brother E. David Stegmeier

Our Security Is in Our Obedience to God

Our Scripture text reads in verse 7, "That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments." I thank God that my faith and confidence are in Almighty God. He can help us to win every battle. God has never known defeat, and He never will! We are serving a victorious God. No matter what happens to our nation, we are serving a God who will never fail. I recommend Him to everyone.

Our nation has undergone a very difficult time since the terrorists attacks that hit the World Trade

Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. on September 11, 2001. There has been a shroud of uncertainty, sadness, and gloom over the people. It was a wake-up call for this country. It is high time for people to awaken and do something about the evils in this country. In times like these we need something to which to cling. Many are looking for someone or something to cling to for support. I am glad that my support is in Almighty God. He has never failed me, and He never will.

As individuals, as congregations, and as a nation, our success or failure depends upon what we are trusting in. I am clinging to God

more strongly than I ever have in my life. I have trusted in God all my life, but I am doing it in a greater way, because I need God now more than ever. Our nation needs God. When disaster strikes or we are facing a crisis, we need Someone to hold on to or something to hold us steady. Human beings, machines, and governments fail, but God *never* fails. Friend, what are you clinging to?

My greatest desire is to do what Jonathan did for David. When David was going through a very difficult time, Jonathan met David to strengthen his hands in God. I trust that your hands will be strengthened in the hands of God. Some

people feel a real void or an emptiness when disaster strikes, but that is not so with the child of God. Do you feel an emptiness in your life and heart? The only One who can fill that vacancy is Jesus Christ. You need to reach out to Him. So many people are reaching out to material things such as alcohol or drugs to relieve their helplessness. A saint of God draws closer to God. God is reaching out to people in all kinds of situations, personal tragedies, sorrows, sicknesses, and death. He is always there, and He is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

Many things are going on in our nation. Our greatest security is in God. America needs to clean up her act. I love our country. I am not speaking against her, but there are some things we need to change. Ultimately, our security is in our obedience to Almighty God! It bothers me when I see people miss service after service and take it so lightly. They are just inviting disaster or tragedy. We need God's approval. There is One I am working very hard to please, and that is God. The universal atmosphere is one of tension and uncertainty. There are many godless ideologies that permeate this world and that war against Truth. We need to stand stronger, taller, and more steadfast than we ever have. Church of God, we have the Truth, and I am working really hard to get it out to others.

The Importance of Living According to God's Law

During World War II, a very dear saint of God wrote a song that has been such a blessing to God's people. The name of that song is, "In Times Like These." What a help it was to the church when she wrote that song during those dark years. Church of God, we have an anchor. Friend, do you have an anchor? Are you steadfast in the storms of life or do you run, looking for some shelter or help? That anchor is found in God. He can keep you steadfast and

strong, and He can help you to keep a good, positive outlook on life.

In our text of Scripture in Psalm 78, the author was encouraging us to teach our children diligently concerning the importance of living according to God's law. Parent, you have a great responsibility and a big job on your hands. You need to remind your children that their strength and your strength are in obedience to God. You need to rehearse the wonderful things of God with them. In my home I like to rehearse with my children repeatedly the times when God came to our rescue, healed their bodies, and helped us.

I began to trust in God at an early age. I was taught to trust God for the healing of my body. As a small child, I had a bad appendix, and my parents asked me, "Do you want to go to the hospital or do you want Brother Watson to pray for you?" I said, "I want Brother Watson to pray for me." When our pastor prayed for me, God touched me instantly, and I have never had a problem with it since.

We need to have faith in Almighty God. He will never fail us. He has never failed me, and He will never fail you. Have faith in God. We need to teach our children to place their faith and trust implicitly in God.

Deuteronomy 6:4-5 says: "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD [there is one faith, one God, and one church]: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." Do you love God with all your heart? Is there a rival in your life? Is something working to steal away your affection for God? Your affection ought to be in God. Moses said in verses 6-7: "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, [Are you doing that diligently? If not, your children are hearing what you are saying, and it will have a tremendous effect on them. You may

be sealing their doom in hell. Some things stir me as a pastor. One of them is disrespect. We are to teach our children respect. We should especially teach them to show great respect toward the pastor, because in essence, we are teaching them to show respect to God.] and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."

Practice and Teach Godly Principles

When you are driving your children to school, their music lessons, or wherever, you should talk to them about the principles of God. Do you have family worship? You ought to have family worship with your children. Also, you ought to go to the house of worship whenever services are being held. You need to take advantage of every opportunity to teach and instill in your children basic, godly, Christian principles. You can find no greater principles by which to live than those taught in the Church of God. Deuteronomy 7:7 states, "The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people." God has always had a remnant of people who have been true to Him. As we teach our children, we need to encourage them to place their hope and confidence in God. He should be the anchor in their lives. We all need an anchor. Do you have an anchor? How steadfastly are you attached to it?

The Word of God states in Romans 10:17, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." The end of all spiritual teaching and singing should be to increase your faith in God. Each day you should be further up the road spiritually. As you instill biblical principles in your children, they will acquire more and more faith.

One songwriter penned a beautiful hymn entitled, "The Solid Rock."

This song has a powerful message. It reads:

*My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and
righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.*

*When darkness veils his lovely
face,
I rest on his unchanging grace;
In ev'ry high and stormy gale,
My anchor holds within the veil.*

*On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand,
All other ground is sinking sand.*

*His oath, his covenant, his blood
Support me in the whelming flood;
When all around my soul gives
way,
He then is all my hope and stay.*

*When he shall come with trumpet
sound,
Oh, may I then in him be found;
Dressed in his righteousness alone,
Faultless to stand before the
throne.*

That is not merely poetry, but it ought to be the desire of every Christian. Jesus will never forsake you. Sometimes you may feel as though you are standing alone, but *stand*. God will reward your steadfastness.

The Importance of Retaining God's Word in Your Mind

Our Scripture reading reminds us of the importance of storing in the memory thoughts of God, His works, His Word, and His way. We need to store these things in our minds. There is nothing that I would rather read than the Word of God. It is so powerful and so wonderful, and it is truly the apex when it comes to works of art. There is not a flaw in it.

Tragedy can open a door of opportunity. God is giving the church some opportunities. Let us

take advantage of them. We are saddened and deeply grieved by the terrible, horrific situation that occurred on September 11, 2001, yet God allowed it. He is still in control. When people forget God, His Word, and His ways, they are going to suffer.

As we retain God's Word in our minds, it will guide our actions in the path of obedience. When I was in the military service, I remember asking God, "Please help me to live a clean, holy life throughout my military experience." One Scripture that was so good for me was, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." Another Scripture in Psalm 19:14 says, "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer." In the service many smutty stories were told, and sometimes things went on that were not good. I kept saying, "God, help me. Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer."

As you struggle through emotional darkness, you ought to go to your knees. I believe that God wants the people of our nation on their knees. Our nation needs to fall to her knees. People need to be reminded that it is futile to trust in military might and weaponry. Our trust and our hope needs to be in God.

God is against trusting in physical might and physical things. This is a principle that you can read of in God's Word. Isaiah 31:1 reads, "Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help. . . ." Every one of us should get our help and direction from God. We help one another, but our direction in the Church of God should come from God. He is still on His throne, and the Holy Spirit is still doing His office work.

Isaiah 31:1 tells us, "Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many; and in

horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the LORD!" This is not an antiquated Scripture; it is up to date. We all need to look to God for help. Our country needs to trust in God and not in modern weaponry or unmatched military strength.

