

"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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Vol. 36 December 2006 No. 12

Guest Editorial

"For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building."

1 Corinthians 3:9

"We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain."

2 Corinthians 6:1

Laborers Together

As born again men and women, we are part of the beautiful Church of God, the body of Christ. Therefore, as saints and believers, we are to be laborers working together with Him in harmony to build up the Kingdom of God. The Church of God is a soul-saving station where the saints unite their efforts to win other honest hearts to the Lord and to the glorious Truth. God has a specific work for each loyal member to perform. Every worker is important and vitally needed to accomplish the great task of spreading the Gospel to this lost world.

Earnest prayer, Bible reading, and faithful church attendance are absolute musts. Having a real burden and being willing to contribute your time, energy, and talent to the work of God is necessary. Faithfulness to God and His work conveys an important message to those who are watching our lives. All are not preachers, and not everyone can be evangelists, singers, or teachers; yet all can be workers and helpers together, filling their places in the body. It is not just being workers and doing what we think is good, but it is being harmonious workers together for the glory of God. Working together demonstrates unity.

Laboring together creates a

close relationship with Christ and with one another. Unity in heart and spirit is vitally essential, especially in a world where division and strife are so prevalent. Satan has the church world in such a divided and separated condition that it is impossible for them to be profitable for the Lord. Satan, through his deceitfulness, is striving to bring this division into the ranks of the Church of God. We, the people of God, must reject Satan's motives to divide and separate us from Christ and one another. There is power in unity, and Satan knows this; therefore, we must stay focused on the directives that the Lord has laid out for us to follow. Jesus reminds us about the need of being one with the Father. He prayed for this oneness and unity to be among His people in John 17:11 when He said, "Holy Father, keep in thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are."

As the world looks upon the church and sees genuine love and concern being manifested from heart to heart, it creates a drawing effect on honest, peace-seeking souls. Love for Christ, first of all, and then love for one another are key to real success and unity. In John 13:34-35 Jesus spoke

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The Nation of Israel



Brother Roger L. Decker

Deceptive Teachings

If you take Israel out of the theology, there is no millennium, no rapture, and no tribulation period. You have to fit Israel in to prop up those doctrines. We want to take a look at these theologies by the Word of God. There are all kinds of teachings out there. First, there is pre-millennialism, and those who embrace that theory teach a rapture, and the literal interpretation of the Word of God. Next, there is a-millennialism, and those who teach this interpret things symbolically. Then, there is post-millennialism, and those who hold this theory say that the Kingdom of God will come gradually. They do not believe that

the kingdom is all set up yet. Last, there is preterism, which somewhat agrees with post-millennialism, yet they have some different views. Within each of those teachings there is a little truth, which is what makes them so deceptive.

Today there is much fighting going on in the Mideast, and there is much confusion about the literal nation of Israel. Many people believe that God has something special for the literal nation of Israel, but if that were true, then that would make God a respecter of persons, which is contrary to what the Bible says.

It seems that Israel and Palestine have been engaged in battle after battle with no signs of either side

giving in. Because of this, false impressions have come across the pulpits of our land. Some people feel that when people engage in combat against Israel, they are actually in battle against God, because they believe that the literal nation of Israel is still God's people. Jeremiah wrote in Jeremiah 3:15, "And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding." That is a good diet, spiritually speaking.

Paul, writing to Timothy, said in 1 Timothy, Chapter 2, that prayer should be made for all men, for it is God's will that all men be saved and come to the knowledge of the Truth.

A Look at Israel of Old

As we consider the nation of Israel, I trust that since this is a teaching message, you will follow along in the Word of God. First of all, we want to take a look at Israel of old. Israel is mentioned 2,293 times in the Bible: 2,200 times in the Old Testament, and 73 times in the New Testament. When was there first an Israel, according to the Bible? If you look up the word *Israel* in a concordance, you will find that it was mentioned first in Genesis 32:28, which states, "And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed."

Most Bible students know the story of how Jacob wrestled with the angel, or the Scripture says "a man," and prevailed against him. Therefore, God changed his name from Jacob to Israel. From that time on, Jacob was a changed man. After that, Jacob had twelve sons, and they were called the sons of Israel. Those twelve sons became the names of the tribes of Israel. Of the twelve sons of Israel, only two were born to Rachel, and they were Joseph and Benjamin.

When Jacob was old and failing, he called in his sons and blessed them. To each of his sons he gave a name with a blessing. For example, Judah was a lion, which meant "praise," and from the lineage of the tribe of Judah came Jesus Christ. Benjamin was called a wolf, which meant "son of thy right hand." The Apostle Paul was of the tribe of Benjamin. Then there was the tribe of Levi, and God chose the priesthood from the tribe of Levi, and this tribe was the only one that stood with Moses when the people worshiped the golden calf.

Exodus 32:25-29 says this: "And when Moses saw that the people were naked; (for Aaron had made them naked unto their shame among their enemies:) Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the LORD's side? [If someone were to do that today, people would

really brand him; but Moses was not trying to win a popularity contest. Moses was very angry at that particular time.] let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him. And he said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour.

"And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men. For Moses had said, Consecrate yourselves to day to the LORD, even every man upon his son, and upon his brother; that he may bestow upon you a blessing this day." There you can see that the tribe of Levi was the only tribe to back Moses during the incident concerning the golden calf.

It is true that Israel of old was God's people throughout the Old Testament. No one can deny that. Israel was made up of Old Testament Jews who were guided and directed by ordinances, the Law, and chosen leaders.

King Solomon's Downfall

Down through time Israel had many kings, one of which was Solomon. However, we find that idolatry entered the life of Solomon. He committed a terrible sin, and it caused severe division. First Kings 11:1-8 reads: "But king Solomon loved many strange women [I would like to paraphrase that and say that he lusted after many strange women], together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites [all of them were enemies of God and of Israel]; Of the nations concerning which the LORD said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after

their gods: [That is the reason it pays to marry in the Lord. You should not bring a foreign god into your house; then you will not have to battle with your companion about where to go to church.] Solomon clave [or stuck] unto these in love.

"And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart. For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods [just as God said they would]: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. And Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and went not fully after the LORD, as did David his father.

"Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon. And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods." Solomon actually set up a high place and an altar, a place where his wives could go and offer up incense to their gods. If a king was truly following God, one of the first things a king did was destroy the high places.

Solomon was a man who had understanding and light. Verse 9 tells us, "And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the LORD God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice." God was angry with Solomon. Sin is sin, no matter who commits it, and God is not a respecter of persons.

God was very displeased with Solomon's sin, just as he would be with the vilest of sinners. Solomon was wise and he knew better than to marry strange women and allow them to practice idolatry, but he became so wrapped up and so deceived in what he was doing that

God appeared to him twice over this matter, but it was to no avail. Solomon's sin was not a secret between God and Solomon, but it was a reproach before all Israel, for all to see, including their enemies. None of them was as responsible as Solomon was.

God's Admonition and Warning to King Solomon

God had appeared to Solomon at the dedication of the temple. Let us read that account in 2 Chronicles, Chapter 7. Earlier in the chapter, when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from Heaven and consumed the burnt offering.

Verses 12-22 read: "And the LORD appeared to Solomon by night, and said unto him, I have heard thy prayer, and have chosen this place to myself for an house of sacrifice. If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people; If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land. Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attent unto the prayer that is made in this place.

"For now have I chosen and sanctified this house, that my name may be there for ever: and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually. And as for thee, if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, and do according to all that I have commanded thee, and shalt observe my statutes and my judgments; Then will I stablish the throne of thy kingdom, according as I have covenanted with David thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee a man to be ruler in Israel.

