

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

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

Brother Roger L. Decker Editor
Workers Too Numerous to Mention

THE CHURCH OF GOD BELIEVES IN:

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

SOME SPIRITUAL FACTS

PERTAINING TO THE CHURCH

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

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Guest Editorial

"With What Body Do They Come?"

First Corinthians 15:35 states, "But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?" In this passage of Scripture, the Apostle Paul raised questions that fill men's minds yet today. In this verse the divine penman framed two very intriguing questions, but perhaps the most often posed question of the two is the one recorded in the latter portion of the verse: "With what body do they come?" By the help of God, we want to examine this question to see how the Scriptures respond to this inquiry.

As we begin to consider this passage, it is notable that although it is abbreviated, the truths it conveys are voluminous. Several very vital truths are already assumed by the sacred writer. In the first question posed, "How are the dead raised up?" the writer assumed by this point in his writing that the fact of the resurrection had been clearly established. It is apparent that this truth was being contested by the Apostle's words recorded earlier in this chapter.

In 1 Corinthians 15:12 Paul wrote, "Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?" In verses 13-23 the Apostle refuted this erroneous teaching and firmly reestablished this truth as a vital portion of biblical doctrine. By the time he penned verse 35, he felt that he had amply laid to rest the fact of the resurrection. The second question posed in our Scripture text, when taken in conjunction with the first portion of that verse, reveals that when the dead are raised up, they will

come with a body. This lets us know that the eternal realm, subsequent to the second advent of Christ, will not solely be a spiritual realm. It is obvious from these words that there will be a physical component.

When we view the Scriptures pertaining to the final Judgment, we read such words as, "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" (2 Corinthians 5:10). Since the deeds, or "things done in his body," were performed in the body, it is reasonable that the body will be a participant in the rewards or the punishment.

Let us view systematically what occurs. When one dies, the body "is sown a natural body" (1 Corinthians 15:44). According to 1 Corinthians 15:42, "It is sown in corruption." Ecclesiastes 12:7 tells us, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was." When physical death seizes one, the natural body, which is subject to physical corruption, returns to the dust. Those who have departed from the natural body prior to the resurrection are referred to as "them that slept" in 1 Corinthians 15:20. However, on that great day "the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, . . . and the dead . . . shall rise . . ." (1 Thessalonians 4:16). Not only will the dead rise in "a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust" (Acts 24:15), but those "which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them" (1 Thessalonians 4:17).

When "the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them" (Revelation 20:13), "the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (1 Corinthians 15:52). Not only are those who are dead and have been resurrected changed, but the Apostle wrote,

[continued on page 26]

Philippians 2:12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good

pleasure.

14 Do all things without murmurings and disputings:

15 That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine

as lights in the world;

16 Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.

WORK OUT YOUR OWN SALVATION



Brother Roger L. Decker

The Work of Salvation

I want to focus on verse 12 of our Scripture text. The Apostle Paul, writing to the Philippian brethren, said to "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." The Lord wants you to receive the total benefits that He has for you in the Gospel. You should not stop half-way; do not start serving God and then quit. God wants you to bring the work that He started in you to completion. Let God work with you all the way. He who started a good work in you is able to perform it. You must work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. You need to continue so that the work of

salvation is fully operating in your life. You should let God use your life fully. How can you do that? You must turn your life over to Him completely. You should not have reserves in your life, but rather let God work through you to bring the work of salvation to completion.

When I speak of salvation, I am not talking about religion. You can join a church and still not have salvation, but you cannot be a child of God without having old-time salvation. Salvation is of God, and it brings deliverance. Before the children of Israel crossed the Red Sea, Moses said to the people, "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD" (Exodus 14:13). It is

God who works in a person the desire to be saved. Christian friend, you would not even be saved if God did not work with you. It is God who awakened you to your need of salvation, and He worked the desire within you to be saved.

You need to get it out of your mind that salvation is joining a church. Psalm 3:8 tells us, "Salvation belongeth unto the LORD: thy blessing is upon thy people." Psalm 37:39 reads, "But the salvation of the righteous is of the LORD: he is their strength in the time of trouble." God is called the God of salvation. Psalm 68:20 states, "He that is our God is the God of salvation; and unto GOD the Lord

belong the issues from death."

For salvation to continue in one's life, that person must be dependent upon God. Without God's help sin cannot be conquered. You cannot overcome sin without Him in your life. If it was not for the Lord, sin would have dominion over everyone, and we all would sin more or less every day. If you are living a holy, righteous life, it is not in your own strength; it is due to God working in you.

The Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 6:14, "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace." There would be no spiritual progress without the Lord. Salvation begins with God, continues with Him, and ends with Him. Second Corinthians 10:4 reads, "(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds)." You cannot pull down strongholds without God.

In First Thessalonians 4:17 the Apostle Paul wrote, "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." One of these days it is all going to be over, and we shall ever be with the Lord. The Apostle Paul wrote in verse 12 of our Scripture text, "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."

Accepting God's Terms

There is another side to salvation. The other side of salvation is man's part. Sinner friend, without your cooperation God cannot save your soul. As the Gospel message goes forth, not everyone gets saved. Man has to submit to God. Throughout the Word of God you will find this to be true. Some people are sitting around who are dead, spiritually speaking. They have dried up in their souls; however,

that is not God's fault, because one must cooperate with Him. John 1:11 reads, "He came unto his own, and his own received him not."

Second Corinthians 9:15 says, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift." This gift is to all mankind, but a man must accept it in order for this gift to benefit him. Let me illustrate it this way. A man could be drowning out in the midst of a turbulent river, and someone could throw him a lifeline; but unless he would reach out and take hold of the lifeline, he would drown. It would make no difference if that lifeline was in the water beside the man if he failed to take hold of it. When salvation is preached, that is God's part. Your part is to heed the message. If you do not, then you will be lost, though ones may be saved all around you.

Someone may say, "When God speaks to me, I will get saved." Friend, if you know that you are lost, you ought to seek God. The Spirit of God may come really close to you and stir your heart, but if you refuse to accept His unspeakable gift, He will leave you alone. You have to cooperate with God. There is no salvation without Him. Salvation is always on God's terms; it cannot be on your own terms.

In Acts, Chapter 24, when Paul stood before Felix, the governor, Paul reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come. Felix thought when he got ready, he would send for Paul, but we have no record that he ever did. Often people turn God down, and then after they have just about wrecked and ruined their lives, when they get down low enough, they call upon God. It does not work that way, friend. Salvation is always on God's terms. Man must come to terms with God, and the terms are very simple.

The Prophet Isaiah wrote in Isaiah 35:8 that even wayfaring men would not err therein. Even the simpleminded can understand the Gospel message. What is it? Jesus said, "Repent: for the kingdom of

heaven is at hand" (Matthew 4:17). That is very simple, yet people would rather do anything than repent. They will join a church and ascribe to a theology, but they will not confess and forsake their sins. Where is the kingdom? As soon as you repent, you are born into the Kingdom of God.

Salvation was offered to Israel. Jesus came to His own first. God is so fair and just. Although He came to His own first, only those who received Him attained salvation. John 1:11-12 reads: "He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name."

Man's Part in God's Plan

Again, our Scripture text says to "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." Saint, you have a part in it. Some people are not doing well in their Christian experience, but that is not God's part. Certainly, the deliverance begins, continues, and ends with God, but man has a part. That is the reason some people are more spiritual than others, and that is the reason some people have greater prayer lives than others. Some people are too lazy to serve God. They have just enough religion to make them miserable. They are miserable in the church services sitting under the messages, and they are miserable around the saints. They never have anything good to say. Why? They have reserves in their lives that they need to let go of, and they need to allow God to work with them in a greater way.

The fear and trembling that the Apostle Paul mentioned is not that of a slave who is in constant fear of his master or of one who is in fear of punishment. The type of fear and trembling that he was talking about stems from the inability to deal with life in general in one's own strength. In other words, the Christian knows that he cannot handle life without

God; therefore, he works out his salvation with fear and trembling. The Christian knows that he cannot stand against the temptations of life in his own strength.

The doctrine of "once in grace, always in grace" is false. To whom was most of the Bible written? It was written to Christians, warning and admonishing Christians, not sinners. The Word of God warns the Christian repeatedly. One warning to the Christian is found in 1 Corinthians 10:12, which states, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

Some warnings are in the Old Testament. We will read a few of them. Deuteronomy 6:12 says, "Then beware lest thou forget the LORD, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage." We read in Deuteronomy 8:10-11: "When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the LORD thy God for the good land which he hath given thee. Beware that thou forget not the LORD thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day."

Fear Brought By Condemnation

God continually warns the Christian that he cannot fight this warfare in the flesh. You cannot do it, friend. It is not by your physical strength or by your great wisdom. The battle is spiritual. In the Christian's life there is always that temptation to get switched over from being spiritual to walking in the flesh. Ephesians 6:12 says, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

Dear friend, the flesh will lead you astray and deceive you. This "fear and trembling" that Paul spoke of draws one to God, not away from Him. Adam and Eve hid themselves from God. We read in

Genesis 3:8, "And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden." This fear was caused by sin. In our Scripture text Paul was talking about people who already had salvation when he said to "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." On the other hand, the fear that Adam and Eve had came as a result of condemnation from sin, fearing the wrath of God.

If you are walking in disobedience, you need to fear the wrath of God. You are not dealing with a man. You are dealing with One who knows you. God knows your every thought; He knows everything about you. If you reject salvation, you are not turning down man; you are turning down God. If you are in disobedience, you need to fear the wrath of God. If you are committing sin, you need the fear of God upon your soul.

Psalm 7:11 reads, "God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day." Each day the wicked face another day of God's anger. If you are living in sin, every time you climb out of bed in the morning to the dawn of a new day, that is a new day of God's anger. You need to fear that. Those who follow the flesh live a life of selfishness.

Some feel that even though they are not serving God, they are not wicked. They need to study the Scriptures. Psalm 11:6 says, "Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup." Some may think that a wicked person is one who is devil possessed. Although such a person is wicked, the definition takes in more than that. The word *wicked* also means to be morally wrong. A wicked person is one who is under condemnation. Are you condemned?

Second Thessalonians 1:7-8 reads: "And to you who are trou-

bled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." Do these two verses of Scripture find you short of knowing God and obeying the Gospel? Vengeance is coming on the wicked, those who do not know God and who do not obey the Gospel. If you are in that category, vengeance is coming upon you.

Living in Fear and Trembling From a Heart of Love

The Christian loves God. The fear and trembling that Paul talked about stems from a heart of love. The Christian is not afraid of what God will do to him, but he is concerned that he might disappoint God. Therefore, he works out his salvation with fear and trembling and respect. He loves God too much to want to hurt Him. He knows that Jesus died for his sins once, and he does not want to crucify Him again. Also, the Christian does not want to do anything that would hinder the work of the Holy Spirit in his life. He does not want to get out of the will of God.