Have Faith in God

According to *The World Book Encyclopedia*, on July 30, 1956, the United States adopted these words as our motto: "In God we trust." We all know that moves have been made over the years since then to take God out of everything. That angers God. If that is your motto, then you need to live by it. In what are you trusting? To what is your hope anchored? The strongest weapons that we have as a nation are prayer and having faith and confidence in God.

If you are obedient and where you ought to be spiritually, God will fight your battles. You need to work harder than ever to be more obedient. You may ask, "How can I become more obedient?" Sometimes God will show you more areas in your life to measure to. Sometimes people have come to me and asked, "How can Sister So-and-So get by with cutting her hair?" or "How does Brother So-and-So get by with sleeping in church?" My answer is, God will bless individuals according to their level of obedience. You need to do what is right, and then God will bless you until you cannot contain yourself. God will bless you and your children according to your obedience. Therefore, you must work hard to obey God, and that also means that you must obey your godly pastor and respect him. You should not allow your children to call him by his first name.

During the days of Zerubbabel, when he had the task of leading the remnant of God's people back to the beloved city of Jerusalem to rebuild the temple, they went with some fearfulness and anxiety. However,

God sent a message to Zerubbabel through the Prophet Zechariah in Zechariah 4:6. Zechariah wrote, "Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts." In the center reference of some Bibles it says, "Not by armies, nor by power."

How is it in your life? Are you steadfast? Are you strong in the situations of life? To what is your hope attached? In Mark 11:22 Jesus said, "Have faith in God." In other words, trust God for the strength that you need every day to live a godly life; draw from Him the strength that you need every day to live a sinless life. You need the grace of God to cope with all the problems of life and to find in Him an anchor to hold you fast in the time of tragedy and the difficult places that you may encounter. Have faith in God, and He will take you through every situation of life.

How Secure Is Your Anchor?

Daniel had his hope anchored securely in God. He ignored the king's injunction to refrain from praying to the God of Heaven and seek only Him for help. The Bible says Daniel opened his window,

knelt down, and prayed toward Jerusalem, giving thanks to God. He went on living as he had always lived in that difficult time of life. Because Daniel stood true, a whole nation turned back to God. The king said to Daniel, in so many words, "Daniel, the God in whom you trust has delivered you from the lions. Now hear me nations and languages, let all people everywhere, worship Daniel's God." Dear one, stand for God. You may turn a family, a community, or even a country back to God. God is depending on the Church of God. We have the message for our day. When the Hebrew children stood true, Nebuchadnezzar said, "There is no other god that can deliver after this sort." There is no other god like the God of the Church of God. He stands by those who set their hope in Him.

God will keep you if your hope is set and anchored in Him. You will never be disappointed, dear one, if you put your trust in God. Whenever a person or a nation outgrows the need of God, tragedy is around the corner. I tell God every day, "God, I need You." Without Him we can do absolutely nothing. If you become too self-reliant and think you do not need to seek God's wisdom, His help, His grace, or His strength, you are setting yourself up for tragedy. Too many people in our


nation think, "We do not need God's help anymore." As a nation, we are setting ourselves up for terrible tragedy.

In closing, I ask you, "In what is your hope anchored? How strong is that anchor?" Christ should be the center of your faith, and He should be your comfort, your inspiration, and your all in all. Is He?

In times like these, you need an anchor; you need a support. Do you have that in your home? Your children need an anchor. You ought to instill in your children strong principles, because the strongest teachers of your children are the church and the home. Church of God, we have a big job.

Are you yielding yourself fully to God? In some areas of your life, are you drawing back and not really giving your all? You need to yield yourself fully to Him and anchor your hope securely to Him. We do not know what the future holds, but if we will draw close to Him and hold more firmly to Him so that our anchor is secure, He will keep us and watch over us. Just as a good father watches over his children and takes care of his children, God takes care of us. Do not get out from under His umbrella of protection.

(Cassette C-4741E)



Nothing lies outside
the reach of prayer
except that which is outside the will
of God.

Matthew 19:27 Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?

28 And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

29 And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.

30 But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first.

Matthew 20:1 For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard.

2 And when he had agreed with the

labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard.

3 And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the marketplace,

4 And said unto them; Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way.

5 Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise.

6 And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle?

7 They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive.

8 So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first.

9 And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny.

10 But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny.

11 And when they had received it, they murmured against the goodman of the house,

12 Saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day.

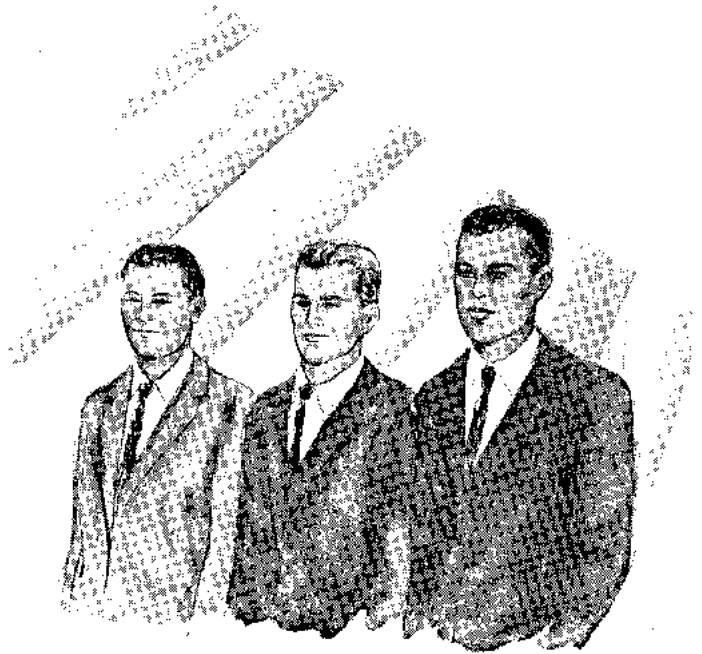
13 But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny?

14 Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee.

15 Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?

16 So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.

Many Are Called But Few Chosen



Brother Allen Polston

God Is a Just God

As Christians, we must be perfect as our Heavenly Father is perfect. There is no unrighteousness in Him. We cannot do anything that is

a violation of God's will in our lives. God is perfect and holy. His ways are just and true. Isaiah 45:21 tells us that God is "a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me." The Lord is just in His doings, and

He is equal. No one can say, "God has done me wrong." The enemy of souls may try to get people to *think* that God has done them wrong. I have heard people make some very foolish statements along that line,

but no doubt it was due to their lack of understanding. The fact of the matter is, God is a just God, and His ways are perfect and complete.

Revelation 15:3 says, "And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints." God's ways are fair. He does not treat anyone in a wrong manner.

In Matthew 19:29 Jesus said, "And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life." He did not leave out anyone, but He made everlasting life available to whosoever will come and yield themselves to Him.

When the Lord looks down upon mankind, He is no respecter of persons. The Bible lets us know that every man will receive according to the deeds he has done in his body. Any person who will forsake everything to serve God (which is exactly what He requires) will receive a blessing from it. However, one must forsake all. There is not a much closer bond than a man and his wife. When they are truly joined together by God, that is a wonderful relationship. It is a blessing, yet one must be willing to put God before even that relationship. God has to take precedence above all earthly relationships. Jesus let us know that everyone who comes God's way will be richly rewarded.