"But if ye turn away, and forsake my statutes and my commandments, which I have set before you, and shall go and serve other gods, and worship them; Then will I pluck

them up by the roots out of my land which I have given them; and this house, which I have sanctified for my name, will I cast out of my sight, and will make it to be a proverb and a byword among all nations. And this house, which is high, shall be an astonishment to every one that passeth by it; so that he shall say, Why hath the LORD done thus unto this land, and unto this house? And it shall be answered, Because they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, which brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, and laid hold on other gods, and worshipped them, and served them: therefore hath he brought all this evil upon them."

God appeared to Solomon, and at that time God was pleased with Solomon. All Solomon really desired to know was how to go in and go out and how to lead the people. God blessed him with wisdom and riches, and He blessed everything Solomon did. When Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down. Solomon knew that if he went into idolatry and worshiped strange gods that God would be angry and upset with him. Therefore, God did just what He said He would do.

You can read in 1 Kings, Chapter 11, that God had appeared to Solomon twice, and then He went on to let Solomon know that He was going to rend the kingdom from him. However, God did not rend the kingdom while Solomon was alive, but He did so during the reign of Solomon's son. After the death of Solomon, the kingdom split into a northern kingdom and a southern kingdom: The northern kingdom was known as Israel and the southern kingdom was known as Judah.

The northern kingdom lasted about two hundred years, and then it was overthrown and the people were taken captive by the Assyrians. The southern kingdom lasted about three hundred years, and the people were taken captive by the Babylonians under King Nebuchadnezzar's reign. You can read of this in Daniel,

Chapter 1. However, a remnant from the southern kingdom was allowed to return and rebuild Jerusalem in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah, when Babylon was overthrown by the Persians under Cyrus the Great.

The Kingdom at the Time of Christ's First Advent

The kingdom was still divided when Christ came. You can read that it consisted of three different groups of people: the Samaritans (they were actually called half-breeds), the pagans (or the Gentiles), and the Orthodox Jews who claimed the pure lineage of Judah. The Orthodox Jews were broken up into three groups: the Sadducees, the Pharisees, and the Essences; then there were smaller groups: the Herodians, the Galileans, and the Therapeutes. There was much division at the time of Jesus Christ.

How was God going to bring those different groups together when they would not have anything to do with one another? The woman at the well asked Jesus, in so many words, "How is it that You, being a Jew, would ask me for a drink, since I am a woman of Samaria?" The hatred was so severe between the groups that it was out of the question for the leaders even to talk to one another, yet it was all under the name of religion.

Each group claimed to be God's people, yet they would have nothing to do with one another. They all were supposed to be getting their direction and blessings from God. How was God going to get those divided groups together? How could we get them together today? The Scripture that really helps us to know the answer is found in 1 Corinthians 1:19-29: "For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the

wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

"For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence."

Romans 11:33 says, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" The Scripture says that His ways are past finding out! How would men get various groups together today? No doubt, they would call the leaders of each group and say, "Let's have a meeting," but that is not how God did it. God had a different way of working. There was no way for God to get the people together until first there was a sacrifice for sin. There had to be a sacrifice for sin.

No doubt, some of those same Jews who stood in Pilate's judgment hall and hollered, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" were present on the Day of Pentecost. God was not going to make several groups, but rather one body. Oh, the wisdom of God!

"One Body by the Cross"

Before the Day of Pentecost, men did not have New Testament

salvation as we know it today, because the Holy Spirit had not yet been given. He had not been poured out on all flesh. God wanted to make one new man, but how was He going to do it? He had several groups to work with: the Jews, the Samaritans, and the Gentiles (or the pagans).

How was He going to make one body when they all hated one another? The Apostle Paul said in Ephesians 2:1, 10-16: "And you hath he quickened [the word *quickened* simply means 'made alive'], who were dead in trespasses and sins [keep in mind that he was writing to Gentiles]: . . . For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

"Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

"For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby."

On the Day of Pentecost, God broke down the middle wall of partition. In these verses of Scripture, no doubt Paul was referring back to the temple where they had an outer court for the Gentiles, a court for the women, a court for the priests, and a court for the high priest. God broke all of that down to make "twain one new man."

The only way God could accomplish what He did was through the people having their hearts changed. A change came over the Gentiles, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenes. That is what the problem is yet today: people need to have their hearts changed so they can get along.

Why do some homes fail to get along? Some individuals get out of the will of God. If one companion is not saved and one is, that makes the home a battleground. Dear one, you will *never* win your companion to God by compromising. A sister may think, "Well, perhaps if I would dress in a more worldly fashion, I could win him" or "Maybe if I go here or there . . ." Friend, all that would happen is that you would lose out with God.

Even ministers can get out of the will of God and follow the flesh. If they did in the days of Jesus, why can they not do it yet today? Men and women must have their hearts changed before they can get along in one body.

Who Is Israel Today?

God was going to make a new Israel. If people could see that God's people are the spiritual Israel, they would see there is no need for a tribulation period, a millennium, or a rapture. Also, they would understand the antichrist better. If you could see that God is dealing with spiritual Israel today, you would take Israel of old out of the millennium theory. All those theories are centered on Israel of old. Some people think that somewhere out in the future God is going to do something special for Israel of old, but that is not so.

Romans 9:1-6 reads: "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: Who are

Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen. Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel."

Why is it that they are not all Israel which are of Israel? Because not all Israel accepted Jesus Christ. Israel is in the same condition as any congregation. Not all people in the congregation of the Church of God are in the Church of God, or the Kingdom of God. The difference is that not everyone accepts Jesus Christ.

In 2 Corinthians 3:12-14 the Apostle Paul stated: "Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: And not as Moses, which put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which veil is done away in Christ." What was Paul talking about? The Old Testament is about Christ, and unless you turn to Jesus Christ, there is a veil over the Old Testament.

In verses 15-18 he said: "But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away. Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

What causes people's minds to be blinded? What causes the veil to be on their hearts? It is due to their rejection of Jesus Christ. When is the veil lifted? He said in verse 16, "Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away."

This is the reason that not all Israel was really Israel. All who carried the name Israel were not truly Israelites. Likewise, not everyone in a Church of God congregation is truly Church of God.

"All Israel Shall Be Saved"

In Romans 11:13 Paul wrote, "For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office." Then he stated in verses 16-27: "For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches. And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear: For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.

"And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again. For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree? For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant

unto them, when I shall take away their sins."

Again, verse 26 reads, "And so all Israel shall be saved. . . ." God was not dealing with Israel of old. When will all Israel be saved? When "the Deliverer comes out of Sion" and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins." This is dealing with spiritual Israel. Israel is saved when you accept the Deliverer, Jesus Christ, and He takes away your sins. All Israel takes in those who have accepted Jesus Christ and have been delivered from their sins, whether they were Jews, Gentiles, pagans, or whatever they were. When they are saved, they become a spiritual Israelite.

Again, Paul said in Romans 11:26-27: "And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them [Israel], when I shall take away their sins."

A New Testament Jew

Under the new covenant, it is no longer literal Israel but rather spiritual Israel that represents the Kingdom of God. You must turn to the Lord and be saved to be an Israelite, or a New Testament Jew. God is no more interested in literal Israel than any other people. Everyone has to enter the kingdom the same way: one must be born again.

The Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 2:28-29: "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly [in other words, one who dressed the same way the Jews did; they had the Law and the commandments around their necks, and their attire set them apart from others]; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God." One must have a change on the inside.

In Galatians, Chapter 6, I want you to read what Paul said. He was from the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews. He held to the letter of the Law as best he could. He said in verses 14-16: "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, [Who is the peace to be on? Those who are new creatures.] and mercy, and upon the Israel of God."