A true child of God does not want to say something wrong or tell someone off or make wrong judgments. He lives in fear and trembling from a heart of love because he does not want to do anything to displease his Heavenly Father. The child of God draws close to God because he knows that without God he cannot stand against temptations. Everyday living without God is more than man can cope with. Without Jesus Christ directing and guiding us and without having someone to lean upon, we would make all kinds of wrong choices. Many times we would not know good from evil if it was not for Jesus Christ helping us. Those who work out their own salvation with fear and trembling live consistent, holy lives, and they are faithful to God,

faithful to the work of God, and faithful to their brothers and sisters in Christ.

Ephesians 4:30 reads, "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." The Christian does not want to grieve the Spirit of God in any way. He keeps himself clean, and he does not want to touch that which is unclean. How does he keep himself pure and holy? He obeys the Word of God and works out his own salvation with fear and trembling. The child of God who works out his own salvation with fear and trembling will live for God though others around him fall. Working it out takes effort. To keep hold of the precious pearl of salvation takes effort. If you had a large sum of money, you would put it in a safe place. Saint, we have something more precious than money, pearls,

or diamonds; therefore, we should do our best to guard it.

Are you working out your salvation with fear and trembling? Do you see a lack of power in your life? Are you short fused, unable to cope with even the smallest of trials? If so, you are not working out your salvation. If you continually take things to the Lord, He will strengthen you and fortify the weak places in your life. You could not stand big temptations, because you can hardly overcome the little ones. You are not working very hard at it. Do you see your inability to cope with the smallest of temptations and trials? Does the fear and trembling that Paul wrote about draw you closer to God or do you find yourself drifting further away?

Dear friend, this is not a time to drift. It is time to get really close to God. If you do not get hold of that

anchor in your soul, you are going to be swept away. Religious spirits are not letting up. Do not be deceived, because they are working. Do you see in your life a lack of the fear of God? Only God can change that for you. God does not want His people to drift away. He would like to get really close to you, if you will let Him. If you will draw near to God, He will draw near to you. Read verse 12 of the Scripture text again: "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." If you have a need in your soul, won't you listen to the Lord?

(Cassette C-3066M)

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unless they are executed.**

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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James 1:12 Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

13 Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither

tempteth he any man:

14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

16 Do not err, my beloved brethren.

17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

18 Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.



Are You Fully Aware of the Cost You'll Pay for Your Sins?

Brother E. David Stegmeier

Consider the Consequences of Sin

James let us know that a man is truly blessed and rewarded when he resists temptation and stands true to God. He will enjoy happiness, blessings, and rewards in this life, and then he will receive a crown of life at the end of the way. You need to remember that God does not want anyone to do wrong. His will is for every man, woman, boy, and girl to be saved and come to a knowledge of His Truth. He does not tempt any of His creatures to do evil. When an individual is tempted to do wrong, he is being tempted by the devil, the enemy of his soul.

What is temptation? It is the drawing of the flesh toward the things of this world, and the one that is drawing you is Satan. His desire is to destroy; he does nothing good. He is the author of all evil, all

sin. The devil is at the bottom of everything that is bad. Sometimes thoughts will come into a person's mind and prompt him to do evil. If those thoughts develop into actions, they become sin, and sin brings spiritual death. Sin is not a pretty thing.

I heard about a little boy who went to church one day. When he got home, his mother and father asked him, "What did the preacher preach about today?"

He said, "Well, I can't remember."

"Don't you remember anything he said?"

"Well, he talked an awful lot about sin."

"What did he say about it?"

The boy said, "I don't remember, but I could tell that he sure didn't like it."

Sin is a terrible thing. Few individuals really consider the cost

they will pay when they go into sin. The enemy of the souls of humanity makes sin look very attractive, very pleasing, very appealing, and very rewarding. The devil always paints a beautiful picture, but the end is not beautiful. I heard that the big, tall, handsome man pictured riding the horse in the Marlboro cigarette advertisements died with emphysema. He died a horrible death. I have witnessed the deaths of many people who have gone into sin and started smoking.

I remember teaching a class in Science, and the regular teacher said, "Pastor Stegmeier, take advantage of what you are going to see today in my Science class. You are going to see an operation on a man who had cancer, and they are going to remove his black lung." We watched the entire operation on video. At the end of it, he said to me, "Say what you want." I took advan-

tage of that door of opportunity.

At the end of my discussion, a boy raised his hand and said, "Mr. Stegmeier, I will tell you of an experience that I am going through in my life. Just as soon as school is over, we are going to drive to the hospital where my brother is dying of cancer. They removed part of his jaw and a good part of his face and his throat. Now he only has a few hours to live."

Sin is a terrible thing, but the devil will never show you the end. He will never tell you what the consequences will be. In my lifetime I have seen many people leave thriving Church of God congregations, and without exception, I have never seen any of them prosper. No individual or family will prosper who leaves a thriving Church of God congregation. When you are tempted, you need to consider the consequences of sin.

Are You Willing to Suffer the Cost of Sin?

The word *cost* means "the amount paid for something; to cause to pay, suffer, or lose." Many young people give up their virtue, and they can never regain it. Many people give up their good names. When my family celebrated my birthday, many in the community came, the school faculty and students came, and the former mayor of our city came. The mayor walked up front on his own to speak and said, "Pastor Stegmeier is known all over this city, and I have never heard a word spoken against him." I say that to the glory of God. We need to live right, by the grace of God. He can help us to live right.

Your life is counting either for or against God. The devil would like nothing better than to destroy your influence and your name. Proverbs 22:1 says, "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold." You need to endeavor to keep a good name. The cost of something is whatever you give up or sacrifice.

Some people sacrifice a good marriage and a nice, peaceful home and suffer heartache, woe, grief, shame, and guilt because of sin. The cost is what you suffer. I sleep very well, and it is because my conscience is clear. I thank God for that. The sleep of a righteous man is sweet.

The *cost* is a loss or deprivation or suffering as the necessary price of something gained. What you gain in sin is not worth anything when you consider what you are giving up. Many people are grieved because they are suffering for their sins. It is the unavoidable result or penalty of wrongdoing. That is the reason you need to count the cost.

Going to the house of worship is very serious. It is as serious as going into an operating room when a surgeon is operating on someone. The person being operated on could be at the very threshold of eternity. It could be a life or death matter. That is how it is when you go to church. It is not a funny place. It is a very serious place, because the Holy Spirit is operating on souls, and it may mean life or death. Church of God ministers have the greatest responsibility of anyone in the world. By the grace of God, I want to live up to my responsibility.

Departing From God's Standard of Morality

What is *sin*? John said, "All unrighteousness is sin" (1 John 5:17). Everything that does not conform to God's standard of morality and the principles in His Word is sin. That is the reason I will do nothing against my fellow ministers. If I were to do that, it would become sin to me. It is very serious to work against another congregation and another man of God.

Sin is a voluntary departing from the path of duty designed by God. One who sins voluntarily walks away, or departs from the principles contained in the sacred Word. When individuals know that what they are doing is wrong, yet they do it anyway, it is sin.

Years ago, I preached in Sacramento, California, and a young man and a young woman came up to me. He was the husband in one family, and she was the wife in another family, and they were seeing each other on the sly. They said, "Brother Stegmeier, what do you think about it? We really love each other. We sing together." (Friend, when you work in close proximity with someone of the opposite sex, you need to watch your affections!) They sang beautifully. They said, "We are planning to leave our families, get married, and then ask God to forgive us. Then we are going to move far away and work for God."

I said, "No! That is sin; it is presumptuous sinning!" Well, they did it anyway, but their marriage never lasted. Presumptuous sin is a very serious sin.

Sin scares me. It could destroy my wonderful marriage. If you were to ask me, "Do you love your wife?" I would tell you, "Oh, yes!" Do we have a good time? Yes, and it gets sweeter and sweeter. Life is wonderful serving the Lord!

Sin is more than a mistake. A *mistake* is a "wrong action or statement proceeding from faulty judgment, inadequate knowledge, or inattention." It is an unintentional error; that is not sin. For an action to be sin, it must be premeditated and done voluntarily. I will agree that sin starts in the mind, but it is not consummated until it takes hold of one's will and that person conceives of a plan to do it. That is exactly what James was saying in our Scripture text.

Verse 14 reads, "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed." We still have desires after we are saved, and God has directed us concerning how to fulfill those desires. Sin is a choice of the free will. An individual cannot sin and be ignorant of it. Jesus said in Matthew 5:28, "But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."

All individuals who want to live clean, holy, pure lives need to keep their eyes in check. Sometimes I shade my eyes. I tell my boys, "You can go anywhere in my study, and go through any of my materials, and you will find nothing immoral." Also, we need to listen to good things. I want to live a pure, clean, holy life, and I mean that!

John wrote in 1 John 3:4 that "sin is the transgression of the law," of God's law. The Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 4:15, ". . . for where no law is, there is no transgression." No sin is imputed when one does not know any better.

Sometimes an individual will come under condemnation because of a dream. People have come to me and said, "Oh, if you only knew what I dreamed. I am so ashamed, and I feel so guilty." A dream is a dream. God told Jeremiah that when a prophet has a dream, he should tell it as a dream (Jeremiah 23:28). I repeat, a dream is a dream, so you should leave it there and go on. I have had dreams that I did not like. When I awakened from such a dream, I thanked God that it was not true. I would like to offer a word of caution: you should be careful of what you read or meditate on before you go to bed. I have many old *Gospel Trumpet* magazines, so I often read an article from one of them before I go to sleep. I ask young people when they come to me about dreams, "What were you reading? What were you thinking upon?" You need to be careful. Dreams will come, but be careful of what you read and meditate on. Many times if you will think back on what you had been discussing or thinking about during the day, you can connect your dream to that.

"Yield Not to Temptation"

Temptation is not sin, but yielding to the temptation becomes sin. If temptation were a sin, Jesus would have sinned, because the Word of God plainly teaches that He was tempted; however, He did

not sin. The Hebrew writer wrote, "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15). Many years ago, after I had attended a camp meeting, as I was going back home, I stopped in Minneapolis, Minnesota, to visit an uncle. I was young, and I was going through strong temptation. My uncle was a dear, old child of God, and he had a piano in his basement, so I went down there all by myself. I got an old hymnal and started looking through it. Finally, I found an old song that really gave me the impetus and the strength to say, "No, old devil!" Sometimes you have to get rough with him. You cannot invite him in to have tea and crumpets. When he comes knocking, you should say, "Go on down the road! Get lost!" You should not entertain the devil.