Peter said in verse 27 of our Scripture text, "Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?" Jesus was following up on Peter's statement, and He was bringing it down to help people understand His divine plan. God has a divine plan, one that we need not interfere with, because it has already been established. It is working, it is successful, and it will do the job that it has been sent to do. To try to med-

dle with God's plans or to try to rearrange them is senseless. The only thing we need to do is gain an understanding of them and conform to them.

Upholding the Truth

In our Scripture reading we find that Jesus began to respond to what Peter had to say. There is a human tendency in us that wants to know what we are going to get for our labors and our efforts. Peter asked Jesus, "What shall we have therefore?" Jesus' first reply was, "Verily [or truly] I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." In other words, He was saying that the time was coming when the Spirit of God would be given from Heaven. He said it was going to be a time of regeneration, a time when men could be saved. Then He said when that time comes, those who have followed Him would become kings and priests.

The Bible lets us know that the saints shall judge the world. This is not to say that we set up a tribunal and begin to judge people in that sense. It means that by living the Truth, we place judgment on the way men and women are living. Our standing for the Truth and being faithful to the cause of God puts judgment on people who are not in the Truth. When we stand for what is right, that puts judgment on those who are standing in the wrong, and it might cause them to become convicted and to repent of their sins. A song in our Evening Light hymnal, entitled, "Glorious Peace" says this: "*I came to Jesus repenting, Confessing my ev'ry sin, My heart's door swung wide open, And glorious peace flowed in.*" That is the reason we stand for what is right.

We should not be wishy-washy and fail to uphold the Truth. If we were that kind of people, we would fail to do what God wants us to do.

He wants us to stand for what is right. He does not want us to sweep things under the rug, so to speak, and let everyone do their own thing. He wants us to stand for the Truth. By doing this, we place judgment on those who are living in error. By that means, it may be that we can help to save a few.

"What Shall We Have Therefore?"

Peter inquired of Jesus, in so many words, "What is going to be our reward?" In essence, He said, "You are going to sit on the twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." He was bringing the understanding to the disciples that they were going to be the first ones to stand in this glorious Truth that we are still standing in today. This Truth is glorious, and it has been glorious all down through the years. It has produced the same experience of glory, even in this day and time. It is a wonderful, blessed Truth! It is something that is great to live and uphold, even with the opposition.

Why were they to judge just the twelve tribes of Israel? Because the Gospel was to the Jew first, and then to the Gentile. Jesus let them know they were going to have that position, but He knew that was not what they were looking for. We ought to count it a great privilege to be able to stand in this present Truth. Church of God, we ought to be thankful that we have understanding on this evening-time message. It is a privilege to know this Truth and to stand for this Truth. We ought to be glad for what Jesus has done for us and for what God has revealed.

Though I am not sure why some things are the way they are, I am enjoying this Truth. It is blessed and wonderful to be clean through and through and to have the understanding of the Revelation and the many doctrines. That alone ought to be a real reward.

Jesus went on to say in verse 29 of our Scripture lesson that every-

one who has forsaken houses, lands, brethren, sisters, father, mother, wife, or children for His sake is going to receive a hundredfold, and the benefits do not stop there. That would be enough. After all, we once worked against Him and helped nail His Son to the Cross, yet He is going to do that for us. Then He went further to say that we can inherit everlasting life. What a wonderful blessing that is! Saint, if you really will keep fresh in your mind what God is doing for you and what He has done for you, it will really help to keep you encouraged and on fire for God, which is what you need to be. He has done so much and blessed us so much.

Jesus went on to say in verse 30 of the lesson text, "But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first." He began to introduce something here; therefore, I felt that it was necessary to continue the study into Chapter 20 so that you might understand it as God would have you to. He began to explain His Kingdom, or His divine setup of things. As I have already said, He has divinely established this, so you need not think you can change it, because it is not going to change. *You* need to change and adhere to the Gospel; then you will be much better off.

When Jesus began to talk about the Kingdom of Heaven, He gave an example. In this example He said that people who had been hired to do a work at different times along the way, when it came down to the last, they all received the same thing. He was not talking about Heaven in eternity. He was not dealing with where we will go beyond this life if we die in the Lord. One thing for sure tells me that: this Scripture text tells of people who murmured, and those who murmur are not going to make it into God's Heaven.

In this parable Jesus was telling about the Kingdom of Heaven, or the Church of God, right in this present world. He was putting on display His church and the qualifi-

cations for His church. I want you to know what it takes to get in and what it takes to stay in. I enjoy life without condemnation and guilt being present! The devil is always trying to slip around to seduce us and deceive us to get us back in sin.

The First Shall Be Last, and the Last Shall Be First

In our Scripture lesson verse 30 lets us know there is no chain of command as far as one being exalted above another. You would think that the first ones would receive what is coming to them first before any others, but Jesus said, "But many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first." In other words, He was taking away any preeminence. He was taking away something very human, and that is the idea that "I am first. You can't have my place. I have done more." This is very human, but God has the ability to override what is human and natural. His power and His Spirit can override it and give the ability to overcome that.

Some people do not believe that anyone can live free from sin. One of their cries is, "Everyone is human. You can't help but sin here or there a little." I am glad that God gives us power over even that which is human and that which is natural. Human thinking has a tendency to lean toward an expectation of more or a desire for more than others.

In essence, Peter said, "Jesus, behold, look in my heart and life." Friend, if you open your heart to God and say, "Behold," He will begin to show you some things. Too many people say, "Look, God," and then they try to cover up some things in their lives.

Peter said, "Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?" Jesus looked deeper than what Peter realized and began to point out something that Peter did not realize. God requires that you forsake all. Everyone who forsakes all will receive blessings in this life. He will get to

uphold this blessed Truth and be a vessel that carries the message of salvation to others. He will also receive an hundredfold and everlasting life; but he must forsake all.

This lesson reveals another area that we have to forsake besides that which is tangible. He dealt with something that gets a little deeper than you can see with the natural eye, but God can reveal it to you. In Matthew, Chapter 20, He was tearing down the preconceived notion that the first is going to be exalted above others. He used the most common thing that we would expect to receive more from. Would you go out and work more hours tomorrow on the job if you were to receive the same pay as one who worked fewer hours? Suppose you were to clock in at six o'clock in the morning and work hard all day long and someone else were to come straggling in about three o'clock in the afternoon and put in an hour or two, yet he was to receive the same pay. Undoubtedly you would be upset. You could have been with your family or resting in bed or doing other things.

Now, God does not expect you to go out on the job and work longer hours and not receive any more pay than someone else. That is not what He was dealing with. He was using that concept to bring a spiritual lesson, one that reveals something that you must forsake if you are going to follow Jesus. What is the spiritual lesson? Those who were first expected more than those who had come along later. They were placing emphasis on the fact that they had been there longer and that they had worked more than others. In the secular world on the job, that is a legitimate argument, but in the Church of God, it is not a legitimate argument at all, because we must remember that without Jesus we can do nothing. It is only through Him that you can do anything, whether it is to work for one hour or all day. You must not fail to remember this fact: He is your strength, your power, and your ability.

"Not by Might, Nor by Power"

According to the Bible, one's own works of righteousness are as filthy rags. I do not keep filthy rags around. When they get filthy, I toss them out. When I have used rags to change the oil and wipe down the motor, they are grimy and filthy, so I do not keep them. Jesus made it clear that it is only by God that we can do what we do. First, He calls us, next He empowers us, and then He directs and guides us. Also, He encourages and corrects us. Even the great Apostle Paul said, "But by the grace of God I am what I am" (1 Corinthians 15:10). Zechariah got a revelation in Zechariah 4:6 when he said, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts." God is the One who enables and empowers us to do what we do.