Nowhere in the Bible can you find that God has anything special for literal Israel in the future. If He did, then that would make God a respecter of persons. The literal Jew has to enter the Kingdom of God the same way you and I do. There was a man who came to Jesus named Nicodemus who was a ruler of the Jews. Nicodemus, being a member of the Sanhedrin, was interested in the teachings of Jesus. He came to Him by night. The statement he received is the way that everyone gains access to the Kingdom of God: one must be born again, and that is not possible if a person does not believe that Jesus Christ is the Messiah.

Jesus Christ was rejected by the Jewish nation as a whole in His First Advent. Nevertheless, that did not stop God's plan for having a new Israel. Those who had the veil of blindness lifted had it lifted because they turned to the Lord. God does not have two or three different ways for people to enter His kingdom. He has only one way, and that is through being born again. God is not going to subdue nations to get someone in unbelief to believe. All unbelievers have to believe the same thing: that Jesus Christ was a sacrifice for sin and that He came to take away sin. God is not going to dispatch an angel from Heaven to come down and tap people on the shoulder and ask them to be saved. It is through the foolishness of

preaching, not foolish preaching, that men and women are saved. It is through faith. The just shall live by faith. God does not have two or three different ways to get Israel to turn. The way He has for literal Israel to turn is the same way He has for everyone.

Literal Israel did have an advantage that many of us did not have. When Jesus came, they had the Scriptures, which they studied. They had read that the Messiah would come. Therefore, Israel had an advantage over the rest of the world at the coming of Jesus Christ. Notice what Paul said in Romans 3:1-2: "What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God." They received the oracles of God, the statutes of God, the Law of God, and the prophecies of God first. God appeared to the Jew first on the Day of Pentecost.

Today Israel has no more right to the Kingdom of God than the vilest of sinners who believe. God has an Israel today, but it is those who have been born of the Spirit of God. Israel today is spiritual Israel. God is not going to perform some great work out in the future for those Jews who are in unbelief anymore than He did for you and me when we were in unbelief. If you are a saint of God, how did you get

saved? It was through the Gospel.

When one comes to Jesus Christ, he must have godly sorrow for his sins and repent and forsake all sin. For many people, it is not a problem to get them to repent, but it is a problem to get them to forsake sin. Confessing and forsaking sin go together, and God said *then* He will have mercy. Many people are not sorry for their sins; therefore, they are going to have to stay in them and suffer the consequences attached to the sinner's life.

Who is Israel today? Israel today is spiritual Israel, those who are Jews inwardly, not outwardly. A spiritual Jew today glories in the Cross of Jesus Christ. You need to know that. Most people out in sectism and in the world have heard false teachings, and that is all they know.

Friend, you need to study these things and know them. Sad to say, too many people do not have enough knowledge to even lead someone to Christ. You do not always have to have the preacher to lead a person to Christ. As a Christian, you should be able to do that. When others are under conviction, you ought to know enough Scriptures to help them. Again, Israel as a nation is spiritual Israel. I trust you can understand who Israel truly is.

(Cassette C-5599M)

"Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother."

1 John 3:9-10

John 1:11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

12 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:

13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will

of man, but of God.

14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

15 John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is

preferred before me: for he was before me.

16 And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.

17 For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

The Difference Between the Old and the New Covenants



Brother Calvin Foster

Two Dispensations of Time

I would like to call your attention to verse 17, which reads, "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." In that verse you are looking at two dispensations of time: the time of Moses and the time of Christ. The Law was given by Moses, and it had a very high moral standard. The Law was what God gave man to live by, but the problem was that man did not have the power to carry it out.

The difference between the Old and the New Testaments is the covenants under which people lived in the past and are living today: the

old covenant and the new covenant. The ability to carry out God's laws in a way that satisfies and pleases God is found only in Jesus Christ. In Romans 12:1-2 the Apostle Paul said: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." You ought to live in a way that is pleasing to God in this new covenant dispensation in which we live.

The atonement of the blood of Jesus Christ can cleanse, forgive, and blot out your sins. I thank God for that! Jesus Christ also came to take away the desire to sin. I thank God that I do not have a desire to sin any more. The desire is gone because Jesus took it away. A true Christian has no desire to sin. He is not trying to make room for sin or to make excuses for sin, and he is not trying to make a way for sin to get in the church. I hate sin. In 1 Thessalonians 5:22 Paul said, "Abstain from all appearance of evil."

The old covenant left man with the desire to sin. As sinners, they went back and forth. They received forgiveness through the blood of

bulls and goats, and then they went back into sin. Therefore, you can see there was a great need for the new covenant. Today many men teach that you will be free from sin only after you are dead, because they do not believe that anyone can live free from sin in this life. These men, whether they know it or not, are teaching the old covenant. In reality, they do not know anything about the new covenant.

Why would God give a new covenant if He just forgave us of our sins without giving us power over sin? The old covenant did that. People could not please God because they did not have any power. Jeremiah 17:9-10 says: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings."

The Law Was Man's Schoolmaster

The first covenant could not change the heart of man. God used the old covenant to teach men about sin. Galatians 3:24-25 tells us: "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster." God put the Law before them and said, "Thou shalt not . . ." Man knew what he should not do, but he was powerless to do it. Verse 26 says, "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." Again, verse 25 states, "But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster."

Under the old covenant, man could please God. However, men such as Noah and Abraham were perfect in the sight of God, even before the Law. Job was also called a perfect man. Those men were perfect in their time, according to the spiritual education and the power that God had given them. Let me illustrate it this way: if you were to tell a first grader and an eighth

grader to draw a picture of a horse, the eighth grader's illustration should look better than the first grader's. However, you would not judge the first grader's drawing the same way that you would judge the eighth grader's. So it is with God, spiritually speaking.

God deals with men according to their knowledge and understanding. The reason God called Abraham and Noah perfect in His sight was that they pleased Him according to their spiritual knowledge and understanding of God's Law. Those men were rare exceptions, because in the Old Testament God put His Spirit on very few men. As a whole, the people who lived in the Old Testament dispensation fell short of pleasing God. It was very rare to find people among Old Testament worshippers who pleased God.

Under the new covenant, or the Holy Ghost dispensation, every man and woman can have the power to please God. Why? Joel 2:28-29 tells us: "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit." The Spirit being poured out on all flesh was not possible before the Cross and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

John 7:37-39 says: "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)" The people back then knew it would be outstanding for God to pour out His Spirit upon all flesh, and on the Day of Pentecost that is what happened. Praise God! The Old Testament prophecy was fulfilled. (God's Word

is always fulfilled according to prophesy; that is something that we can depend upon.)

The Pouring Out of God's Spirit Upon All Flesh

In Acts 2:14-18 we read: "But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy."

The servants, the men, and the maidens were to get the Spirit of God poured out on them. The Bible commentator Matthew Henry stated: "In the beginning of the age of prophecy in the Old Testament there were schools of the prophets. Before that the Spirit of prophecy came upon the elders of Israel that were appointed to the government, but now the Spirit shall be poured out upon persons not brought up in the schools of the prophets." Praise God! God is pouring out His Spirit upon all flesh. God will give His Holy Spirit to all men and women who will come to Him, repent of their sins, and turn from their wickedness.

Schools can teach people how to be doctors and lawyers and teachers, but it takes God to make a preacher. You do not need to have a college degree or attend a theological seminary to preach the Gospel. God poured out His Spirit upon all flesh. This is an outstanding thing!

False preachers will do anything to get a crowd in a church building. They tell people, "Do the best you

can. All you need to do is make an honest attempt. God understands. As long as you come close to being what God wants you to be, He will be satisfied."