As I sat down at that old piano, I began to sing this song:

*Yield not to temptation, For yielding
is sin;
Each vict'ry will help you Some other
to
win;
Fight manfully onward, Dark passions
subdue;
Look ever to Jesus, He'll carry you
through.*

I thought, "That was good. I am going to try that second verse."

*Shun evil companions, Bad language
disdain;
God's name hold in rev'rence, Nor
take it in vain;
Be thoughtful and earnest,
Kindhearted and true;
Look ever to Jesus, He'll carry you
through.*

I was feeling better with every verse, so I thought, "I believe I will sing that last one."

*To him that o'ercometh, God giveth
a crown;*

*Thro' faith we will conquer,
Tho' often cast down;
He who is our Savior, Our strength
will renew,
Look ever to Jesus, He'll carry you
through.*

*Ask the Savior to help you,
Comfort, strengthen, and keep you;
He is willing to aid you,
He will carry you through.*

When I was in the military service, I sang those Church of God hymns repeatedly. I had my own services, just the Lord and me. I would sing the song entitled "Be Strong and True," which begins, "*Be Strong and valiant for the truth, Resist the tempter's luring power.*" That is a good song, and it was such a blessing to me. Sometimes I sang that song ten to fifteen times, because it really strengthened me.

Christ Came to Break the Power of Sin in Your Life

Sin can be by commission or omission. If you do something wrong, it is a sin of commission. You are responsible for your wrongdoing. The Apostle John said in 1 John 3:8, "He that committeth sin is of the devil." A sin of commission is performing an evil act. Neglecting to do what you know is right is a sin of omission. If God should put His finger on you, so to speak, and say you need to ask someone's forgiveness, it would become sin to you if you were to fail to do it. If God were to say, "You need to go to the altar and get some things taken care of," and you do not go, it would become sin to you. The sin of omission is the result of neglecting to perform that which God commands you to do. James wrote in James 4:17, "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."

God condemns sin in the flesh, or in the body, dear one, yet He loves the sinner. God sent Jesus into the world to save the sinner. Probably the best-known Scripture

in the world is John 3:16, which reads, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." In Romans 8:3 Paul wrote, "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned [or put an end to] sin in the flesh."

The holy way of living is absolutely the most beautiful way to live. It is a wonderful way to live! Sinless living makes good men, good women, and wonderful young people. Jesus put an end to sin in the flesh. He can break the power and the control of sin over your life. Jesus spoke of the freedom from sin. In John 8:32 He said, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." The Truth can make you free from anything unlike Christ. He said in verses 34-36: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." What a wonderful way to live!

Paul said in Romans 6:18, "Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." Verse 22 says, "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." You cannot outgrow sin in your life. Some people feel that eventually they will outgrow sin, but they can no more outgrow sin than a crab apple tree can grow into a Red Delicious apple tree. Sin becomes a part of your very nature; it becomes a part of you. It is woven into your life.

Jeremiah wrote in Jeremiah 13:23a, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?" No! Likewise, no self effort can lift you out of sin. Nominal religion does not teach living without sin. That is what makes the Church of

God a separate, distinct body of people. Dear one, you can live without sin if you want to, by the help of God.

The latter part of verse 23 reads, ". . . then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil." The word *accustomed* means "through long use of repeated experience." You cannot pull yourself out of the quagmire of sin; it takes God. Paul said as much in Romans, Chapter 7. Paul was not writing of his condition as a Christian. He said in verse 24a, "O wretched man that I am!" Christians are not wretched. They are sons and daughters of God. Paul let us know that before he was converted, he would set his mind to do right, but he had no power to live holy while living under the Law. Church of God, God has blessed us with an awesome truth; holiness is an awesome truth.

If we could save ourselves through our own efforts, Christ would not have had to come into the world, take a fleshly body, and then suffer, bleed, and die as He did. If we could earn our salvation, Christ would not have had to die. Paul said in Ephesians 2:8-9: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works [or effort], lest any man should boast."

The High Cost of Sin

An individual pays dearly for his or her sin. First, it brings grief to God, and then it brings sadness to others and to oneself. Consider the cost of Adam's and Eve's sin. With their sin came much unhappiness. They were driven from an absolutely perfect environment, and the judgment of God was placed upon humanity. We read in Genesis 3:16 that God said to Eve, "I will greatly multiply [it does not say add; it says multiply] thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee."

We read in Genesis 3:17-19 that

God said to Adam: "Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

Some people say, "Sin isn't so bad." Well, what Adam and Eve did cost them dearly. The next generation introduced a new sin into the world: the sin of murder. Millions have followed Cain's example. If a father is rebellious, the children will be tremendously rebellious. The grandchildren will be even more rebellious. The problem compounds itself. I know what I am talking about. I have seen this come to pass. When you tell them to leave the sin business, some of them will turn against you.

How did Cain feel about his punishment, the cost he had to pay for his sin? In Genesis 4:13 you can read his testimony: "And Cain said unto the LORD, My punishment is greater than I can bear."

Years after Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery, they eventually came under the convicting power of God. (You see, you may go along for a while and think that things are hidden, or concealed, and think that no one knows; however, Numbers 32:23 states, "Be sure your sin will find you out.") For some time, Joseph's brothers stifled the conviction of God, but they came to feel the weight of the guilt and the shame of their sin. In the process of time, Joseph's brothers were driven by hunger into the land of Egypt where Joseph was reigning in power. Calamity after calamity followed those men. That is what sin brings. Finally, many years later, those guilt-ridden brothers were brought face to face with their

crime. They relented of their jealousy. Jealousy is a terrible sin, and it is the root of all kinds of evils that go on under the guise of religion.

In Genesis 42:21, when Joseph's brothers went down to Egypt, they said, "We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us."

Sometimes people do things in a group that they would not do alone. That is the reason you need to be careful of grouping up with others. People can become nasty, daring, ugly, and hardhearted. Romans 14:11 reads, ". . . every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God." We can see in these brothers how conviction works in people's lives. The conscience may lie dormant for a while, but the time will come when one comes in contact with God, and the conscience will be awakened.

We are living in a day when ministers do not preach to awaken people's consciences, but rather they soothe their consciences. They do not ruffle anyone's feathers, so to speak. So they let people sleep, and one day they will wake up in hell. The Apostle Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 7:10, "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation."

Reaping the Whirlwind

Let us consider Samson. By following after a strange woman and giving in to her pleading, he lost the strength of God, and then he lost his eyes. (I want to preserve the strength of God in my life.) Have you ever thought about the pain that Samson must have suffered when the Philistines gored out his eyes? Then they made him grind in the prison house as he was jeered by the crowds, and eventually lost his life. What a price to pay for sin!

Consider King David. He committed some very heinous sins against an officer of his own army. First, he took Uriah's wife and com-

mitted adultery with her, and then he plotted the death of this innocent man in an effort to cover his sin. It was found out. *The Living Bible* says, "You may be sure that your sin will catch up with you." The child died that David and Bathsheba conceived in their adultery. Also, incest entered his home.

One of David's own sons (Absalom) turned against him and led a conspiracy against him. Eventually Absalom was murdered, and when the news came home to David, it brought untold grief to him. In 2 Samuel 18:33 David's testimony was, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" The cost of sin is very great. David said in Psalm 51:3, ". . . my sin is ever before me." The pleasures of sin are very short-lived, but sin can bring a lifetime of grief, and maybe even eternal woe.

Hebrews 11:24-25 reads: "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." You may find some pleasure in sin, but it exists for only a short time. The sowing season might be enjoyable, but only God controls the reaping season. Hosea said in Hosea 8:7, "For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind." God has the final word in everything. The reaping is *always* greater than the sowing. I have seen this repeatedly. I cannot emphasize enough how great the cost of sin is.

In the Word of God we can read of the high cost of adultery. Its memories and the influences seem never ending. Adultery breaks apart homes and leaves children insecure. I have taught school for many years, and I have seen how insecure, how confused, and how greatly troubled it leaves them.

I ask, in closing, Do you want to pay the price for sin? Do you realize how high the cost is? An old Church of God songwriter penned, "What

we are sowing surely is growing. That which we reap shall be as the seed." You may say, "What is past is past." Yes, but the memory does not go away. God can forgive, but the scars will always remain. You need to make wise choices. You ought to choose to serve God. If you are not saved, won't you come to Jesus right now and say, "I'm giving up sin. I'm through with it." One contemporary song says:

*As a child I foolishly turned God
away,
Not knowing the heartbreak a sinner
must face;
But God in His goodness has let me
return
To share with His children this lesson
I have learned.*

*So with pleasure and promises, sin
took control,
Leaving me dying with nothing to
show;
Gone were the good things and my
dearest friends—
Only a Savior could love me again.*

*O soul, are you tired of sin's binding
ways?
Are you tired of the wages your soul
must pay?
The Savior calls your soul today,
These words are His warning, in love
hear me say,*

*Sin will take you farther than you
want to go,
Slowly but surely, taking control.
Sin will keep you longer than you
want to stay;
Sin will cost you far more than you
want to pay.*

My responsibility has been to preach the Word to help you to understand the seriousness of sin. Won't you come to God? You need to lay aside all the excuses that the devil may bring into your mind. Won't you let God take control of your life?

(Cassette C-4743E)

CHRIST

the Refuge of Man



In the Old Testament is recorded the account of provision being made for those who committed involuntary manslaughter to find sanctuaries of safety. In the earliest stages of history, mankind made no distinction between the various forms of homicide. The avenging of the victim was assumed by his kinsmen. But after Moses slayed the Egyptian taskmaster, God provided for Moses a place of hiding until after the death of Pharaoh. Then when Israel came out of Egyptian bondage, God instructed Moses to provide cities of refuge for those who unintentionally took another person's life. Thus, it came to pass that when Israel reached the land of promise, they established six cities of refuge, three on each side of the river Jordan.

Gradually it began to dawn upon the minds of men that every mortal needed a great impregnable, eternal, divine refuge. We hear Moses declaring to Israel, "The eternal God is thy refuge." David sang, "God is our refuge." Today we realize that Christ is the great refuge of man, the impregnable tower of safety for all who will come to Him.

The Hope of the Morally Bankrupt

Christ is the hope of the morally bankrupt. John tells of a woman who was taken in the act of adultery and brought by force into the presence of the Master. Her accusers said, "Master, Moses said in his law that such a person should be stoned

to death, but what sayest thou?" Jesus stooped and began writing in the sand, as though He had not heard them. Then He straightened up and said, "He that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone." Again, He stooped down and wrote. We do not know what He wrote. It has been suggested that He wrote the sins of which these men were guilty: pride, hate, self-righteousness, greed, dishonesty, jealousy, intemperance, or some other sins.