Acts 17:28 says, "For in him we live, and move, and have our being." We move about because God makes it possible. Any positive characteristics that we may have are because God has given them to us. Some people feel that because they have certain abilities or because they are successful in a certain area that they should be exalted a little more than someone else. The most obvious characteristic for some might be physical beauty or wealth. Many times people think they really are something because they are beautiful or because they have a good physique. Others might have some other qualities that they excel in. In the worldly aspect, those qualities may cause them to gain more recognition or to climb a little higher up the ladder of success. However, in God's church those things do not amount to anything as far as making Heaven your home in eternity.

You may feel that certain qualities should cause you to be exalted above another fellow, but those things do not make any difference with God. Those things are not going to cause you to receive a special position with God. Whether you are living in a mansion on a hill or a

little shack, it is not going to merit you any more favor from God. People can get very mixed up along these lines, thinking that money, popularity, position, or family name should elevate them. Jesus said the first will be last and the last will be first. The richest individual can be just as saved as the poorest, and the poorest can be just as saved as the richest. The important thing to God is whether or not you are humble. He has grace for the humble. God is interested in those who humble their hearts and yield their lives totally to Him.

Fleshly Desires

There is order to God's church, and God has ordained that a pastor oversees a congregation. The pastor is in charge. God has called him to lead and guide a congregation spiritually. No other pastor has any business coming in and interfering in the affairs of another congregation.

The desire for elevation is a fleshly desire, or a human desire, that tries to work in our lives. We all have a flesh. The fleshly desire of wanting preeminence can really become a problem, because it is not necessarily something that others can see. When somebody lets his family stand in his way and keep him out of the services and keep him from really living for God, the pastor can preach and counsel with him, "You must not allow your family to stand in your way." However, when a spirit begins to work to cause one to feel that he should be exalted, sometimes it is hard to detect until it has done a destructive work. That very spirit is working on many people in the world today, and it has caused many problems around the church.

Why do some people begin to feel that they ought to receive more recognition than others? Maybe it is because when they preach, the altars are filled. Perhaps it is because their congregations have grown by leaps and bounds, so they feel that

they have really been successful. Friend, it is only by Him that you can even stand upon your feet. It is only by the help of the Lord that you are able to do what you do. That is the reason you should not allow that spirit to work.

Someone may say, "Well, I have forsaken all, and I have really done a lot." That is how Peter sounded when he said, "Lord, behold, we have forsaken all. What are we going to receive?" You see, that same thing was beginning to work in him. Today it is still trying to work in people's lives, trying to get them to measure their success by something they see or feel.

Jesus said, "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign" (Matthew 12:39). If you are looking for a sign to measure your success or to make you feel that you ought to be recognized, you are on the wrong track, friend. Jesus got really plain when He said an evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign. If you start looking for something to measure your success, when you start seeking a sign, that is a sure indication that your faith is at an all-time low. When you have faith in God and your faith is strong, you do not have to look for any signs. If you are really living by faith, then you do not seek after outward signs. You are trusting in God.

Surrendering Your All

Living by faith in God requires that you surrender your all. You cannot really live by faith and say, "I believe Jesus died and gave His all for me," and yet hold back. It is not possible. That is not real faith. Real faith in God is the result of a person coming to a point in his life when he says, "Lord, I am forsaking all. I am doing away with everything that is a hindrance to serving You. I can't do it myself. I want to be saved. I need Your help in this matter." That is real faith in God. When people lack faith, they seek signs to carry them forward. Jesus said that

an evil and adulterous generation looks for some kind of sign.

Jesus gave this lesson found in our Scripture text to help us realize that in God's church everyone is considered the same by God. It does not matter if you are black or white, rich or poor, if you have humbled your heart before God, you can have as much communion with Him as anyone ever has. When I knelt at an old-time altar and asked God to come into my heart and life, thank God, I did not have to have a college education or a lot of money in my pocket. God looked on a person who was humbling his heart and calling on His name for grace. He is still doing that today.

God was giving a picture of something He designed that will work. It is beautiful when you are in an atmosphere of people where no one is trying to be "king" and everyone exalts God as King. It is wonderful to be in the city of the Living God, the new Jerusalem, the heavenly city, where no one is trying to have the preeminence. In this city everyone is happy to be a humble servant of God. I am happy just to obey God and to do His will. I am rejoicing in that.

When people try to take the preeminence and start having opposing spirits, it makes for an ugly atmosphere. I thank God for the city of the Living God, where everyone is happy to let God be the King and be humble servants, glad to be serving God and standing in this present Truth. What a wonderful blessing that is! Jesus was giving us a vision of the church, or the kingdom, where God is King and not man.

If we were to allot lordship to someone because of some characteristic that we could visibly detect, we would become as denominational religion, where man is worshiped. In denominational religion there are those who have positions of supreme leadership. If we were to exalt people because of their wealth, their beauty, or their longevity in the congregation, that would be no

different than sectism. God would not really be worshiped, but those who sit in the chief positions would be worshiped.

Man cannot do anything for you when it comes to saving your soul. There is no other name under Heaven whereby men can be saved except the name of Jesus Christ. This is one reason that God does not want His people to get off on some tangent and allow people to be exalted. He wants the first to be last and the last to be first. Each one who humbles himself and forsakes all will receive the blessing of God upon his life.

Prerequisites That God Has Set Up

Jesus stated in verse 16 of our Scripture text, "So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen." Thank God, some are willing to forsake the evil desire to be exalted and to have the preeminence. Jesus said that many are called. God wants every precious soul to be saved. He does not want anyone to be lost. It is not His will that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. He wants all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of the Truth. He does not want anyone to die lost. He does not get pleasure in the death of the wicked. Friend, God loves you, and He cares for you. He does not want you to end up in the regions of the lost, in darkness and pain and torment and suffering. That is the reason He knocks on your heart's door.

Friend, God wants you to make Heaven your home. He pricks your conscience when you have done things that you ought not to do. He pricks your conscience when you devote your time to things you ought not to give time to, when you expose your children to things you ought not to, when you keep company with those whom you should not keep company, or when you get involved in things you should not get involved in. He is calling people

to be saints of God and to make Heaven their home.

To be one of God's chosen, you have to fit the qualifications that God has laid out. In essence, Jesus said in one place, "I have chosen you; you have not chosen Me." In other words, He was saying that God has laid out the prerequisites of what it takes to be saved. God has set up the plan. You must measure to His plan or go away lost into outer darkness. God designed and established His plan, and we are not going to change it. He has chosen the way His people must be. We do not choose Him. We do not get together and vote on what we are going to teach and preach. God directs us, and we must measure to that. Many are called, but few chosen. In other words, a lesser number are willing to meet the conditions. Many people cannot get beyond the desire to be exalted. There are many people whom God would love to have saved and living true to His Word. He would like to sanctify them and set them apart from the world, but many cannot get over the desire to be exalted. Some have the idea, "I am the oldest one here. I have been around the longest. I have done more work for God than anyone else. I have a greater revelation of Truth than anyone else, so I ought to be exalted."

Grace for Every Need

Do you know what God requires? He requires that you humble yourself. There is grace to overcome the desire to be exalted. There is grace for every need. I thank God for that! Thank God, there is grace for every need that we face in life, but it is contingent upon our humbling ourselves to obtain the grace. God is calling. He would like to see many people saved, but they are failing to meet the conditions found in His Word. God does not care a thing about worldly successes and the things that men may exalt you over. God is interested in your humbling yourself before Him.