If coming close were good enough, why did God make a new covenant? If coming close were good enough, then Jesus died in vain. I want you to understand that, according to the Bible, coming close does not count. I thank God for good school teachers, honest lawyers and doctors, and good people of renown; but if they do not have Jesus Christ as their personal Savior in their hearts, they will not make it into God's Heaven. Every person needs to be saved. I thank God for good, upstanding people in the community. I have much respect for them. Nevertheless, good works and being a good person will not get you into Heaven. Jesus did not die in vain; you must be saved.

The Righteousness of the Law

The Apostle Paul did well under the Law. He said in Philippians 3:4-5: "Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee." Paul was a Jew. He even knew that he was of the tribe of Benjamin, and Benjamin was one of Jacob's favorite sons. He lived the life of a Pharisee, which was one of the strictest religious sects of that time.

In verses 6-10 he said: "Concerning zeal, persecuting the church [he was excited about his religion]; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. [What did he think about it after he found Christ?] But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all

things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death." Paul knew that coming close was not good enough. The righteousness of the Law was self-righteousness, or an outward righteousness. Paul counted all of it as dung.

The rich, young ruler came close. In Luke 18:18-27 we read: "And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? none is good, save one, that is, God. Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother. And he said, All these have I kept from my youth up. Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me. And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich. And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, he said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. And they that heard it said, Who then can be saved? And he said, The things which are impossible with men are possible with God."

I am not telling you that I can live a holy life and that I can live free from sin without God, but with the power of God I can live a life free from sin. I am not living under the old covenant; I am living under the new covenant. John 1:17 states, "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus

Christ." It would not make sense for God to tell man how to live, knowing that man could not do it. However, God knows that we cannot do it without Him. Matthew 19:26 tells us, "With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible."

Inward Righteousness

God has always wanted inward righteousness that comes from the heart. That is the reason God was not pleased with the first covenant. Matthew 15:16-20 reads: "And Jesus said, Are ye also yet without understanding? Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man."

Saint of God, God saved you and gave you a new heart. That is the reason you can carry out His law. The old covenant could not give man a new heart. God had to go where the real problem existed, which was in the heart. We read in Romans 5:5 that "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." When the Holy Ghost puts the love of God in your heart, you can please God and love everyone just as God does. Why? It is not your love, but it is God's love in your heart, put there by the Holy Ghost.

The heart of man is sick without Christ. The old Law tried the heart of man. Man's heart was deceitful and desperately wicked; therefore, the Law showed him how deceitful his heart was without Christ. You might look sanctimonious and strict, but without Christ your heart is deceitful and desperately wicked.

When people backslide on God, they become worse than they ever were. You should not even consider

backsliding. The devil hates you, and sin will take you further than you want to go. You cannot hide sin. It will destroy you and cause you to destroy yourself. No matter how long you have been saved or how long you have been sitting under the Truth, the devil cannot wait to get you in his clutches and destroy your soul. God does not want you to lose your soul, but without God your heart is deceitful and desperately wicked.

God demands holiness in the new covenant. Romans 6:15 tells us, "What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid." Moreover, God wants perfected holiness, inside and out. Second Corinthians 7:1 states, "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

John 8:21 says, "Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come." If you die in your sins, you cannot go where Jesus is. It is just that simple. Hebrews 9:27 reads, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Dear one, you do not want to die in your sins.

A More Excellent Way

In the old covenant the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin. Hebrews 8:5-13 says this (referring to Jeremiah, Chapter 31): "Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount.

"But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been

sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.

"For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away."

The new covenant goes right to the problem: the heart of man. The death of Christ canceled out the sins of the first covenant and the sins of the second covenant. Ezekiel 36:26 reads, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh." God took away my hard, mean, stubborn heart and gave me a heart of flesh. He gave me a tender, loving heart, a new heart and a new Spirit, and He put His laws in my heart. All I want to do is obey God. I do not want to make room for sin.

When you start playing around with sin, you cannot hide it. It will grow, and you will not be able to cover it up. Sin will expose you; you cannot control it. What you have hidden under the covers will soon come to light. Your sin will find you out. God will pull off the covers. It will come out in your living, in your personality, or some other way.

Proverbs 28:13 says, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy."

God can give you a new heart and remove the desire to sin. Ezekiel 36:27 says, "And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." God has taken the worst alcoholics and the worst drug users and cleansed them from sin and made them new creatures in Christ Jesus; then they no longer had a desire to sin. Praise God! He is good to us.

Enduring Temptation

The counteraction theory says that the carnal mind is nicely balanced by the Spirit of God. However, this theory is false. One Scripture that those who advocate that theory use is 1 Corinthians 9:27, where Paul said, "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." Paul was not talking about being beaten down in sin every day. If you let the sin of lying get in your heart, it will lead you to deeper sins. You cannot control sin.

Paul was talking about keeping the natural appetites of the human body in subjection to the will of God. The flesh must be kept under. You must keep yourself from drunkenness, idolatry, revelry, and partying all the time. Galatians 5:19-21 tells us: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

Friend, you cannot handle sin without Christ. The devil gets in your heart through the desires of the natural body. Therefore, you have to

abstain from some things and discipline yourself and bring your body into subjection to the will of God. You are going to be tempted, just as Christ was tempted. Temptation is not sin.

When God saves you, He removes your sinful heart and gives you a new heart, but that does not take away the possibility that you could sin. Sin will get hold of you if you leave your first love. You must keep your love for God hot. If you are married, you should help your companion keep his or her love for

God hot.

James 1:12-15 reads: "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. 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: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust [or his own desire], and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is

finished, bringeth forth death." You might have problems and failures as you grow in your Christian experience, and when you do, God will deal with you as His child. He will chastise you when you need it, but His ultimate goal is to heal you. He does not want you to live a hypocritical life or to be up and down or in and out in your Christian experience. He does not want you to live as if you are living under the old covenant.

(Cassette C-5538E)

[Guest Editorial—continued from page 2]

these words: "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." Love is the major ingredient in Christianity that binds the hearts of God's people together and causes them to work in unity and harmony. Without the love of God ruling and reigning in our hearts, laboring together is impossible. Real love is long-suffering and kind, and it demonstrates humility. Love does not demand its own way or create problems when things go differently than one desires.

Whenever one's love becomes

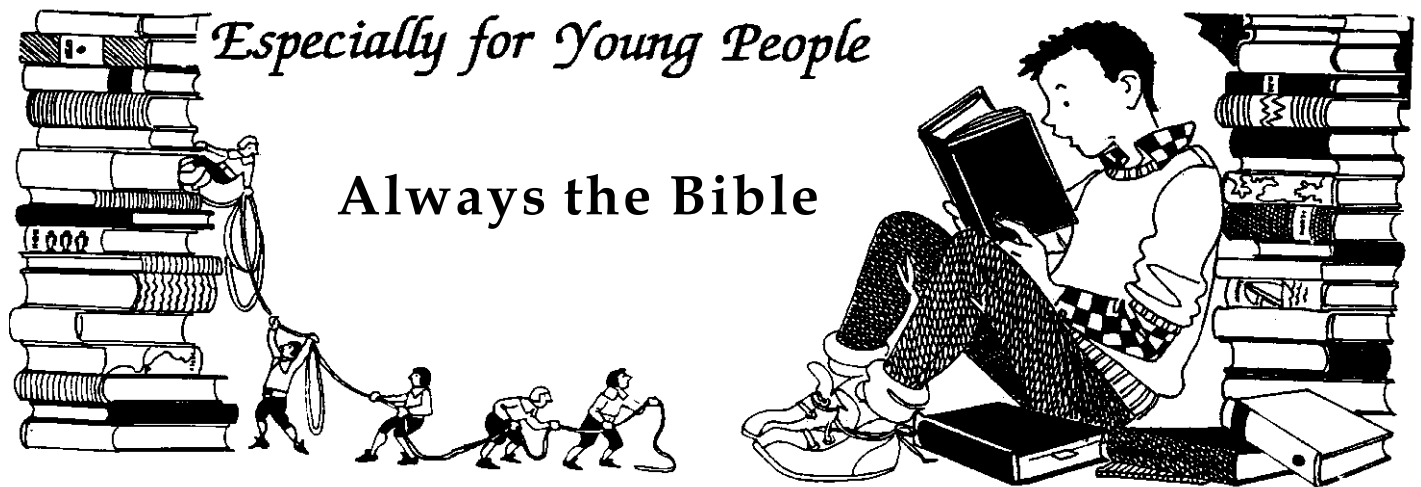
cool toward God, it will not be long until love becomes strained in the heart toward one another. Laboring together can no longer be a joy, a benefit, and a pleasure. Unfortunately, it soon becomes an irksome task; then schisms and separations are created and begin to divide the church body. If this is allowed to continue, it will portray a distorted picture of Christianity to the world around us. Those who are looking on will begin to wonder what has happened and why we who claim to be the church cannot get along with one another. They may see the members working, but they will be laboring independently of one another instead of working together, thus hindering the promotion of the glorious Gospel