At long last, when He looked up, they had all silently fled. Upon seeing the woman there all by herself, He said, "Where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee?" And she answered, "No man, Lord." Our Lord said to her, "Neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more." Jesus was this poor woman's only refuge. If it had not been for Him, her death would have been inevitable. Let the morally bankrupt of today and of every age know that Jesus Christ is the great secure refuge of the morally bankrupt.

The Refuge of the Physically Handicapped

In the New Testament we read again and again of Jesus healing the sick. Blind Bartimaeus cried out of the night of despondency, "Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me!" Jesus went to him and healed his blinded eyes. A group of lepers, who were making their way through the streets calling, "Un-

clean! Unclean!" saw the Lord and cried, "Master, if you want to, you can make us clean." Jesus was touched with compassion for them and He went to heal them. At His Word, their leprosy fled like frost before a morning sun.

Almost a quarter of a century ago, a boyhood pal of mine became seriously ill. Day by day, he grew worse. Although he was only in his youth, his body bent over until he moved about like an aged man of eighty or ninety years. A large growth came on his back, and we all despaired for his life.

One Lord's Day afternoon, when all hope was apparently gone, a group of Christians came. The leader of the group asked the sick boy if he believed God could heal him. Yes, he believed! The world has yet to realize what power is available for those who have faith in the immanence of God.

Then the old Christian turned in his New Testament to James 5:14 and began to read, "Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him."

"Do you believe this?" Weak, tired, almost hopeless, yet with faith

in the power of Christ, the boy replied, "Yes, I believe!" Taking a small vial of oil from his pocket, the aged man said, "Now we will anoint you with oil, as the Bible has instructed us to do. There is no virtue in this oil. It possesses no power to heal of itself. We use it merely in obedience to the Scripture."

Then the elderly man began to pray. If you had been in the adjoining room, you would have had difficulty in hearing what he said. He reminded the Lord of the times when He healed the halt and the lame and the leprous and the blind as He trod the shores of Galilee, and quoted Hebrews 13:8: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever." He closed his prayer with a glorious affirmation of faith in the power of God to heal even today and said "Amen," to which all those present assented.

"Hobert," he said, "you are healed." Strange though it may seem, Hobert straightened out in his bed for the first time in many months. The large growth on his back opened and drained, his fever subsided, and he was well. I can't explain it. I only know that Christ is still the great eternal, divine refuge of the physically handicapped.

The Refuge of the Mentally Afflicted

Christ is the refuge of the mentally afflicted. One out of every seventeen persons in the United States, according to statistics, is mentally ill. There was a day in the not too far distant past when there was a great stigma on those who were mentally ill. We are coming at long last to have a more Christian attitude toward the mentally ill. There is a very thin line of distinction between the sane and the insane. The altering of a chemical the tiniest fraction in the body may becloud the mind forever, or the changing of the nerves one molecule many throw a man into mental oblivion for a lifetime, or a nervous shock may place one in total mental eclipse.

A friend of mine suffered a nervous breakdown. He was placed in a sanitarium. Psychiatrists shook their heads and turned away. But his family and a few faithful friends held him up before the Lord in believing intercession on the wings of prayer, and one happy day he was well. He had found that Christ is still the refuge of the mentally afflicted. He is the "same yesterday, today, and for ever."

The Refuge of the Heartbroken

Christ is the refuge of the heartbroken. No matter what may be the cause of your worry, Christ does not fail. He stood up in the synagogue at Nazareth and announced to all, "I am come to heal the brokenhearted."

Your heart may have been broken by the crashing of your house of dreams. Your shoulders may droop with sorrow by the infidelity of a husband or a wife. Your face may be lined with care through financial reverses. Your world might have crashed about your head because of the waywardness of a son or a daughter. The light might have gone out in your sky because of the death of a husband or a wife or a child. Impenetrable darkness may cover all for you because of insane, mad war. Since the earliest dawn of the Christian era, the heartbroken have found Christ to be their sure, un failing refuge. "Whosoever will, let him come."

The Refuge of the Sinful

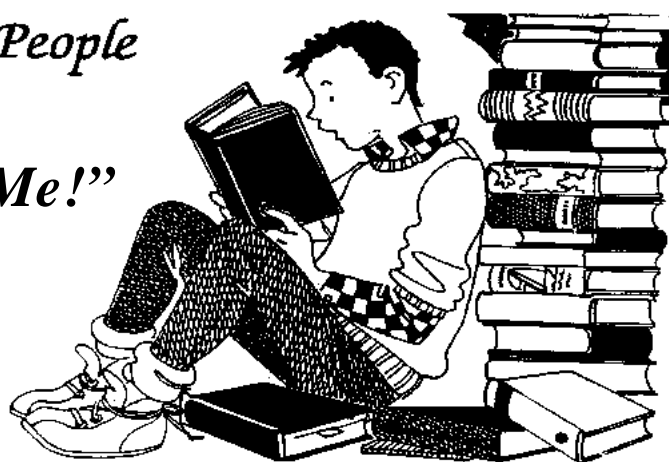
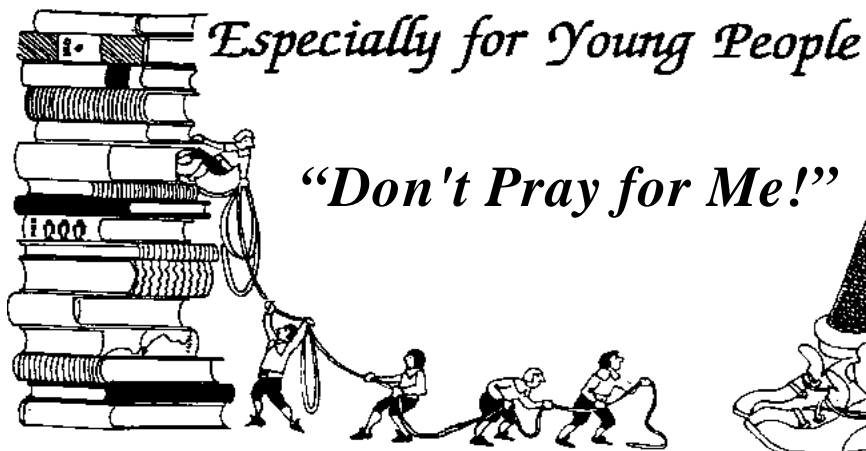
Christ is the refuge of the sinful. "This is a faithful saying, worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners" (1 Timothy 1:15). The drunken, the profane, the immoral, the vulgar, the dishonest, all have found Christ as their refuge. It matters not how apparently trivial or how terribly hideous the transgression, Christ is the great hope of all who have missed the way. Look to Him, repent, believe, renounce the old evil way, surrender and consecrate, and verily thou shalt be saved.

The Refuge for Those Facing Death

Christ is the refuge of every quavering, fearful mortal who contemplates death. Jesus went down into the tomb, broke the shackles of death, arose from the grave, and He is alive forevermore. He said, "Because I live, ye, too, shall live." As we believe in Him, death loses its terror. The grave ceases to be dismal, dark, and ominous; it is turned from a blind alley into a great, golden thoroughfare that leads to the glorious place where we "shed this mortal coil" and go to be at home with God. The Christ, glorious, transcendent, immutable, eternal, divine—He is our refuge.

Selected

*This hope supports me in the storms,
When flesh and spirit quail:
My Father holds me with His arm,
His promise cannot fail.
The ocean of His grace transcends
My small horizon's rim,
And where my feeble vision ends
My heart can rest in Him.
In confidence I bide the tryst:
His promise is for aye.
He guides me still, through cloud and mist,
Unto the perfect day.*



I once witnessed the most heart-rending scene I have ever seen in my life. It was at the big Union Depot on a cold, November morning. I had come to see a friend of mine off. As we stood there, talking and shivering in the early morning mist, I noticed the next door neighbors of mine were standing just across the station platform from us. I noticed that their son, who was a soldier, was with them. I assumed that he had been home on a furlough and that they had come down to the depot to see him off. His folks were very good Christians. Their name was Barton. We had been friends for years, but I had not seen much of them recently because I had been very busy.

Just then Mrs. Barton turned and saw me, so she motioned for us to come over. My friend and I stepped over, and introductions were made. I hardly remembered her son Ralph. He certainly had changed since he had been in the army. He was still as tall and handsome as ever, but the old, frank, smiling countenance was gone. He was nervous and irritable. He kept pacing back and forth while waiting for the train to pull in.

Mrs. Barton explained that Ralph had been home on a furlough and was anxious to get back to camp. As we stood talking, the big streamliner came roaring in and the crowd began to surge through the gates to the coaches. Ralph turned to say good-bye to his folks. His mother's lips began to quiver, and the tears welled up in her eyes. She

looked up at her boy with tender, loving eyes and with a voice full of compassion, she said, "Goodbye, my son. Remember, we'll be praying for you all the time."

A strange look came over Ralph's face, a deep red color surged up from under his collar. Something seemed to actually snap inside of him, and anger and passion blazed out of his eyes.

He spoke sharply, almost blurt-ing out his words, "Don't pray for me," he said, "I don't need your prayers. I can take care of myself. I've gotten along without God this far, and I guess I can make it the rest of the way!" His tone was sharp and bitter. I felt so sorry for poor Mrs. Barton. You could see that his words were fairly cutting and tearing out her heart.

Then he continued, "Anyhow, if God cared anything at all about me, He would have kept me out of the army. He doesn't care about me, so why should I care about Him? Aw, don't pray for me, Mom. I don't need it, and it won't do any good."

He glanced at his mother and saw the tears pouring down her cheeks and the heartbroken look on her face. It was more than he could stand. Without another word of farewell, he turned quickly on his heel and strode, almost ran, to the waiting train. Without a backward glance or a farewell wave, he swung on board and disappeared from view.

I left then. I couldn't stand to stay there and see Mrs. Barton as she

stood so crushed and silent in her grief. To think that her only boy of whom she had been so proud and who had once been a fine Christian, now spurned God's love and mercy.

I saw Mrs. Barton several times after this incident, but we never spoke of that awful moment in the depot that morning. Mrs. Barton seemed to age years in those months, but I knew she was still living close to God and making intercessory prayer for her son.

Then one day she called me over. She said she had a letter from Ralph that she wanted me to read. I noticed as she handed me the thick envelope that there was a changed look on her face. A calm, serene light glowed in her eyes. "My, it's a long one," I remarked.

"Yes, it's very long," she answered. "He had a lot to tell me."

I hastily unfolded the pages and read the strange story that Ralph had recorded there. It read:

Somewhere in the Pacific

Dear Mom,

It's going to be kind of hard to write this letter. We aren't allowed any lights out here, so I have to scribble by twilight and whenever I get a chance, which isn't often. Another thing that makes it rather hard is that I don't know just how to say what I want to. How I wish I could sit in the living room with you tonight and just talk. Remember how you used to sit in the old arm chair and mend, and I would sit on the foot-

stool at your feet? Those were the happy days, weren't they, Mom?