He wants your heart to be consecrated to Him. God wants men and women to forsake those things that they are trying to use to exalt them. Friend, you must forsake that desire and take your place as a humble, lowly servant of Almighty God. You need to forget about being exalted and thinking that you ought to be recognized. That desire will only cause you problems, and it will lead to more problems as time goes on. I wonder how many more people would be serving God today if

they could have overcome the desire to be exalted.

Dear one, you have a choice. If there is some kind of desire working that makes you feel that you ought to be more recognized than someone else, you need to forsake it. Do not let it linger. Take your place as nothing before God, and serve Him with all your heart. He can use one who does not feel that he ought to be exalted. In fact, that is whom He is looking for. He is looking for young people, whether they are

good looking or not, whether they came from a rich family or not, whether they have a great education or not. God is looking for young people who will humble themselves and say, "I am nothing except a servant, God. Use me for Your glory in the kingdom." God is looking for all age groups that will come His way. God bless you.

(Cassette C-4765E)

YOUTH CORNER

Keeping a Promise

The twins, Bob and Rodney, lived for the summer in a cottage on Horseshoe Beach. All day they played on the beach or in the little creek that ran along the sand to the ocean. Mother let them wade in the water up to their knees all they wished, but beyond that she was afraid of the undertow, so they had promised her they would not go in any farther unless she or father were with them.

The other boys who played on the beach laughed at them. Their mothers had told them the same thing, but they would run out way up to their shoulders, then tease the twins every chance they got.

The twins did not like this and, bit by bit, they played more and more in the creek. Yet, they continued to obey Mother's warning. There was a boathouse there, and by climbing aboard and looking in a window, they found that they could see a fine boat painted white and green.

Some of the other boys who had been there years before told them, "That's Captain Dan's boat. He has been away for two months, but he will be coming home soon. It won't do you any good, though; he never lets any boy go out with him. He never pays any attention to us."

A few days later, as the boys were playing in the creek, some of the older ones came along.

"Oh, see Mother's dear little sissy boys!" cried one. "Look at the curls on Rodney's head."

He drew back, flushing, but just then a calm, cool voice said:

"That will do. Big boys like you should be ashamed to pick on smaller ones."

"Aw, but they are both sissies, Captain Dan," protested one of the largest of the boys. "They don't dare go out above their knees because they promised their mother not to."

Rodney saw a tall, sunburnt young man of about thirty-five, who was smiling pleasantly. As the big boy finished speaking, he turned to the twins.

"What do you have to say for yourselves, boys?" he asked. Bob flushed. "It is true," he answered. "We promised Mother, and Father says a fellow always keeps his promise."

"Good," said Captain Dan, heartily, "and do you always mind as well as this?"

"Yes, sir," answered Bob. "Father says it is only a coward who does not mind those he knows are wiser than he is, and Mother is wiser than we are."

Captain Dan's eyes softened as he looked on the faces raised to him. "Many times," he answered, "little bears, tigers, rabbits, birds, and all wild life have saved their lives by following that principle. I wonder if you would like to go out on the bay with me? If your mother will let you go, I will take you."

While they were gone, Captain Dan turned to the bigger boys, saying, "You thought it strange that I have never taken you out sailing," he said. "You have the answer now. I have watched you summer after summer as you have been here growing more and more disobedient and foolhardy about little things and making run of the boys who tried to follow the cautions of their parents. You have often succeeded in getting them to be as foolhardy as yourselves, but the shoe is on the other foot now. No boy sails with me who will not mind instantly and unquestioningly. That is the reason these new boys are going on my boat and you are staying on shore."

He turned to the boat as the twins came racing joyfully along the beach, and soon the three went out in the waters of the bay, leaving a dozen crestfallen boys on shore, who realized too late for a summer's pleasure why they did not sail with Captain Dan.

Selected

Psalm 65:1 Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Sion: and unto thee shall the vow be performed.

2 O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come.

Isaiah 64:4 For since the beginning

of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him [The Septuagint version says, "thy works which thou wilt perform to

them that wait for mercy"].

Hebrews 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

PRAYER



Brother E. A. Wilson

Our Greatest Weapon

In general terms there is a great lack of really praying today. I say that because we fail to see the fruits (or the results) of it in individual lives and collectively as the church. References to prayer are found in the Word of God hundreds of times, and I believe God has something to

say about prayer. It is instilled throughout the Word of God from one end of the Book to the other. Prayer is certainly a great necessity. It is our greatest weapon, and the enemy does not want us to use it. The older brethren used to say, "Satan trembles when he sees the weakest Christian on his knees," and it is still true. We can put forth

great efforts (and certainly the enemy is working by moving on the minds of God's people to promote greater programs); but if we fail to pray, it all amounts to nothing.

Nowhere in the Bible did Jesus ever teach anyone to preach, but He did teach us to pray. Without real prayer there cannot be any real preaching; however, through real

prayer someone who cannot preach can preach when God deems it that way. I am trusting that as we study God's Word, the Holy Spirit will stir you. One of the ways of getting your spirit stirred is through the teaching of God's Word. If you look into it honestly, really seeking, your spirit will be stirred, and it will do something for you.

The verses of Scripture that we read in the Book of Psalms and in Paul's writings to the Hebrews let us know that God hears and answers prayer. The other text in Isaiah lets us know there is no way of knowing what God will do and how He will work for those who wait on Him in prayer.

I believe there are greater things in store than our eyes have ever beheld. With just a little greater waiting before God in prayer, we can see God work the works that need to be accomplished and greater works. Jesus promised before He went away that when the Holy Spirit came into our lives, we would work greater works than He worked. The Scriptures plainly teach us that the greater works are the spiritual works that He could not do. He preached and gained one hundred twenty disciples; but when the Holy Spirit came and fell upon all flesh, a greater work was done, and has been done, than Jesus could do when He walked here on the earth. Friend, I am not talking about fantasies; I am talking about realities.

Diligent Seeking

Paul said that God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. The enemy is working as never before through the power of unbelief. If he can get you to doubt one part of God's Word as being true, he has done a terrible work on us. It is a fact that God is a rewarder of everyone who diligently seeks Him. Nevertheless, you have to go to God, who sees in secret, and pray in secret, and He will reward you openly. If there is anything we need

as the church, it is some more open rewards. Thank God for everything that has happened and is happening, and for every bit of reward. God has rewarded us in a great way, but there can be greater open rewards. When God openly rewards you, you will begin to lift Him up and the world will begin to see that God is blessing you as an individual; then the church will be lifted to the place of being a city set on a hill that cannot be hid.

The truth that shines forth in Hebrews 11:6 is that reward comes to diligent seekers. That Scripture is very plain, but sad to say, the unbelieving world believes it more than most Christians do. Look at the very scheme of the universe: diligent seeking is the thing that has caused us to make such progress in scientific fields and other lines in the last fifty years. Scientists believe that if they search, they will be rewarded; so there are scientists who are searching round the clock, and they are being rewarded every day. If we could get the Church of God seeking on spiritual lines as diligently as scientists do in nature, we would be much further up the road as the church. While science has taken us way ahead the last fifty years, the church has gone in reverse.

Why are we not receiving more from God? Why is there not greater reward? The answer is, there is not enough diligent seeking. What if every scientist were to quit studying and researching and just sat around and took the attitude that many Christians take: "If God wants me to have it, He will send it." That is not the law: you only get rewarded if you seek Him diligently. The scientists have learned that, and even men who do not believe in God put this principle into practice. They dig into what they term "the laws of nature." Many of them do not want to acknowledge that it is God; nevertheless, they can call it whatever they want, it is still God.