of Jesus Christ.

Laboring together for the cause of the Gospel may require us to forsake our ideas, our wants, and our desires. One may strongly feel that things should be done a certain way in order to attain the best results. Being laborers together calls for submission to God and to one another. Paul admonished the Ephesian brethren in Ephesians 5:21, "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God." The Apostle Peter said in 1 Peter 5:5, "Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble."

Selected

*The pleasures of sin
are for a season;
but its wages are eternal.*



"Always the Bible!" said Horace Cooper to his sister. "Aren't you tired of it?"

"Almost," said Marian, laughing; "but still not *quite* as indignant as a boy not far off."

"Here we came down into the country to enjoy ourselves for the holidays, and instead of that—"

"Now, Horace," interrupted his sister, "I am sure you have had lots of fun. There were rides and uncle's amusing stories of his travels. There were luncheons in the arbor and walks with Charles and Fanny. Come, now, I can't let you find fault with *everything*."

"Perhaps not; but remember that on the excursion we had to sing a hymn under the trees, and to listen to a psalm."

"Yes, the sixty-fifty," said Marian.

"Well, and then in those stories of travel, uncle brings the same Book forward constantly. In the arbor don't we sing hymns and read verse by verse? In our walks Charles and Fanny learn memory verses and ask us to do the same."

"So it is," returned the sister. "I confess that at first the reading and prayers, morning and evening, appeared strange; but now I am beginning to like it. Anyway, I do not wish myself back at Uncle Herbert's as I did the first day or two."

Horace and Marian Cooper were orphans under the guardianship of the "Uncle Herbert" of whom we have heard them speak. When about ten

years of age, they had been sent to boarding schools in the city. A few summers after this we find them spending a vacation with "Uncle Loxley down in Cornwall," as Horace always called him.

A beautiful place was Fernley, as Mr. Loxley's place was called. The house had ivied walls, surrounded by gardens.

That evening in the cheerful drawing room at Fernley, Mrs. Loxley, Marian, Fanny, Charles, and Horace awaited the arrival of Mr. Loxley. Charles had discovered that there was a particularly interesting story for this evening, and even Master Horace was ready to listen and applaud. At length Mr. Loxley entered and took his armchair.

"Bertha," he said, addressing his wife, "I have a long letter to read to you. What is the matter, Fanny? How crestfallen you look, my child! And Marian too!"

"O father, it's our story; we thought you would begin now."

"Oh, I see,"—there was a merry twinkle in Mr. Loxley's eye as Charles explained the downcast looks. "I see," continued the man with assumed gravity, "the letter will have the goodness to wait awhile."

Everyone smiled assent. Mr. Loxley cleared his throat and the "story" began. "When I was a boy—" Everyone looked up.

"Well, then, I will choose some less antiquated beginning. The snow lay thick on Salisbury Plain as I rode

home from school on the top of a stagecoach. Dark and dismal was the night, not a star to be seen. It was such a night as would suit the adventurous Master Horace yonder. The coach was heavily laden, and the horses—we had six of them—could scarcely drag us over the road.

"Presently the guard whispered to a gentleman at his side: 'Shan't get through this without some mishap'; and at the same instant, down went the coach in the deep snow. The passengers dismounted, the horses struggled nobly, still it was evident that, without more horses, the coach could not move. A conference was held, and it was resolved that the larger number of the passengers, with the guard, should proceed to the nearest village and send help immediately."

"But how could they find the way?"

"Hush, I am going to tell you. There was one man on the coach who knew 'every step of the road,' and, with a lantern in his hand, this man, looking at the waymarks which he so well knew, was to guide us to the village."

"That was great," said Horace, who was all attention.

"This man was called Guidewell, and an honest guide he was. In our company, hastening with us over Salisbury Plain, was a self-conceited man, Mr. Careless I shall call him, who never appealed to our guide. As for the rest of us, we followed Mr.

Guidewell carefully. By and by, Mr. Careless said: 'Why do you trust to this man? I believe I know the best way after all.'

"Have you ever been on this road before?" I asked, with schoolboy forwardness.

"Why, not exactly; but I'm tired of hearing your constant appeals to Mr. Guidewell. I wonder if you will join me to strike off to the left and find the way as best we can."

"Oh, how foolish!" cried Fanny.

"That's silly," cried Horace. "When one has a guide who knows the way, surely no one would go off alone and be lost!"

Mr. Loxley looked grave. "In vain we argued with him; in vain we called our guide and questioned him as to the safety of such a course. Mr. Guidewell asserted that path which he pointed out was the only safe course; but Mr. Careless shook himself away, saying, 'Always this

Guidewell, I'm tired of him.'"

"Uncle, the man must have been mad."

"Was he ever heard from again?" asked Charles.

Mr. Loxley still looked grave. "You are wrong," he said; "for, happily, some of the words which Mr. Guidewell uttered made a deep impression on the mind of Mr. Careless, and before he had walked a hundred yards, he returned and acknowledged his mistakes."

All brightened at this unexpected conclusion, and during the next five minutes the children expressed their opinions of the story.

"But father hasn't finished," suggested Fanny presently.

"Well, perhaps I should tell you that we reached the village in safety, and that the coach was soon out of the hole. The part of my story I want to impress on your memories is the adventure of Mr. Careless."

There was a pause, and then Mr. Loxley, in his kindest manner, said: "Horace, my boy, come here." Horace obeyed. "And Marian." Marian came to the other side. Their uncle took a hand of each.

"This morning," said Mr. Loxley, "I accidentally heard these words in my garden: 'Always the Bible; aren't you tired of it?'"

"I stayed to hear no more; but I told you this story to help you. If a man refuse to be guided by the Bible, if he choose *his own path*, what shall be said of him? Will not the words uttered a moment ago express it: 'How foolish?'"

The brother and sister chose God's Word for their guide, and the motto of their lives was: "*Always the Bible.*"

Selected

A Duty — **TO PERFORM**

Keep a bridle on your tongue; think twice before you speak. Always say less than you think. Cultivate a sweet voice because how you say it often counts more than what you say. Be dependable. Make promises sparingly and keep them faithfully.

Praise good work done, regardless of who did it. If criticism is needed, criticize helpfully and not spitefully. Be interested in others, their homes, etc. Rejoice with them that do rejoice and weep with them that weep.