I guess something kind of came between us then before I had to go to the army. Guess I kind of got soured on life in general then. I could not see much ahead in the future for me. Everything seemed so black. Guess I thought I was the only boy in the world who was having to sacrifice a promising career for the army. I could not see why God allowed me to have all the tough luck.

Then I got to looking at church members and lost confidence in their experiences. Well, you know how it was, Mom. Things went from bad to worse, and I kept drifting further and further away. I guess you didn't know it, Mom, but after I got in the army training camp in Texas, I went into actual sin. Yes, I was just like the other boys. I smoked, danced, and gambled. All the time, I kept thinking about you, Mom. I knew it would crush your heart if you could see the way your son was acting, the boy that you had tried to raise so carefully in the strait and narrow way. I thought about how good you'd always been to me. I thought about the time when I had scarlet fever and the doctor gave me up, and how you stayed with me night and day and nursed me back to health. I just couldn't get you out of my mind. Every time I'd take a drink, I'd see your face, and something would say, "What if your mother could see you? Would you drink that beer in front of her?"

The world had gotten a tight grip on me, Mom, and even though I hated myself for doing it, I kept on in the paths of sin. Then I got that furlough. Remember, Mom? It came as a surprise just before they were going to ship me across. Well, then I found out that I could have a furlough, I didn't want to go home because I couldn't bear to have you find out about me. But, oh, I was so homesick, and I wanted to see the old home place once more! So I made up my mind that I'd reform. I quit all my bad habits for your sake, and I'd be so good that you'd never

guess about all the sin I'd committed.

So I went home, and you did everything you could to make those few days full of happy memories for me. But instead, they were days of torment and torture. I suffered agony of soul, mind, and body. For one thing, my whole body cried out for the liquor and cigarettes that it was accustomed to.

As the days of my furlough dragged slowly by, my conscience bothered me more and more. I grew irritable, grouchy, restless, and nervous. I just couldn't conceal my feelings even around you, Mom. I was glad when the furlough was up and it was time for me to leave.

That morning, before we went to the depot, I could hardly sit still. Time seemed to stand still. I wanted to go to the train alone. I hated to have to say goodbye. I guess I've always hated farewells. Then after we finally got there, it seemed ages before the train pulled in. I was so nervous I could hardly keep my hands from shaking. When I started to move toward the train and you kissed me and began to cry, I felt like I was going to cry too. To relieve my intense feelings, I began to swear under my breath. But, Mom, when you said you'd be praying every day for me, it seemed that something snapped inside me.

The devil took full possession of my heart, and I found myself saying harsh, embittered words. I don't know now just what all I did say. I only know that all the sin and the conviction that I had been storing up just spilled out.

I stopped when I saw the pitiful heartbroken look on your face. The tears were streaming down your dear, old face, and I couldn't stand it any longer. I turned on my heel and stumbled toward the waiting coach. Scalding tears were burning my eyes, and I felt as though my heart would burst. My only desire was to get away as soon as possible.

The events that followed are all like a blurred nightmare to me. I got back to camp and was shipped across in a few days. It was then that

I began to know the awful terror of a lost, unsaved soul. I don't think I'd ever known before what it was to be afraid. I was afraid of being torpedoed, of drowning, of freezing to death in the icy ocean waters, of burning to death in flaming, oily waters.

After we arrived in the jungle islands, I was afraid of bombing raids. There was screaming, falling shrapnel and sneaking snipers hiding in every tree, or so it seemed. Most of all, I was afraid of dying and going to hell with no Christ to help me and save me ever again.

Then came the night that I want to tell you about, Mom. The one night that changed my whole life. Our company was attempting to move up and occupy the enemy's position. We had advanced some, but there was one bad machine-gun nest that kept raking us. We had already lost a lot of men because of it. Finally, our commander called for volunteers to go ahead and destroy it. I didn't want the others to know what a coward I was, so I volunteered along with three others.

We started out, loaded with hand grenades. The going was slow and laborious. Most of the time we hugged the ground and advanced on our stomachs. Bullets whined all around us. One bullet hit a man in the leg, and we were forced to go on without him. When we went a few feet farther, a shell burst directly in front of me. The terrible concussion seemed to crush my whole body, and everything suddenly went black.

When I regained consciousness, all was still around me. I could not figure it out. I opened my eyes but couldn't see a thing. All was blackness, yet I could feel the scorching, tropical sun on my face. It finally came to me that I was blind—utterly, helplessly blind. Then I tried to move, but my body seemed numb. I was paralyzed and powerless to move a muscle. I couldn't even talk. The muscles of my throat refused to function.

It was then that I knew what real terror was. This was to be a living

death. I would lie there under the burning rays of the sun with the insects eating me and poisonous snakes all around me until I slowly and horribly died of thirst and gnawing hunger.

I didn't know what happened to my company. In the distance I could hear fighting, but whether I was in enemy territory or not, I could not tell. I had no way of knowing.

I lay there for some time, trying to collect my thoughts. Conviction gripped me as it never had before. There I lay, slowly dying in agony and suffering and misery, but this present agony was not to be compared with the agony and suffering I would soon be enduring in hell. This agony would only last a short while. In hell it would go on endlessly!

Then and there, I saw the need of the God whom I had forsaken. All the Scripture verses I had ever learned about repentance surged through my mind, and I began to silently pray to God to save me. Oh, how I prayed! I was desperate.

Time passed slowly. I felt the warmth of the sun decrease, then it began to rain. Oh, what a cold, chilling rain it was! The sun did not shine, so I knew it must be night. I

lay there on the wet, cold ground. My clothes were drenched, and I chilled constantly. All around me, I could hear the stealthy sound of jungle animals.

Still I prayed on and on. I confessed every sin I could think of and begged God's forgiveness. Night passed by, and I felt the rays of the sun once more and the sweltering heat as it rose from the ground, moist from the cold rain during the night.

All at once my prayers got through to Heaven. I seemed to see Jesus dying on the Cross for me and for my sins. I knew God had forgiven me and that I was once more a child of His.

A queer, ringing noise pounded in my ears, and I began to lose consciousness. Just before I passed out, I heard voices, American voices. I thought I must be dreaming.

When I awoke, Mom, I was lying on a hospital cot in a hospital ward on board ship. I could see and move and speak. The nurse told me I would be all right. I had only been temporarily shell shocked. However, if the litter bearers hadn't found me when they did, I would have died from exposure. She told me that the

Americans had won a glorious victory and had captured the islands.

My heart was so full of joy that I began praising the Lord right there in front of the nurse, and I'm still praising Him, Mom, for what He has done for me.

The doctor says I'll be fine, Mom. They are giving me a thirty-day furlough, so I'll see you soon.

Also, Mom, when this war is over, I'm going to prepare for the ministry. I want to tell other people how to find God. Until then, I'm going to keep witnessing for my Savior right here in the army. Well, Mom, I'll be seeing you soon. Don't forget to pray for me. I found God, but I still need your prayers.

Your loving son,
Ralph

I handed the letter back to his mother. "Praise the Lord," I breathed.

His mother sat with bowed head and folded hands. A quiet smile hovered on her lips.

"Thank God, I kept on praying for him," she murmured.

Selected

Mechanicsburg Church of God

(The church is located just West of Mechanicsburg on US 36.)

Revival Meeting & special fellowship service

March 7-14, 2004

Evangelist: Brother Roger L. Decker, Newark, Ohio

Service Times: Mon. -Fri. 7:00 p.m.; Sat. 10:00 a.m.; Sun. 10:30 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.

**Special Fellowship Service will be held on Saturday at 10:00 a.m.,
with a meal provided by the local congregation.**

For further information contact:

*Pastor Allen Polston, 2020 Ralph St., New Castle, IN 47362
Telephone: 765-521-8284*

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

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

3 And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship.

4 Now when he had left speaking,

he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.

5 And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net.

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

7 And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them.

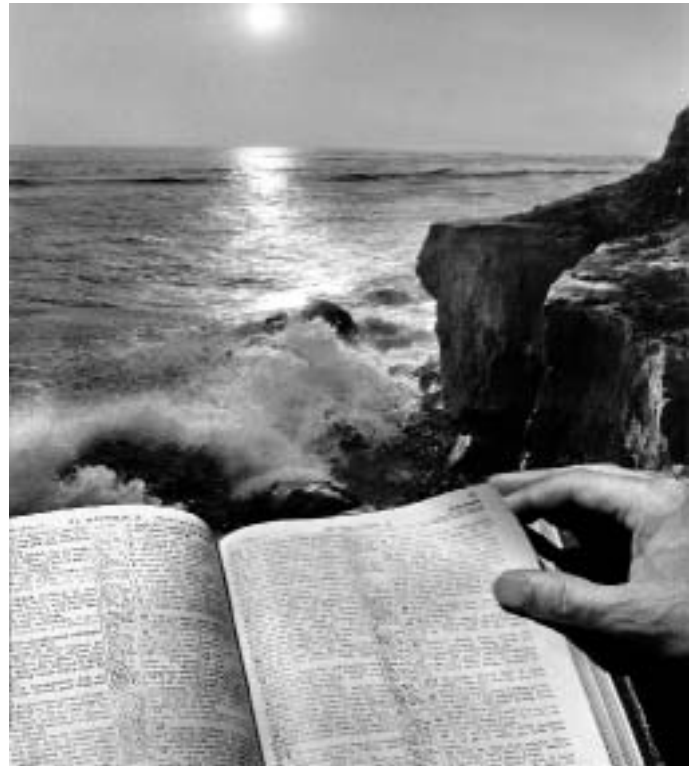
And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink.

8 When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.

9 For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken:

10 And so was also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.

The Conditions for a Miracle in Your Life



Brother Esau Brooks

The Need of Getting Into the Ship

We are living in a time when it seems that many people are finding pleasure in everything but the Lord. I am glad that salvation is real, that it satisfies the hungry soul, and that it still gives power to overcome the devil. When the devil says, "Do this," you can say, "Thank God, I don't have to." I am a firm believer

in real salvation. The devil has so many false teachings under the name of salvation that it is alarming to see how few people really know the genuine from the counterfeit.

Mystery Babylon is giving many people a sip from her cup. She is accomplishing the work she has set out to do, and that is to make all the nations of the world "drunk with the wine of her fornication" (Revelation 17:2). Though oth-

ers around me may give in, by the grace of God, I intend to stand against the devil as long as God gives me breath. Sometimes the way gets tough, but I thank God that the grace of God has always been sufficient.

Friend, signs and conditions let us know that we are near the end of time. Those of us who intend to make Heaven our home must rise against the imposition of the devil.