Oh, how scientists search and search, and the first thing you know, they find something. How

did they find it? They were rewarded for their diligent seeking. Brother, God is a just God who rules this whole world. It makes no difference whether you are delving into natural or spiritual things, if you are diligent in your seeking, you *will* be rewarded!

God Is True to His Word

It is God's desire that you dig deep when it comes to spiritual realities. When Israel was in bad shape and the Prophet did not know what was going on, God took him in a vision to the house and a hole in the wall. Then, God said, "Son of man, dig." When he dug, a door opened, and he went in. It was a vision of God opening up to him and showing him what was going on in the hearts of His people, but the Prophet had to dig.

Too many preachers are lazy today and are not willing to dig into the Word of God and seek diligently. Also, it comes right down to the laity who are not diligent enough in seeking God in prayer. God can show us things that eyes have never seen and ears have never heard. We are dealing with a limitless God. He is unlimited, and He can do anything. Also, He will do anything to awaken a lost world before the end of time, but the instruments through which He works are you and me, Christian friend.

Men in science are in daily pursuit of abstract knowledge through constant seeking. They find something every little bit, and then you read about it. They are rewarded for their diligent efforts. Just as God rewards the diligent seeker in one area of life, He rewards us in the other. How much more can we find in the realms of prayer if God will reward men who do not even have respect for Him and who do not believe He exists, yet He is true to His Word! When they diligently seek, He rewards them. God will reward us much more when we believe that He is real, and if we pray and really seek Him in a dili-

gent manner.

In the day and time in which we live, prayer has become an unreasonable thing in too many cases, but I want you to see that it is very reasonable to pray and very unreasonable not to pray. We are in a day when so many people are struggling with the thought of finding time to pray and really praying. Throughout the Bible and through all ages, prayer has recommended itself to the human mind. As an illustration, when an individual's car rolls over and ignites, he might not have gone to church in his life, but he will start praying then.

The Word of God, as well as history, bears this to be true even in religions such as Buddhism. The Buddhists deny the existence of a true God distinct from nature; however, though they do not believe there is a true God distinct from nature, in the last few years prayer has forced itself into Buddhism. Buddhists do not pray to the living God, but they pray. I want you to see that it is a human instinct right within man to pray.

Our Scripture text says, "Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Sion . . ." (Psalm 65:1). Sion is the church, and if you rightly divide the Word of Truth in reading the other Psalms surrounding this one, you will find that God told how He was going to deliver Jerusalem once and for all. He was going to send a deliverer, Jesus Christ, and He would deliver them from sin. In essence, the Psalmist was saying, "Praise is waiting for you. We believe that You are going to answer prayer, and we are waiting to praise You for it." That is real faith. Those words were spoken hundreds of years before it happened. God prophesied that He was going to deliver His people from their sins; therefore, the Psalmist said, "Praise waiteth for thee." Then he said: ". . . unto thee shall the vow be performed. O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come" (verses 1-2).

Partakers of God's Divine Nature

When a situation really gets troubled enough, it is a natural instinct for men to pray. However, beyond the natural instinct, there is a supernatural instinct put in every born again person that causes him to have a deep, burning desire to pray. It is a work of the Holy Spirit within. A child of God prays because he wants to pray. Old things have passed away, and one of the old things that passed away was the prayerlessness and unconcern for God that you used to have. Saint, when you are born again, you are a new creature and you get a great concern for God. Formerly you were not a praying individual, but you become a praying man or woman when you were converted. Now, you can become careless in your prayer life, but if the word comes that your child, your father, your mother, or your husband or wife has cancer, you will begin to vow your prayer more than you had before.

Let us read Romans 8:15 to see how this supernatural instinct comes into us. Paul said, "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." The word *Abba* is the Chaldean word for Father. When you receive the Spirit of adoption, you begin to cry, "Father, Father." For the benefit of those who do not understand this Scripture, I will clarify it. Paul said that you receive the Spirit of adoption. When you adopt someone else's child, you go through legal procedures and officially file the proper papers, and then the child legally belongs to you. Nevertheless, no matter how much he belongs to you legally, he will still have the attributes, the actions, and the looks of his biological parents.

By contrast, when God takes you into His family, He does not make out papers and bring you in legally and ceremonially, but He actually gives you the Spirit of adoption.

When you receive the Spirit of adoption, you look like your Father, and you become a partaker of His divine nature. You act like your Father, and you know who He is. As soon as you become filled with His Spirit, you begin to cry, "Abba, Father."

Verses 16-17 read, "The Spirit [the Holy Spirit] itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and jointheirs with Christ. . . ." When you are made to realize that you are truly a son of God and a joint heir with Christ, the very Spirit of God will bear witness with your spirit. Paul made that plainer in Galatians 4:6 when he said, "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts [and that Spirit is], crying, Abba, Father." My friend, you become a changed individual, and God has sent the Spirit of His Son. What does the Spirit of His Son do? He causes you to pray as Jesus prayed.

God's Storehouses

God has given us exceedingly great and precious promises. None of those promises were ours. We all were Gentiles without promise and without hope, but thank God, through the Spirit of adoption, we have been made children of God. As a result, all those precious promises and everything God has (who knows how much God has), are ours. We are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. God said to Abraham, "Is any thing too hard for the lord?" When God wanted the world, He just made one. When God wanted a man, He made one. When God wanted a fruit tree, He made one! God is glorified in blessing His children. He wants each of us to be as rich as He is. All of Heaven's riches are ours, and God has given every storehouse to you and me. What is the combination that will open God's storehouses to you? You must cry, "Abba, Father."

Mark 14:34-36, speaking of Jesus

in Gethsemane, reads: "And saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch. And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt."

My friend, crying "Abba, Father" definitely has to do with prayer. We are brought into an experience where a supernatural work is working within us and the Holy Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. When we are children of God, how does the Holy Spirit bear witness with our spirit? When we are born again, our spirit will cry, "Abba, Father." This is the Spirit of adoption. Paul said that God sent the Spirit of His Son (the Holy Spirit) into our hearts, and the Holy Spirit cries, "Abba, Father." Both of them bear witness, opening up the great inheritance that God has ordained us to enjoy. The devil wants to make you feel, "God has storehouses running over, but you just try to get anything!"

God still has a storehouse branded "divine healing," and every kind of healing imaginable is there for us. Jesus paid the price whereby each of us could have that precious privilege. Despite this fact, the enemy is working through unbelief. Many people do not even pray about things. They do not know whether God will answer because they do not pray. The devil has them sold on the idea that it will not do any good to pray, so they do not try. Preachers of every kind try to prove that anointing with oil means giving people every bit of medicine that can be given, and then pray. This is the enemy working through various avenues to sow thoughts in people's minds to kill the effectiveness of God's Word that He has given us to enjoy.

Someone may say, "I didn't know that crying 'Abba, Father' had to do with prayer." Even before

conversion, when the Holy Spirit moves on a heart, it is a natural thing for someone to go to an altar of prayer and get down and start praying. When a person seeks God with his whole heart, which is a diligent way, God rewards him. Not one person who has ever sought God in a diligent manner failed to get rewarded. I am in no way saying that God will reward you the very moment you seek Him. Paul did not say that in that verse of Scripture, but he did say that you will be rewarded. If you hold to that promise and seek God in a diligent manner, you will be rewarded.