Be cheerful; hide your worries, pains, and disappointments under a pleasant countenance. Let your good speak for itself. Don't let your testimony be upstairs and your living be in the basement.

Omit gossip, filthy, foolish talking and jesting. Make a rule not to say anything ill of others, especially when they are absent. Tell me my faults and tell my good to others.

Always be careful of another's feelings and of whom, what, how, when, and where you speak, because grievous words stir up anger, but a soft answer turns away wrath.

Don't worry about the evildoers. Pay no attention to the false things said about you; just live so God is pleased with you. Remember what Jesus said in Matthew 5:11-12: "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."

Don't be a fault finder; don't be a talebearer. Don't be slothful, and don't let others use you or your house as a garbage can by bringing you all the news.

Always do your duty because Jesus is calling for a holy life and service too. Let not your hands be idle or slack (Zephaniah 3:16). Forget yourself. Come before the Lord with singing, prayer, and supplication. Be thou faithful unto death and you will be rewarded.

Psalm 51:1 Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.

2 Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

3 For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.

4 Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.

5 Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.

6 Behold, thou desirest truth in the

inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.

7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

8 Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.

9 Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.

10 Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

11 Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me.

12 Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free

spirit.

13 Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.

14 Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.

15 O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall show forth thy praise.

16 For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering.

17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.



Brother Larry Dishman

God's Cure for Sin

I am glad there is something that people can do about sin if they really want to. Whether you are a backslider or a Christian who has allowed things to come into your life or one who has never been saved, I

am glad to tell you there is a remedy for sin. You do not have to continue in sin; God has a way that you can be delivered.

In the religious world men say that everyone sins. They tell people, "We have to sin, and we all sin every day. It is impossible to live above

sin." On the contrary, according to the Word of God, you do not have to live in sin. God has a cure for sin, and He will deliver you from sin if you will meet His conditions. I am not satisfied with man-made religion that preaches a little Jesus and tells people that they cannot be de-

livered from sin. I am glad that Jesus came, not to save us in our sins but to save us *from* our sins.

Many people say, "We are just sinners saved by grace." Well, do not include me in that, because I am not a sinner saved by grace. I am a Christian saved *from* sin by the grace of God, and I do not have any intentions of going back into sin. I became sick of sin one day, and I forsook it. By the grace and help of God, I intend to walk the highway of holiness. No unclean thing can walk on this road. It is only for the pure and the redeemed, those who have been cleansed by the blood of Jesus and have been made every whit whole.

Jesus told a man in John 5:14 to "sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee." If you ever get saved and then lose out with God and go back into sin or if you apostatize, you will go deeper into sin than you were before. Something worse will come upon you.

The Apostle John wrote in 1 John 3:5, "And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin." He continued in verses 8-9: "He that committeth sin is of the devil. . . . Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." I am glad for the miracle of salvation. People say that man cannot live above sin, but according to the Word of God, man *can* live above sin.

The Apostle Paul said in Acts 24:16, "And herein do I exercise myself, to have always [not sometimes, but *always*] a conscience void of offence [sin] toward [or before] God, and toward men." Paul stated in Romans 6:1-2: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid [saying 'God forbid' was the strongest way that he could say no]. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"

I am glad there is a cure for sin. If you are bound by sin in any way, you can be delivered if you will pay

the price and sell out to God completely. Then you, too, can stand and say, "I have been saved from sin. Praise God!"

Acknowledging Your Condition

Men should do something about sin, because the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life. James 1:15 says that "sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." The latter part of Ezekiel 18:4 tells us that "the soul that sinneth, it shall die." Therefore, men have to get out of sin or be separated from God throughout the ceaseless age of eternity.

Isaiah 59:2 states, "But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear [you]." Sin still separates people from God. It separated the people from God in the Old Testament, and God could not hear their prayers. Today God has not changed His mind one little bit about sin. Men have changed their minds and said, "Nothing is wrong with this anymore and that is okay and this is no longer sin"; nevertheless, God still hates sin just as much as He ever did. God hates sin, but He loves the sinner.

Much deception is working in our world among religion. Do you know what causes deception? It is due to people not rightly dividing the Word of God. Do you know how the devil deceived Eve? He changed the Word of God just a little. That is what people are doing in religion today. They are not throwing away their Bibles, but they are changing the Word of God. The Word of God does not need to be changed or rearranged. Whether you believe it or not, it is forever settled in Heaven. If what you believe is contrary to God's Word, that does not change it. God said it, so it is forever settled in Heaven. You do not need to try to change the Word of God.

Some people in religion today are teaching men what to do about sin, but they are not teaching

according to the Scriptures. The first thing an individual must do about sin is acknowledge it. David acknowledged his condition. In verse 3 of our Scripture text he said, "For I acknowledge my transgressions." To acknowledge sin is to recognize and admit it. There would have been no pardon and no mercy for David had he not acknowledged that he had done wrong.

In Babylon (false religion) they say they sin every day. They readily acknowledge it, but one must do more than acknowledge it. In Jeremiah 3:13 God spoke to the children of Israel and said, "Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the LORD thy God, and hast scattered thy ways to the strangers under every green tree, and ye have not obeyed my voice, saith the LORD." Those people had sinned, and God, through the Prophet Jeremiah, admonished them to acknowledge their iniquity, or sin. He pleaded with them to acknowledge what they had done.

Getting people around holiness movements to acknowledge when they have done something wrong can be difficult. One cannot receive any help from God until he acknowledges his shortcomings, or failures. Today many people try to cover their wrongdoing in some way or try to get around acknowledging their wrongdoing.

My friend, if you ever prosper as a Christian, you must come clean with God, not just a little, but all the way. You may try to cover things, but God knows the very thoughts and intents of your heart. The Bible says that His eyes go to and fro upon the earth all the time. You see, you may slip something over on me or your pastor or your spouse, but the eyes of God see every secret thought of your heart. God knows your thoughts and the motives of your heart. Therefore, you might as well quit playing games and come clean with God.

In false religion many people profess to be saved, yet they say,

"Oh, I sin every day." Well, there is a possibility that a Christian can sin, but he does not have to. Sin is the only thing that can separate you from God. If you, as a Christian, ever do sin, it will make you weak and feel really bad that you offended God, and you will never want to do it again.

When Peter sinned, the Lord Jesus Christ told him exactly what he was going to do before He had even done it. Peter said he was ready to die with Him. In essence, Peter said, "Everyone else may forsake You, Lord, but I will never forsake You." In just a short time, Peter began to curse and deny that he knew the Lord. When the cock crowed three times, the Lord turned and looked at Peter, and it caused him to go out and weep bitterly.

Mark it down, when a person sins and goes against God, if that does not cause the individual to weep and repent, he does not know anything about the Lord Jesus Christ. He is still in sin and walking after the flesh. When a true child of God sees that he has done wrong, it will cause him to do as Peter did: he wept bitterly.

The prodigal son acknowledged that he had done wrong. He had wasted his substance on riotous living, but he said, "I am going to arise, and go to my father." What did he do? He acknowledged, "I have sinned and I am not worthy to be called thy son." He acknowledged what he had done. He would not have received help or mercy had he not acknowledged his sin, but he was willing to acknowledge it.

In Luke, Chapter 18, you can read about two men who went up to the temple to pray. One was a publican and the other a Pharisee. The Pharisee stood and lifted up his eyes toward Heaven and said, in essence, "God, I thank You that I am not as other men are, or even as this publican." He told God how good he was. He said that he fasted twice a week and paid tithes of all that he possessed. However, the publican would not so much as lift up his

eyes toward Heaven. He smote upon his breast and said, "God, be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other" (verses 13-14). Why did he go down to his house justified? He acknowledged that he had done wrong and that he was a sinner. In Matthew 9:13 Jesus said, "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." He said in Matthew 9:12, "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick."