I pray that God will open your eyes and help you to see the great possibilities before you. Everything is not all dark and gloomy. Thank God, the outlook may be grim, but the "up look" is still bright. As you study the Scripture lesson, I want to encourage you to focus your attention upon it to see what you can find to help you as you live for the Lord.

If you are a sinner, you need a miracle that will turn you away from sin and satisfy the craving down deep in your heart. If you are a churchgoer, you need a miracle to transform you into a vibrant Christian. There is a difference between merely attending church services and professing to be a Christian and truly *being* a Christian.

In our Scripture lesson Jesus was preaching to a great crowd of people by the lake of Gennesaret. As they pressed upon Him to hear the Word of God, he saw two ships by the lake. Verses 2-3 tell us: ". . .the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets. And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship." Jesus saw the need of getting into that ship to reach the masses of people who were standing on the shore to hear His message. It seems that the moment Jesus stepped into the ship, He saw that the ship was too close to the land for Him to do the work that He was about to do.

Many of us would suppose that the closer to the land the ship was, the easier it would have been for Jesus to reach His audience. No doubt, Jesus saw more than that, so He told Simon to push away a little from the land. Then He sat down and taught the people from the ship.

"Launch Into the Deep and Let Down Your Nets"

We read in verse 4, "Now when he had left speaking, he said unto

Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught." What was the reason behind His request? As our Lord got into that ship, He could see that something was lacking. Let us get the picture. The ship and the necessary gear it took to bring in the fish were there, and the fishermen were there, but there were no fish. As we read further into the story, verse 5 tells us, "And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing."

What I see in our Scripture lesson is very much like what I see today, spiritually speaking. We have the church, we have preaching, and we have Christians; but where are the results? Where are the fish, so to speak? As Jesus went on with His ministering, He decided to do something about the condition. However, before anything could be done, He wanted to get the ship a little farther away from the land.

I want to draw your attention to the latter portion of verse 4 of our Scripture text, where Jesus said, "Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught." Before any fish could be caught, it was urgent that the ship get a little farther from the land. Notice that Jesus could not go on with His ministering in that ship because it was too close to the land. It was not until He got Peter involved in moving the ship away from the land that He went on and ministered to the people. Then, as He finished ministering to the people, He exhorted Peter to launch out into the deep and let down the nets for a draught. Peter was an expert fisherman, and no doubt, Jesus showed no signs of knowing anything about fishing.

Peter said, in so many words, "Master, we have toiled all night. We know these waters. We have fished here all our lives. There are no fish here."

Jesus said, as it were, "I am not asking you if there are any fish here. You have to get away from the land and let down your nets, and then we will see what happens."

Peter, willing to be submissive, said, "Nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net" (verse 5).

Then we read in verse 6, "And when they had this done, they enclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake." They had been right next door to what they so urgently needed, yet they were hindered by not launching out far enough. Could that be the trouble today? Many complain about the wickedness of the world, the ungodliness of mankind, yet it seems that the more they talk about it, the worse it is getting.

America is spending billions of dollars to arrest the drug trade, but it seems that as soon as they conquer it in one area, it springs up somewhere else. Those who are involved in the sale and use of illegal drugs are ruining their lives and ruining their chances of becoming useful citizens in this world. This should bother you as much as it bothers me.

What needs to be done to arrest this condition? God's church is in this world for a purpose, and it is the same purpose the church served in the morning time. I am not going to settle for the idea that the church in this evening time must be less powerful than the church in the morning time. Some talk about knowledge being increased and wickedness being increased, and they say the people of today are different. However, as far as the Word of God is concerned, God is still God. As long as God is still God, "his kingdom ruleth over all" (Psalm 103:19). Something can be done about the condition of our world today.

Jesus Is Ready to Supply Every Need

As an individual, you may be living a life filled with failure and defeat. You may be dragging along, hardly able to make it. Perhaps you are at your wit's end, not knowing which way to turn next. You may be at the point where you are ready

to give up because you see no way out of your situation. As Jesus told the disciples in His day, I am telling you today that you need to launch out into the deep and let down your net for a draught. Jesus is ready to supply your every need.

In our Scripture lesson the fish were there, but why were the disciples unable to catch them? They were too close to the land. The trouble in our day and time is that many who claim to be Christians are living too close to the world. They are giving up on launching out any further. Many have relaxed their efforts, and as a result, the world is getting worse. Young people's lives are turning into wretched messes while those who claim to be God's people wring their hands and wonder what to do next.

Imagine the crisis that was going on in that vessel before Jesus came. The disciples had been toiling all night, looking for fish. They knew there ought to be fish around, but every time they let down their nets, they came up empty. Finally, they gave up and decided to wash their nets. Then Jesus came and, in essence, said, "I would like to use this ship to get a message to the people. But before I can do that, you need to move this vessel a little farther from the land. It is too close to the shore for Me to use." When He finished His message, He gave them the order, "Launch out into the deep." He was telling them to get away from the shore; then they could let down their nets. He did not tell them what was going to happen. He only told them to launch out into the deep and let down their nets. That was all they had to do.

Christian friend, you can learn a lesson from this. If you want to see results from serving God, you must get further away from the world, because it is exerting too much influence over your life. It is a constant battle, even in your prayer life, to keep the world out.

Those fishermen were toiling to catch fish. They did not just sit

around and not do anything. They labored all night, but they did not receive anything in return for their efforts until Jesus told them to launch out into the deep and let down their nets. To their great surprise, they enclosed a great multitude of fish, so many that their nets broke and they called for their fellow fishermen to help. Both ships were so full that they began to sink. Where did all those fish come from? Do you suppose God worked a miracle and produced those fish? No, the fish were there, but the fishermen were toiling too near the land. There were no fish near the land.

Pushing Away From That Which Hinders Spiritual Progress

Christian friend, if you are living too close to the world, you can give up any hope of affecting anyone for the Lord. In order for you to affect those who are under the influence of drugs, alcohol, or other allurements in the world, you must launch out into the deep. You must launch out into the deep where it will make a difference in your experience with God. There is a great need to get deeper into the things of God. The men in our Scripture text had everything going for them: the boat, the nets, and the means to pull in the nets. All they needed was there, but it was useless until they launched out into the deep. Today we have the church and good, solid preaching. Thank God for all of that, but where are the results? Many are too close to the world for the Lord to use them as He really wants to. What does this Scripture text symbolize to us? There is a possibility of revival from God if people will just launch out into the deep and get further from the world.

Those disciples seemed so contented with having the ship near the shore. While they were in that condition, they were getting nothing in return. We are living in a time when many people are failing to launch out into the deep. Someone

may ask, "What do you mean when you speak of launching out into the deep?" To launch out into the deep is to get further away from the world so that you can be in a position where God can use you. If our forefathers in the faith could come back and see how close to the world many people are living today, they would cry out against this condition. There is a need for crying out against this condition. There is no telling what all we would see take place if we would push out a little more into the depths of the things of God. It might cramp our current lifestyles, and we might have to alter certain routines, but the rewards would be great. It would be worth it when the glory falls!

We are losing ground to Satan and to sectism. It is not that we are doing things that are wrong, but that we are settling for life too close to the world. We need to walk closer to God. This will never come about by chance.

Those fishermen had to do what Jesus told them to do in order to experience what took place before their eyes. It was only after they gave heed to what He said that they caught fish. Today we will experience failures, make mistakes, and come short with God unless we push ourselves out a little deeper into the things of God. The disciples received something because they launched out a little deeper. I hope that you can understand what it means to live closer to God, to move a little further away from the conditions of our times, and even to move further away from things that are routine happenings. These things are hindering our progress.

I pray that God will open your eyes and help you to look into this. Perhaps you can remember a time when the blessings of God really flooded your soul and the inspiration of the Almighty really got hold of your heart, but you have gradually let it go. It does not cost anything to drift, but once you have drifted so far, you may think it would cost you too much to get back. Unfortunately,

some never make it back. It is too much of a fight for them to get back, so they drift with the tide. You do not have to do that, friend!

Cutting the Shorelines

The solemn command that God gave Peter was "Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets." It was not enough to launch out *to* the deep, but they had to get *into* the deep to find the fish. I remember a time when this kind of preaching was received with joy. I trust that you are receiving it with joy, because it is the only thing that will cure this condition. Many times I have wondered whether the Gospel had lost its power and if God had given up on man; but when we pushed a little harder, I found that God has never given up on man, and He has never failed. Today the problem is that many have drifted a little.

Jesus did not tell the disciples to go *by* the deep or just to go *in* the deep, He said to "Launch out *into* the deep." In essence, He is telling us to cut all shorelines! The things of God are never found close to the shore. Those fishermen had given up. They had labored all night, and then they decided to put the Word of God to a test. In verse 5 Peter said, "Nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net." When they did that, to their surprise they caught many fish. Had they launched out into the deep earlier, they would have caught the fish sooner, but they continued to toil close to the land, hoping that conditions would change and they would catch a few fish.

When Jesus came, He said, in so many words, "Men, you are fishing the wrong way. Move this ship a little farther out from the land and launch out into the deep; then let down your nets." As they toiled through the night, they might have been close to the place where they found those fish. Were they too weary to push a little farther? Why did they come short? Whatever the reason, they soon saw their failure, because after Jesus told them what

to do, they were able to enclose enough fish, not only for themselves but also for their fellow fishermen.

Many people are dragging their nets in the sand, spiritually speaking, yet they still expect to catch fish. It would be foolish for fishermen to drag their nets in the sand to try to catch fish.

God can abundantly meet every need. No matter what power the devil exercises, God can break it. No matter how carried away people get over worldly things, God can break that power too. We need to wake up and see God as He is. Conditions, time, circumstances, and people do not limit God, unless you allow them to limit God in your personal life. If God's people will band together and launch forward by the grace of God, we will begin to see a difference. Thank God for what is being done under the present conditions, but think of how much more could be done if we would get deeper into the things of God.

Seek a Deeper Life of Consecration and Self-Sacrifice

Those fishermen were washing their nets along the seashore while countless fish were out in the deep. The fishermen were downcast because they toiled without catching any fish. Those nets were their means of livelihood. They made their living by using those nets. However, those nets became useless to them because they were not catching any fish. As those men obeyed the Word of God and launched out into the deep, the same nets (they did not have to buy new nets) brought an untold amount of fish.

I am concerned about the way our world is going. Wickedness of every description is moving in. Today many are fighting as hard as they can to turn our world into a modern-day Sodom. When I was growing up, it was a shame and a disgrace to be called a sissy. Nowadays we hear about "gay rights." You may ask, "What's wrong with that?" I will answer that with another question: "What is

right about it?" You may say, "Well, those people are not responsible. They were born that way." No, they were not. For you to say they were born that way is to accuse God of going against His Word. They were not born that way. They became affected by others and contaminated themselves.