The Spirit of Grace and Supplications

In Zechariah, Chapter 12, the Prophet spoke of Jerusalem being delivered and how God was going to send a deliverer. He began to talk about physical, natural things down through the chapter, then in verse 10, he switched over to spiritual things. He said, "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications. . . ." In other words, God can bring you to a place of praying. In Zechariah 13:1 he said, "In that day there shall be a fountain opened. . . ." That fountain was opened when Christ's side was pierced. God was furnishing real deliverance for Jerusalem, a deliverance they had never experienced before. They had physical deliverance of all kinds ever since they had left Egypt, but He was talking about a deliverance that would deliver them from sin.

God said that at that time He would pour out the spirit of grace and supplications. In Chapter 12, verse 10, he said, ". . . and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn." In essence, the Prophet was saying that God would

pour out the spirit of grace and supplications to the degree that you would get down and mourn over your condition and pray and seek God as never before. All you have to do is read the New Testament and you will know that very thing occurred. I want you to look at the Apostle Paul's conversion, and you will see exactly how this happened.

In Acts, Chapter 9, Paul was breathing out threatenings against the church. He was persecuting and wasting the Church of God. As He was going down the road to Damascus with papers to put the saints in jail, a great light shone down upon him and he fell to the earth. Jesus, the resurrected Jesus who had gone back to Heaven, appeared to him and talked to him. He said, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me" (verse 4)?

In verses 8-11 we read: "And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink. And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth."

God Exalts Real Prayer

Someone may say, "Saul was a Pharisee. He prayed three times a day, and he prayed long prayers." He was not truly praying. You see, Jesus knows when you are *really* praying. Many people pray as the Pharisees prayed: they merely go through a form. However, it is an outstanding thing when a man really prays. Jesus already knew what Ananias would say, so Jesus said, "Behold, he prayeth." It is something to behold when a man really prays. You do not have to worry about a

man hurting you when he is praying. There are many troubles that people are fussing back and forth over, but if the parties involved would pray, the problems would be dissolved.

Jesus had won a great battle: Saul was willing and submissive. He said, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" The Lord told him to go into the city to a street called Straight and wait there. For three days Paul did not eat, but he prayed, and it was not a Pharisaical prayer. He was speaking with a new tongue. Mark 16:17 says, ". . . they shall speak with new tongues." The word *new* there is a different Greek word altogether from the word used in Acts, Chapter 2, where they spoke in another tongue. The word *new* in Mark 16:17 means "a refreshed tongue." When you become a Christian, the tongue that used to cuss, lie, and swear will start praying, "Abba, Father. Praise God!" It has nothing to do with another language. Paul had a new tongue.

Jesus was talking to one disciple about another disciple. In other words, Jesus was saying, "Ananias, you are My disciple, and you are not going to see Saul of Tarsus, because he is praying." Ananias lost all his fear and went his way, and when he went through the door, he said, "Brother Saul." Do not tell me that prayer will not do away with a lot of differences when people really pray.

There is so much more to praying than what people are seemingly getting hold of today. When someone is truly praying, it is a sight that the resurrected, glorified Christ notices above everything else. You may be able to sing like a bird or preach like an orator, but you will not excite Jesus. When someone gets down in real prayer, it is a sight worthy to be observed. To many, this sight would be very ordinary. This attitude toward prayer shows the difference in value that earth puts on things and Heaven puts on things. God exalts praying. He

would rather see you on your knees really praying, and I am not talking about merely saying prayers.

A New State Toward God

Saul excelled beyond any of his equals. He outprayed them and outworked them. He was the strictest of the Pharisees. When they had to pray three hours, he did not pray two hours and forty-five minutes. Even so, all the praying that he had done through that form of religion never excited God one bit. However, when he got down to business diligently seeking God, God took notice. Paul was praying, "Lord, I can see the Christ that I had been against and the very church that I had persecuted. I see it is the church. I know You are the Messiah," and Jesus said, "Behold, he prayeth."

Jesus points to the sight of a man on his knees as something worthy to behold. Why is this such a sight to behold? First of all, it is the first sign that a great change is coming. Mark it down, my friend, when you get down and diligently pray, it portends that there is much to come and something is going to happen. No one can diligently seek God without moving God on His throne. Paul was wasting his life, but when he really prayed, God heard his prayer and lifted him to the place where he was one of the most outstanding Apostles. He wrote the rest of the Bible! Where did it start? He prayed! I cannot put too much emphasis on this.

The man who prays has come into a new state toward God. You cannot really pray without changing your state toward Him. Oh, you can get down and say a few words before you go to bed, say a few when you get up tomorrow, and say a few over your food; but I am talking about getting to a place where Jesus looks down and says, "He is really praying!"

Real prayer changed Paul's state toward God. After he was filled with the Holy Ghost and was bap-

tized, he went out on the street and preached the Church of God doctrine, and the people said, "Isn't that the man who used to persecute the church? Wasn't he against it? What happened to him?" Peter said, "He prayed!" Real prayer will change the church's state toward God, and when our state toward God is changed, our state toward one another will be changed. The man who prays desires to come into a new attitude toward God. He has discovered a need with real depth.

Being Awakened to Your Need

I do not know how many of those three days it took Saul to come to the realization that he had a deep need. He thought he was on the mountaintop, but when he got straightened out, he saw that in terms of real salvation he had nothing. One will never get to the place of really praying until he is somehow awakened to the depth of his need of praying and calling on God.

The reason you do not pray is that you do not think you need to pray; the flesh has raised up. You rest on the length of time that you have been saved, but it does not amount to anything if you have not prayed through today. You are not in any better shape just because you have been saved for years. The devil will try to switch you over to the externals, and you will fall into Pharisaism.

Jesus is looking down to see if you are really praying. His eye is on His children, and His ear is open to their cry. This is sad to say, but it is true: some people do not get diligent until catastrophe comes. It should not be that way, but it happens that way in too many cases. You cannot really pray until you become diligent.

As Jesus looks down upon you, I wonder if He is saying, "Behold, he prayeth" or is He saying, "Behold, he does not pray"? In either case, it is amazing to Christ. It is an amazing thing to Christ when people have been so blessed and then do

not pray. Friend, when you get down to business praying, it is a state wherein you have discovered a great need with great depth. When you really pray, pride is gone. Second Chronicles 7:14 says, "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." You cannot really pray until pride is gone.

Paul's pride was gone. No doubt he dressed well and was well respected; he was a man who got things done. Other Pharisees just sat and said, "That Church of God is terrible. They are turning the world upside down and putting the doctrine of Christ in every town"; yet they never did anything about it. Paul was a doer. He got the papers and went to work. He was proud that he was wasting the Church of God; he was doing it ignorantly, but he was proud of what he was doing. He caused many saints to recant and back off by causing them to fear.

Once Paul got down to business praying, all pride was gone. He who had been the strictest of the Pharisees then called himself the chief of sinners. That is getting down to the bottom. Instead of being proud, he was saying, "No one is as bad as I am, Lord." See, when you are a Pharisee, you are glad that you are not as other men; but when you get down to business praying, you are chief of sinners, the ugliest and the worst.

Do you know one reason that your prayers have not been going through? You hold yourself in too much of an elevated position. You have not gotten down to business telling God who you are as He sees you. I am trying to help you so that you can pray diligently. There is too much praying without reward. I still believe that Jesus gets excited when a man or a woman really prays.