Confessing and Forsaking All Sin

As I stated earlier, it is not enough just to acknowledge your sin, although that is needful. After a person acknowledges that he has sinned, he must go another step. What else must he do? He must confess it. There is a difference between acknowledging and confessing. To confess is to declare it.

David declared, or confessed, that he had done wrong. In Psalm 32:5 David said, "I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." What did he do? He confessed his sin. First John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." There is no promise in the Word of God that you will receive mercy and forgiveness unless you are willing to confess that you have come short of the glory of God.

James 5:16 states, "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed." You need to confess if you have done wrong, whether you want to be healed physically or spiritually. There is no mercy and no pardon for people who are too proud to acknowledge that they have done wrong. God does not have any mercy for people who cover things. Individuals must come clean with God. They have to be

willing to confess when they have done wrong.

Even John the Baptist demanded this kind of confession. He went down to the Jordan River and people confessed their sins when they were baptized of John. In Matthew 3:7 he said to those who were not willing to confess their sins, "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" Pardon in the Scriptures always supposes that one has made a confession. No promise will be granted unless the person at fault fully acknowledges his or her sin, or transgression.

Now, confessing and acknowledging sin is necessary, but that is not enough. One must also forsake sin. Unfortunately, many people stop short of forsaking sin. Too many times when people are told that they must turn from their sins, they rise against that. Nevertheless, one must acknowledge his sin, confess it, and forsake it. Proverbs 28:13 states, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy."

I want you to understand that God's mercy is conditional. Every promise in the Word of God is conditional. In other words, to receive a promise in God's Word, you must meet the conditions. Unless you are willing to confess and forsake your sin, you will not prosper with God. If you confess and forsake your sin, then you will receive mercy.

Many years ago I talked to a man with whom I worked at a meat packing company. His father was the pastor of a denominational church. I knew he did not live a Christian life; he did not live free from sin. I saw him steal meat and put it back in a cooker and eat it there on the job, I saw him smoke cigarettes, and I heard him curse God. Also, he used drugs and lived just as the rest of the world does.

As I began to talk to him one day about the condition of his soul, he said, "I am a Christian."

I asked him, "How can you say

that you are a Christian and live the way you do?"

He said, "I got saved when I was a little boy."

I said, "Well, how do you account for the way you live? You know that you don't live a Christian life."

He said, "Every night before I go to bed, I get down on my knees and ask God to forgive me for all my sins that I have committed that day, and God is faithful and just to forgive me."

You see, people are hiding under a refuge of lies. In 2 Peter 3:15-16 the Apostle Peter wrote, ". . . our beloved brother Paul . . . hath written . . . some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction." Many take Scriptures out of context and wrest them to their own destruction.

The young man to whom I spoke thought that the way he lived made no difference as long as he got down on his knees every night and asked God to forgive him. The devil never told him a bigger lie than that. Sad to say, millions of people are under this same deception today.

Sinning Presumptuously

The Word of God is the hail that will sweep away the refuge of lies under which men and women are hiding. If you are living in sin, I am telling you on the authority of the Word of God that you need to be born again. So many people are under a deception today. Oh, they have Scripture for what they believe, but they do not rightly divide the Word of God. You cannot take a Scripture out of context and rightly divide the Word of Truth.

My friend, you have to forsake sin. In the Catholic Church people go before the priest and confess their sins, but before the night is over, they do the same things again. They have no intentions of doing better. They have no intentions of quitting the sin business. In Babylon the peo-

ple are doing nearly the same thing that the Catholics are doing. They say, "God, forgive me for everything I have done wrong today," yet they continue to live the same way.

Saint of God, if you are not careful, you will start doing the same thing. Some people fail to turn away from certain things, and every once in a while, they ask God to forgive them. If you ask God to forgive you for something, if you are not willing to quit it right then, there is no sense in asking Him to forgive you. God does not forgive any sin until you are ready to forsake it altogether. Until you are ready to forsake all sin, God will not even hear your prayers.

What should men do about sin? They ought to acknowledge their sins, confess their sins, and then forsake their sins. Isaiah 55:7 reads, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." What conditions must you meet to receive God's mercy? You must forsake your wicked ways.

The Scripture says in Isaiah 28:20, "For the bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it: and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it." This verse lets you know that you cannot hide from God. He knows the thoughts and intents of your heart.

Many people do things that they know are not right, yet they say, "I don't think God would send me to hell for doing this and that, and besides, every night before I go to sleep, I ask God to forgive me." What are they going to do if they die before the night comes? Friend, if you do not confess and forsake sin, God will not have mercy on you. People who use tobacco and drink alcohol say, "I know it's not right to smoke and drink, but all I have to do is ask God to forgive me, and He will forgive me." You should not deceive yourself by doing that.

If you have a young child, sup-

pose you were to tell your child, "Now, listen, honey, I don't want you to get in the cookie jar," and then you were to catch him in the cookie jar. Right away, he might say, "I'm sorry. I really forgot. I didn't mean to disobey you." You might let him get by. Suppose the next night he got in the cookie jar again and you caught him; then he said, "I'm sorry. I forgot." After a while, you would know that he was not really sorry. That is the way it is with many people who profess to be saved. They are not truly sorry that they have sinned. They just want to get by with it. God does not issue a license for anyone to sin. His Word tells you to confess and forsake sin.

Lacking Godly Sorrow

Some people watch ungodliness on the television. They watch nakedness, idolatry, fornication, and all kinds of corruption, and then before they go to bed, they pray, "God, I shouldn't have watched that. I want You to forgive me, Lord; I did wrong." The next night they do the same thing again. They are not truly sorry that they watched it. They just want to get by with it. You should not allow this spirit to work on you, saint of God. A spirit can get hold of you and make you think you can get by as long as you ask God to forgive you every once in a while.

Maybe you listen to the wrong kind of music, and every once in a while you feel condemned, so you ask God to forgive you, but then you listen to it again. Remember, the Bible says he that covers his sins will not prosper, but whoso confesses and forsakes them will have mercy. It is not enough to acknowledge and confess sin; you have to forsake it.

You may ask God to forgive you for not dressing right, but if you do not intend to do better, He will not forgive you. You may ask God to forgive you for being unfaithful to the worship services, but if you do not intend to do something about it, He is not going to forgive you.

If you do not intend to reform

your life and do differently, it will not help to kneel at an altar of prayer and shed a few tears. You may make vows and say, "Lord, I am going to do this, and I am going to do something else," but God knows your heart. Unless you are willing to reform and start doing differently, God will not pay any attention to your prayers.

The reason people do not reform their lives and turn from sin is that they do not have what it takes to turn from sin. Do you know what the problem is? They lack godly sorrow. I know what it is to pray because you are afraid. I remember when I was a little boy and it would storm. As the lightning flashed and the thunder rolled when I was upstairs in the bedroom late at night, often I thought I was going to get struck by lightning or blown away in a tornado, and I would become sorry that I was a sinner. I would say, "God, I want You to save me tonight. I want You to forgive me for everything I have ever done wrong. I don't want to die lost." That is worldly sorrow. The next morning when the sun shone, I was no longer sorry. I was right back in the same old mudhole.

We read in 2 Corinthians 7:10, "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death." I have seen people become sorry because they were having marital trouble, and they would cry and pray, but as soon as their troubles were gone, they were gone. I have seen people go to the altar after a death in the family, but as soon as that sorrow had passed, they were back in the same mess again.