I have heard people remark, "That boy is a born thief." No, he started stealing after he got here. Also, I have heard people say, "He is a born liar." No, he started lying after he got here. Likewise, no one is born a homosexual. They did that to themselves after they got here. I am glad that the power and the grace of God can deliver people from that. We do not have to downgrade the ministry and talk about ordaining such or give them liberties that do not belong to them just because we are afraid of what they might say. Let us launch out a little deeper into the things of God and have an answer for the conditions that we have to deal with today.

We are facing a time of great challenge, a time of great testing, and a time of tribulation. Thank God, we do not have to go down under it. You may ask, "What do you think I need to do?" You need to do just what Jesus told the disciples to do. Jesus said "Your only trouble is that you are living too close to the shore. Launch out into the deep and let down your net and see if something happens." They did, and what a difference it made!

I want to close with these words: Do not just sit along the shore and say, "I don't think this will work." Try it out! Do you remember the old saying, "Don't knock it until you've tried it"? Before you fight or oppose it, try it! If you will draw closer to the Lord and launch out into a deeper life of consecration and self-sacrifice, you will begin to see a change that will amaze you. Launch out into the deep and let down your net, and see what it will bring. God bless you.

(Cassette C-3627E)

2 Peter 2:1 But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

2 And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.

3 And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their dam-

nation slumbereth not.

4 For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;

5 And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;

6 And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after

should live ungodly;

7 And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked:

8 (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;)

9 The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.



THE LORD KNOWETH HOW

Brother Allen Polston

Living in Submission to God

I want to speak to you from these verses, but first let us consider some things that lead up to our Scripture text. These chapters were divided for the sake of easy referencing, but originally they were just one long letter from God, sent through the Apostle Peter. Chapter 1 has some things to say that lead us up to what we want to focus on

in Chapter 2. Second Peter 1:21 says, "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." God wants you to understand something about His Word, and that is, it is not something that men conjured up. The Word of God came from a divine source. These are things that God has ordained from the beginning. The Bible says that the Word

of God is forever settled in Heaven (Psalm 119:89). God wants you to realize that there is something that you can base your life upon that is more than just what men have to say. The Holy Ghost inspired men of old to record these things so that you can study them, learn from them, and live by righteous principles. The Word of God came down from Heaven.

In 2 Peter 1:20 Peter wrote,

"Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation." This is a similar message that He wants you to get hold of. It is not up to you to decide what you should accept and what you should not accept. God has given us the liberty to choose in some areas of life. For example, He does not require all of us to wear black or to wear the same kind of suit. However, one area where God does not allow you the liberty to make choices is the Word of God. If you are going to be a child of God and make Heaven your home, you must take it just as God has said it. He is the final authority on it.

When a person gives his heart to God, he needs to realize in the beginning that he is entering into a life of submission to God. When you really submit to God and humble yourself, it is the same as entering into the marriage relationship. When a man and a woman enter into the marriage relationship, the woman is choosing to enter into a state of submission to the man; her husband becomes her head. I know that is not popular in this day and age, but it is a Bible truth. Likewise, when you enter into salvation and become a part of God's church, you are entering into a state of submission to God. You must obey His Word entirely. You cannot reject or sidestep any part of it and yet remain saved. You must do His will.

The interpretation of God's Word is not something that you can privately, or individually, decide upon. You must take what God reveals to your understanding and put it into practice. The Scripture does not leave any room for delay. Isaiah 1:18 states, "Come now and let us reason. . . ." Ecclesiastes 12:1 says, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth." He did not say to go out and sow your wild oats first, and then come back and try to work it all out. God does not give you the liberty to choose when, where, or how you should respond to His Word. He said, "This is the way,

walk ye in it" (Isaiah 30:21). You need to do that very thing. When you understand that God moved on holy men of old by the Holy Spirit to set forth His commands, that makes it clear and urgent that you need to obey it now.

God's Holy Spirit knows what you need. The Spirit of God is God, and He knows what to bring to you. God is not foolish, and He does not do things in vain. Therefore, when He speaks to your heart, He has a reason for doing so. If He talks to you about some area of your life that needs attention, it is because He knows that you have a need. God can see ahead, and He is able to direct you. You should not care what the world thinks or what your friends think.

If you will humble yourself and obey God, He will lead you in the right way. He will bring wonderful joy to your life. You need to keep in mind that the Scriptures are from a divine source. They are not something that came about by the will of man, but they came down from God out of Heaven.

Fleshly Things Are Contrary to Spiritual Things

The Bible lets you know that some things originated in the minds of men; however, those things always end in catastrophe. Revelation 13:1 says, "And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy."

What John saw here was described as a beast, and if you read on down and read the description that he gave, you will see that what he described was a terrible sight. Someone may say, "What does that have to do with things that come from men?" What John saw was something that came from men. The Revelation speaks in symbolic language, and the things that he envisioned were symbols that refer to something else.

Isaiah gave understanding of what the sea is in Isaiah 57:20-21: "But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." The Prophet was not talking about wicked bears, wicked lions, and wicked tigers out in nature. The animal kingdom is in the realm where God created it. Isaiah was speaking of wicked individuals. In other words, he was saying that wicked people are like the troubled sea. He was using the sea as a way for us to understand wicked people. The wicked constantly stir up some kind of trouble. There is no peace to the wicked.

Another place in God's Word where He deals with the thought of the sea and likens it to people is Jude, verse 13, where it says, "Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever." Jude was not trying to tell of some kind of weather-related problem that was to occur. He said in verse 5, "I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not." As Jude went down through this chapter, he described people who believed not and became enemies of God.

What John saw in Revelation 13:1 was something that came from the minds of men; it did not come from God. John saw a beast, one that did not have a pleasant appearance. He was actually describing a system of religion that rose from the minds of people.

Revelation 13:11 reads, "And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon." Once again, we find that it did not come from God. The Scripture says that John saw a beast that came up out of the earth. What was he talking about? He was revealing something that originated in the

minds of men.

When things originate in the minds of men, you can be sure that they have a fleshly nature, and what is produced by them is fleshly. Anything fleshly is not spiritual; fleshly things are contrary to spiritual things. Paul made that very clear in Galatians 5:17, which reads, "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh." When things evolve from men, you can be sure that there will be fleshly results. The Bible very clearly lets you know that when things come up from the earth, it is speaking of coming from the minds of men.

Keeping the Flesh Under

In 2 Corinthians 4:7 Paul said, "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels." He was referring to our fleshly bodies, wherein we have salvation. Thank God, you can experience salvation right here in this time world. You can have a wonderful, delightful experience that causes you to have joy and peace in your earthen vessel. The problem is, if you do not keep the desires of the flesh under, the flesh will rise up and go contrary to God's way.

Enjoying this spiritual life involves some patience and some enduring. One songwriter asked, "Who would not gladly endure?" It involves some endurance. We have to wait for God to bestow some blessings upon us. God does not always work things out overnight. Sometimes He lets things linger for a long time. The flesh does not like that. It wants immediate gratification. It does not want to wait, so we have to bring it under.

In 1 Corinthians 15:31 Paul said you must bring the flesh under daily, so it does not get carried away with its wants and desires. When men do not bring the flesh under, they begin to form groups and go in a direction that is contrary to God's will. That is how these beasts originated. Some people who were not keeping the flesh under,

but did not want the reproach of being called sinners, developed ways to allow them to go on in the flesh and yet call themselves Christians.

Paul talked about being earthy in 1 Corinthians 15:47, which says, "The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven." He was clarifying that the beast he saw coming up out of the earth was a formation of men, an agreement among men, which did not originate with God and was not based on a biblical foundation.

Anything that comes from men is sure to bring devastation and lead one further away from God. No matter how many people get behind it, even if it is financially powerful, if it does not come from God, it is on a fast track downward, and sooner or later, it will end in destruction. You had better flee anything that does not originate in the mind of God, whether it is a little temptation that comes to your mind or a major move of men. John wrote in Revelation 18:4, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins." Sometimes you need to flee certain things.

John described what he saw as beasts. He wanted people to realize the fleshly nature of those powers and forces that were rising among men. He wanted people to realize that they had acquired beastly characteristics and that they no longer possessed the nature of God that causes people to love and care for one another. Animals do things that are not what people should do. Animals sometimes kill one another for food or shelter or if they get cornered. They fight and devour one another. God's people do not do that.

The Lord wanted us to see that some pose as God's people, yet they have characteristics of beasts; they are fleshly. In those beasts we can see that meddling in the affairs of God is never good. When men take matters into their own hands rather than allowing

God to take care of them, it never ends in a good way. If you look down through Revelation, Chapter 13, you can see that very clearly.

Submitting Yourself to God's Word

Revelation 13:4 says, "And they worshipped the dragon." We are not supposed to worship any dragon; we are supposed to worship God. The first commandment is to love and worship the Lord our God. Verse 6 tells us that "he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God." We are not supposed to blaspheme God. We are supposed to fear such a thing. That is the result that this move of men brought about. Verse 7 says that "it was given unto him to make war with the saints." The things that come from the minds of men are horrid! No wonder the Lord wants us to understand that His Word is not from men. It is divine, and we can base our lives upon it and practice it in our daily lives. It will produce good, positive results.

Verse 14 states, "And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth. . . ." The beasts that John saw brought deception upon men and women. The latter part of verse 15 says that "as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed." These things are of the devil, and he is out to do a destructive work. When things work in the minds of men and God is left out, blasphemy and making war with the saints will follow. Jesus said the day would come when he that kills us will think he is doing God service.

There are many reasons why God chose to give us divine rules to follow and to base our lives on. I am glad that He can direct us and lead us. We do not have to base our lives on merely what comes from man. We have an unction from God that helps us as we listen to the preached Word and read God's Word that witnesses to us concerning what is Truth, and we can follow God.

Paul wrote in Romans 8:14, "For

as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." I am glad for something that comes down from Heaven. We do not have to base our lives on what this one or that one says, but we can get in contact with Heaven. We can take our problems, our needs, and our questions to Headquarters and let God administer to us. John the Revelator saw this. He said in Revelation 21:2, "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven." He was talking about the church, those who have submitted themselves to Almighty God.

Do you want to be blessed and have a real experience of joy, a really wonderful life? To do that, you need to let God have His way in your heart and life and let Him reveal His will to you. You need to submit yourself to God's Word. When you listen to a man of God preach, you need to have an openness to God so that He can reveal to you what you need. You should not tighten up; then God cannot penetrate your heart.

Following God's Divine Plan

In Matthew 16:13 when Jesus was with His disciples, He asked them the question, "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" In verse 14 they responded, "Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets." Many people say a lot of things, and there are many opinions in the world; but in verse 15 we read that Jesus turned to them and said, "Whom say ye that I am?"

Peter said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (verse 16). Jesus said, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven" (verse 17).