A Greater Work to Be Done

When Jesus said, "Behold, he prayeth" (speaking of Saul), He was getting the attention of not only Ananias, but the angels and the Father. Jesus said, in so many words, "If he will just pray, I will do the rest," and, brother, He did do the rest. Oh, what a man Paul turned out to be! Aren't you anxious to talk with Him someday? The historian tells us that Paul was a short man and baldheaded, but what a great man of God he was! He prayed, and Jesus did the rest. He started revival fires everywhere his feet trod, and he plainly told people, "It is not me; it is Christ that liveth in me."

Paul gave the same testimony everywhere he went. When they brought him before the captain and let him speak, he said, in so many words, "Well, I was going down the road to Damascus. I had papers to persecute the Christians, but a light brighter than the noonday sun shone down, and Jesus said, 'Saul, why persecutest thou me?' and I fell under the light. He told me to go into the city, and there I prayed three days. Ananias came and laid hands on me, and I received my sight and was filled with the Holy Ghost."

Paul was brought before Agrippa and said, "I was going down the road to Damascus. . . ." He stuck right with his testimony. Men trembled when he told them about it. A man of great authority was almost persuaded to be a Christian when he heard Paul tell how he prayed that day and how God moved on his heart and life.

God is no respecter of persons. We are not going to do the work that Paul did because the Bible has already been written; but God has a greater work for us to do than that which is being done. The starting place is right where Paul started: he really prayed until he moved Jesus. The name Saul (his name before he was converted) means "destroyer"; the name Paul means "worker." He went around building up the very

thing he had been tearing down.

When men truly pray, self-satisfaction and trust in the world's resources are gone. Although there is every reason and encouragement to pray, many fail to pray. Men seeking salvation are praying men, and men living salvation are praying men. Jesus told us to ask for our daily bread. How are you going to live tomorrow without praying? The Bible tells us that without Him we can do nothing.

Keep Asking

Jesus gives us the law of prayer to govern our everyday living. Matthew 7:7-8 says: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." Seeking is more diligent than asking; too many just ask. The Greek translation for the word *ask* there actually means "keep asking." It does not mean to ask one time and go your way nonchalantly as people are today. I have heard people say, "If the Lord wants me to have it, He will give it to me." He will not give it to you if you do not ask, seek, and knock. There is not a place in the Bible where He told you to just mention it to God and go on your way and He will give it to you if you are supposed to have it. He has ordained that you pray.

Paul said, "I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting" (1 Timothy 2:8). Prayer is a great privilege. I thank God for the privilege of prayer. Is Jesus moved when a man prays? He watched Stephen being stoned until they stoned the very life out of him, and he prayed. Did Stephen pray, "My God, I can't hardly wait until you put vengeance on this bunch"? No! There is too much of this kind of praying today. Stephen's prayer was, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." Jesus no doubt stood up and looked over the banister of

Heaven as Stephen prayed, saying, "Come home, son, you have finished your work."

The reason some people do not get salvation when they kneel at an altar of prayer is that they do not come seeking wholeheartedly. The word *supplication* means "to ask humbly and earnestly." In other words, one really gets down to business in prayer, with his whole being, praying diligently. Our praying has to be much more diligent in order to move God to the place where He will answer prayer. In Song of Solomon 2:14 Jesus said to the church, "O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice. . . ." That is Jesus' attitude toward the church.

Cry Unto Him

Hosea, Chapter 5, talks about the priests who were leading God's people astray, and the people were not paying much attention to God. Verse 15 says, "I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in

their affliction they will seek me early."

This verse of Scripture lets us know that God will even send affliction to cause you to turn to Him and cry unto Him. God said that He would go His way and leave them alone until they got to the place where they would acknowledge their offense and seek His face. He said when affliction comes, they would seek Him early. Then James said, "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray" (James 5:13a).

God allows certain things to happen because He wants you to pray. I have seen cases of serious diseases of every kind where the doctors finally had to say that as far as they were concerned, the case was hopeless, and God was standing right there waiting for someone to turn to Him and really pray.

We are living in an age where we are blessed, but the blessings can become a curse and a hindrance to us. I am thankful for every bit of help that medical science can give, but it has worked wrong when it hinders you in your praying. Whenever those things hinder real praying, then they have not really been a

blessing.

In all honesty, has God shown you that you have not been really diligent in your prayer life, and because of it, you have not reaped the rewards? If the devil can keep you praying without getting any reward or answer, all it will take is time until you quit praying. As I mentioned earlier, nowhere in the Bible does it say that you will get an answer the second you ask; but God is a rewarder of those who seek Him diligently. Whether you receive an answer now or later, you will receive it if you ask in faith without doubting.

Friend, if you do not pray diligently and do not get anything, the devil will keep pecking at you, saying, "What are you praying for? God does not answer prayer," and you will become weary in well doing. Then you will do just as many other people are doing now: they are trying to plot their own course, and when sickness comes, their first thought is never prayer. I ask you again, in closing, how is your prayer life?

Radio Log



LOCATION	STATION	DAY	TIME
Wellston, Ohio	WAJB-FM 92.5	Thursday	8:05 a.m.-8:35 a.m.
North Little Rock, Arkansas	KMTL-AM 760	Saturday	2:00 p.m.-2:30 p.m.
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.

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Fall 2003 Camp Meeting Tape List

TAPE NO.	DATE	MESSAGE TITLE	MINISTER	COST
C-5070M C-5071E	8-03-03	Set Thine House in Order Our Need of God	Bro. Roger L. Decker Bro. E. David Stegmeier	2.50 2.50
C-5072M C-5073E	8-04-03	Enduring Our Cross The Vessels of the Lord	Bro. C. H. Dickerson Bro. Ula Bland	2.50 2.50
C-5074M	8-05-03	The Manifestations of God's Love	Bro. Allen Polston	2.50
C-5075M C-5076E	8-06-03	Pulling Down the Strong Holds of the Devil The Wrong of Gambling	Bro. Joseph Mbui Kibuchi Bro. Calvin Foster	2.50 2.50
C-5077M C-5078E	8-07-03	Forgiveness The Church in Its Present Location	Bro. C. H. Ferguson Bro. E. David Stegmeier	2.50 2.50
C-5079M C-5080E	8-08-03	A System of Bondage The Strength to Be the Church of God	Bro. David Watson Bro. Wayne Hafley	2.50 2.50
C-5081M	8-09-03	The Spirit of Antichrist	Bro. Roger L. Decker	2.50
C-5083M C-5084E	8-10-03	The Necessity of Having Keen Spiritual Eyesight The Battle Against the Indestructible Word of God	Bro. Irwin Seshier Bro. E. David Stegmeier	2.50 2.50

For Music Recordings, please specify Cassette or CD

C/YP	8-09-03	Children's and Young People's Songs		3.50
129		2003 Fall Camp Meeting Songs #1		3.50
130		2003 Fall Camp Meeting Songs #2		3.50
131		2003 Fall Camp Meeting Songs #3		3.50
132		2003 Fall Camp Meeting Songs #4		3.50
133		2003 Fall Camp Meeting Songs #5		3.50
134		2003 Fall Camp Meeting Songs #6		3.50
135		2003 Fall Camp Meeting Choir Songs		3.50

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UPCOMING MEETING

Newton, KS
Sept. 17-21

REVIVAL: Community Church of God, Newton, Kansas
Evangelist: Brother Earl R. Borders, Newark, OH
Service times: 7:00 p.m. nightly; Sunday 10:45 a.m.
For further information contact: Brother or Sister Jerry Killfoil
Telephone: 316-282-0104



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2004 Camp Meetings
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June 20-27
August 1-8
December 27-30



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