If you want your life to be blessed, and if you want to experience something divine, then you must pour out your heart to God, submit yourself to Him, keep your

all on the altar, and let Him reveal to you the way He wants you to live, think, talk, and dress, and the places He wants you to go. If you let God reveal His way to you, He will say the same thing to you: "Blessed art thou, because flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father which is in heaven."

Things that come from men and leave out God are never right. As I mentioned earlier in the message, God gives you liberty to choose some things, but He does not give any leeway concerning matters of the soul. He is the Father of spirits, and He is the Father of souls. He created a divine plan for the way He wants each of us to live, and He will not take no for an answer. If you are going to serve God, you must obey Him. You cannot side-step issues; there are no exceptions. If you leave out God, you will be heading for destruction. If you base your life only on what men say without getting divine direction from God, you are bound for trouble.

I am glad for something that we can stand on, something divine that came down from God out of Heaven. It is a solid foundation. Friend, God can talk to you about things that you are unsure of. He wants you to move closer to Him. I think He was calling Peter to a higher walk, to a closer relationship with Him.

Jesus asked Peter, "But whom say ye that I am?" The time came for Peter not to just go on what others were saying. God brought him to the point where he had to take a stand. Jesus required a decision of Peter. God can reveal things to us from Heaven. You may hold off doing things sometimes because you are unsure of what to do, but if you will be true to God, He will make it clear to you and bless your life. God does not want you to do things based solely on what people say. He wants you to do things based on what He reveals to you. Saint, when people ask why you live as you do, you should not say,

"That is just what my church teaches." God wants you to tell them why you stand as you do.

Peter wrote in verse 1 of our Scripture lesson, "But there were false prophets also among the people." Peter had already explained in Chapter 1 that there is a divine plan of God to follow and that God will not allow us to walk outside the boundaries of His Word. He gave us guidelines and rules to live by when He set us free. He has already established these things and let us know that it is not left to our choosing. God has inspired these things, and to reject them is to reject God.

God knows what is best for you, and it all comes from His Word. You must wholeheartedly follow His Word and obey Him. No matter how messed up your life is, how troubled you are, how many problems you have accumulated, or how far you have gone in sin, God's way is still the best way to go. There is only one true way. God is not willing that any individual be lost. God loves each of us, and He has a divine way that He wants us to live.

Beware of False Prophets

God also wants us to know there are false prophets who want to draw us away from God's way. Even if you have been saved for many years, you need to watch out for false prophets, because a false prophet does not come to your door and say, "I am a false prophet." No, he uses deception. You need to be cautious. Not everyone who says, "I am a Christian" is truly a Christian. After God saved me, I could not believe how many people told me they were Christians, yet they smoked and drank and carried on. Even when the Holy Spirit of God was inspiring men to record the Word, the devil had false prophets at work. False prophets are still around in our day. Whether you are young or old or somewhere in between, and whether you have been saved for only a few days or for many years, you need to beware of false prophets. If there was no rea-

son to be warned of them, God would not have done so in His Word. He does not do things in vain. He included the warning in His divine Word because it is valuable, precious, needful, and directive.

Again, our Scripture text reads in verse 1, "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction." Notice that the false teachers He tells us about are not those who are out in the world. They are false teachers who privily bring in damnable heresies, denying the Lord, and bringing themselves swift destruction. They come in among us to try to lead souls astray, so it calls for us to be very cautious and careful. If we see those who cause problems and sow discord or oppose the message of Truth, we should not mingle with them. There are false teachers today, just as there were back then. False teachers have a real influence on people and lead them astray. That is the reason we are given this warning.

Peter stated in verse 2 of our Scripture text, "And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of." It is very sad that many follow false teachers. Why do many follow false teachers? Because they speak evil of the way of Truth. Sometimes a good speaker or someone who is in a position of wealth or who is in a prominent position will cunningly speak evil of the Truth and influence people. That is how false teachers work. Peter let us know that is the reason many people follow their pernicious ways.

Verse 3 of our Scripture text says, "And through covetousness shall they with feigned words. . . ." In other words, they speak words that are inaccurate. What they say is true, yet they do not reveal everything so that they leave people with the impression that things are different than what they truly

are. They do not really tell people wrong, but they say things in a way that leaves the wrong impression in their minds.

Seek God's Divine Way

In our Scripture lesson God gave a warning. First, He established that there is a divine way. Though the world has gone astray and godly saints are hard to find, there is yet a divine way. Thank God, there are still people who are living the Truth and walking in it, and there is still just one church, the body of Christ. Christ has not come for her yet, but He will one day.

An opposition is working against God's precious people. Saint, you have to be careful. The devil is looking for those who are subtle, as the serpent was back in Adam and Eve's day. He would even like to work through you to do a damaging work on God's people. In 2 Peter, Chapter 2, Peter mentioned several things to remind us of what God has done in the past to comfort us with the knowledge that God is in control. He spoke of Sodom and Gomorrah, Noah and his generation, and Lot, to reassure our minds that God is mighty and powerful and able to deliver. He gave us a promise in verse 9 of our Scripture text: "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished."

Sometimes you may think that you have to try to straighten out problems before you can move on with God, but that is a lie of the devil. The devil will cause you to make more of a mess. The Lord knows how to deliver you. He wants you to understand that He still has a divine people and a divine way. God has not changed; He is still on the throne. He is Lord of lords and King of kings. Nevertheless, false prophets are working too.

The devil would like to use problems, trials, and temptations to hinder you from serving God, but Peter said, "The Lord knoweth how to deliver. . . ." Friend, no matter

what you are facing and no matter what you feel stands in your way, God knows how to help and how to deliver the godly. Sometimes people do not get saved because they feel that they have made a mess of things and that they need to get some things straightened out before they give their hearts to God. That is a deception of the enemy.

The Lord knows how to deliver. You need to get saved, and then God will help you with your problems. You need to make sure that you are living godly in all the areas of your life, and God will help you with everything else. He knows how to deliver the godly.

Do you feel that things are closing in on you? Are things working in such a way that you do not know what you are going to do and you feel that your problems are going to take you under? If you will live godly and make sure that you stay very close to God, He will help you. The Lord knows how to deliver the godly. One of the most encouraging things that was ever brought to my understanding as a young convert was that God knows how to deliver the godly.

The Lord knows the problems and the pressures you are facing, and He knows the thoughts that are working on your mind. He knows your fears. Oh, what a comfort it is to know that God knows how to deliver the godly! Are you living godly? Are you really staying close to God so that He can help you? He knows how. Oh, there have been so many things I did not know how to handle, but God knew how.

If you have a need in your heart, if you are not where you ought to be with God, you should not let anything keep you from doing what is most important. You need to get right with God first. He knows how to take care of the rest. He knows how to deliver the godly, and He knows how to reserve the unjust to be punished. He will handle things in His own time.

(Cassette C-4710M)

"We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed" (1 Corinthians 15:51). Therefore, those who "are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth" (John 5:28-29). The Apostle Paul said, "It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body" (1 Corinthians 15:44); so it is with those who are "alive and remain" (1 Thessalonians 4:17). They "shall all be changed" (1 Corinthians 15:51).

The question yet remains, To what are they changed? In our Scripture text Paul asked, "With what body do they come?" First Corinthians 15:44 speaks of "a spiritual body," but what constitutes this spiritual body? First Corinthians 15:52 gives us insight: "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump . . . we shall be changed." In verse 53 Paul began to describe the components of this change when he wrote, "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." How can we best understand this spiritual body? The Apostle Peter spoke of Christ "leaving us an example" in 1 Peter 2:21. Christ is our example in all things, and so He is in this matter as well. Philippians 3:21 clearly states, "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body. . . ." If we want to view the spiritual body that we shall receive, we merely need to consider His glorious body.

When Christ initially was resurrected, He said to Mary Magdalene, "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father" (John 20:17); but after He was glorified, He said, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side" (John 20:27). In this verse we can clearly see that Christ's glorified body was indeed a body; it was physical and had physical components. Note the reference to His hands and His side.

In Luke 24:37-43 we see a detailed account of this resurrected body. In verse 39 Jesus let us know that although it had spiritual qualities, such as appearing "in the midst of them" (verse 36) and "vanished out of their sight" (verse 31), that He had flesh and bones and "did eat before them" (verse 43). In verse 40 we see that Jesus "showed them his hands and his feet." This teaches us the same truth that the Apostle Paul penned in 1 Corinthians 13:12, when he wrote, ". . . then shall I know even as also I am known." Christ proved His identity to Thomas by the scars in His hands and in His side. This glorified body will be recognizable.

When a scene of glorification took place at the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-8), Moses and Elijah were both immediately recognized. It will be very similar to our earthly bodies except for the corruption (the blood) shall be removed. Rather than our bodies being mortal and subject to all that mortality brings, they will be immortal. Where the natural body was constructed to inhabit time, which

is temporary, the glorified body will be designed to inhabit eternity, which is forever. The Apostle Paul said in Romans 8:20-23: "For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption. . . . For we know that the whole creation groaneth. . . . waiting for . . . the redemption of our body."

A glorious day is coming, a day when we "shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption [physical corruption] into the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Romans 8:21). It is no wonder that we groan, travail, and long for the day when we will have "a spiritual body." It is no marvel that John cried, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Revelation 22:20). What a day that will be! "With what body do they come?" It will be one "fashioned like unto his glorious body" (Philippians 3:21).

Brother Earl R. Borders

CHRIST IS THE WAY—men without Him are like Cain, wanderers and vagabonds.

CHRIST IS THE TRUTH—men without Him are held in the clutches of sin, deceived by the devil.

CHRIST IS THE LIGHT—men without Him walk in darkness and know not whither they go.

CHRIST IS THE LIFE—men without Him are dead in trespasses and sin.

CHRIST IS THE VINE—men who are not in Him are withered branches prepared for the fire.

CHRIST IS THE ROCK—men not built on Him are carried away by the flood of judgment.

O BLESSED CHRIST, how much better would it not to be, than to be without Thee!



Consecration

*Since Jesus gave his life for me
Should I not give him mine?
I'm consecrated, Lord, to thee,
I shall be wholly thine.*

*I care not where my Lord directs,
His purpose I'll fulfill;
I know he every one protects
Who does his holy will.*

*Tho' he may call across the sea,
With Jesus I will go,
And tell the lost of love so free,
Till all his power may know.*

*My home and friends are dear to me,
Yet he is dearer still;
In my affection first he'll be,
And first his righteous will.*

*My all, O Lord, to thee I give,
Accept it as thine own;
For thee alone I'll ever live,
My heart shall be thy throne.*

*My life, O Lord, I give to thee,
My talents, time and all;
I'll serve thee, Lord, and faithful be,
I'll hear thy faintest call.*