I have worked with people in the jails, and they were sorry they were in trouble. I have spent hours working with them to try to help them, but as soon as they got out of that mess, they were ready to do the same thing again. I realize that godly sorrow could be working on a person when some of those things happen, and he or she may

really get saved. However, if all you have is the sorrow of the world, because you have been caught and you are in trouble, that cannot bring lasting repentance. You must have godly sorrow, and you must be sick of sin.

Godly Sorrow Brings Abiding Changes

I remember the night I became sick of sin. I had made several trips to the altar and tried to do better, but when I became really sick of the way I was living, I was ready to quit the sin business. I was ready to forsake my sins.

Until people become miserable in the life of sin, they are not going to forsake sin. When they really get tired of it, godly sorrow will work abiding, permanent changes in their hearts and lives. Godly sorrow works repentance to salvation not to be repented of, but the sorrow of the world works death. In other words, you will not regret that you have repented. You will be glad that you have repented. Next week, next month, and next year, you will still hate sin; you will still hate that life of misery. I am glad for godly sorrow. It is not mere grief or sorrow producing gloom and despair or sorrow that causes one to be angry, but it is a godly sorrow that affects the heart. Godly sorrow will cause you to be sorry that you have sinned against God.

In Luke 15:21 the prodigal son said to his father, "I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." He was sick of the hogpen. If you really get sick of the sinful things you are doing, you will not go back to them. Godly sorrow will cause you to make abiding changes in your life. A man who mourns over sin that is committed against God and who seeks God for pardon will truly repent and reform his life. He who has grief for sin only because it leads to disgrace, shame, poverty, or pain will not necessarily break off from his sins and reform

his life. However, if he really has godly sorrow and he is sick of that way of living, his repentance will bring lasting changes.

What should men do about sin? David did something about his sin. He was not sorry just because the man of God pointed him out. The man of God pointed out David by telling him a parable. When the Prophet Nathan finished telling the parable, he asked David what he thought ought to be done with such a fellow. David was outraged that a man would do such a thing as described in the parable, and he gave out strong judgment. Then the man of God turned to David and said, "Thou art the man" (2 Samuel 12:7). David did not do as many people do. He did not change his mind and back away from the judgment that he put out, and he did not blame his sin on the lady. He acknowledged his sin, and God helped him. David repented and asked God to create in him a clean heart. That is the way you ought to be, sinner friend.

"We Have an Advocate With the Father"

What should you do about your sins? You need to go to your advocate. In 1 John 2:1-2 John said: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

I am glad that many years ago I came to the Advocate. The man of God got up and said, "There is a way that you can get out of the sin business and be delivered from sin." He told me about the plan of salvation, and it sounded good to me. It sounded better than anything I had ever heard, and I came to the Advocate.

You could compare an advocate to a lawyer. If you were to get in trouble with the law, you would get a good lawyer who knows the law

and the judge; then you would stand a better chance of getting out of trouble.

When I was lost in sin, I had a bad sentence pronounced against me. Do you know what I did? I found a Lawyer that knew the law and the Judge. I went to Him and confessed my sins. I pleaded guilty and said, "I am guilty. If I were to receive justice, I would split hell wide open." My Lawyer, Jesus Christ, did not do as the lawyers do in the world. If you get in trouble with the civil law, a lawyer will do his best to prove that you are not guilty. He will try to prove that you were not at the scene of the crime, and He will try his best to prove that you are innocent. If he cannot prove that you are innocent, he will try to see there is no injustice in the sentence that you receive.

My Lawyer did not do that. I came to Him one night and said, "I am guilty," and He went to the Heavenly Father, the Judge of all. God's law demands perfection and holiness; it demands no sin. I could not get to the Father because I had sin in my life. Though I could not approach Him because of the sin that I had committed, thank God for my Lawyer, Jesus Christ, who went to the Judge on my behalf.

God looked at my record and saw that I was guilty, and He saw how wretched I was. He said, "I cannot accept him," but Jesus Christ, my Advocate, suffered the penalty in my place. He said, "Here are the scars in My hands and in My feet. My side was pierced for him, and My blood was shed for him." Then God said, "Let him go free." Next, He took all my sins and placed them in the sea of forgetfulness, never to be remembered against me again. Praise God forever! God does not even remember my sins because I went to my Advocate, Jesus Christ.

I am glad there is something we can do about sin. What should men do about sin? They ought to come to the Advocate, Jesus Christ. He is the propitiation for our sins; not for ours only, but for the sins of

the whole world. This does not leave anyone out. It does not matter whether you are a good, moral person or whether you have lived deeply in sin, Jesus Christ is your Advocate. He made a way for you to be saved from your sins. He "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth," paid the price for all men. He tasted death for every man. I am glad that He tasted death for me so that I can enjoy this great salvation. Praise God forever! I have never been sorry, and I love it just the way it is. I do not want to change it or rearrange it.

Finding Deliverance From the Power of Sin

What should men do about sin? They ought to acknowledge it, confess it, and forsake it. If you are a sinner, there is no reason for you to continue in your sins. If you are a Christian and have allowed the devil to pull you down in some areas, there is no reason to go on in that condition, because you have an Advocate with the Father who is standing by right now. He is willing to take your case if you will come and bow before Him with godly sorrow. He will take your case up to the Father, and then you, too, can have a clear record before God.

Every opportunity the Apostle Paul received, he told people how he got saved, and I like to tell people how I got saved. I was getting more sick of sin all the time. I was getting tired of that way of living, and I will tell you what happened. I went to an old-fashioned tent revival. When the people began to sing the Gospel songs, I got out of there quickly

because I was getting ready to cry, and I did not want anyone to see me crying. I walked out of the service and went back behind some cars where no one could see me and cried like a baby. After a while, I went back into the service, and the man of God did not water down the Gospel one bit. (It still takes the straight preaching of the Word of God to save sinners. Preaching a watered-down message and being wishy-washy will not have an effect on sinners.) The man of God preached the Word just as it is, and when it came time for the invitation, a young lady stepped over beside me and said, "Brother Larry, don't you want to get saved?"

I said, "I sure do."

I went down to the altar that night and prayed through to victory, and it is still good today. Praise God forever! It has kept me from sin, it has kept me out of the hellholes and away from the habits of sin that had me bound. God delivered me from them through His grace.

If you are bound by the power of sin, I want you to know there is One Who can save you. His hands are not shortened that He cannot save. If you have sin in your life, you need to get delivered from it. If you are saved but the Lord has shown you that you need to lay aside some things, God can help you. You need to realize that time is running out. We are living in perilous times in these last days of time. There is grace and mercy offered at Father's house. Won't you get the help you stand in need of?

(Cassette C-105E)

"He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."

Proverbs 29:1

John 3:1 *There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:*

2 *The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.*

3 *Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot*

see the kingdom of God.

4 *Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?*

5 *Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*

6 *That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the*

Spirit is spirit.

7 *Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.*

8 *The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*

9 *Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be?*

Ye Must Be Born Again



Brother Jeremy Hupp

The Bondage of Sin

As a boy growing up, the thought of being born again was not something with which I was familiar. If you were raised in a Church of God congregation, young person, you need to be thankful. If your parents are striving to serve the Lord, you ought to praise God. I have teenage children, and I know

that in their eyes I do not always do things the way they want. I know that I have made mistakes along the way, but I think it is important as parents that we endeavor to do what is right and to keep the right example before them.

I think sometimes parents fail to realize the influence they have on their children. As I was growing up, I had no intention of ever smoking;

however, it was not very long until I had picked up the cigarette habit. I started smoking when I was approximately eight years of age, and I was drinking alcohol by the time I was twelve or thirteen years of age. I did many other sinful things before I got out of high school. The very things I despised as a young boy had gotten hold of me, and I did not like who I was.

When I got out of high school, often I went out drinking with my friends several nights each week. Soon I found myself full of anger, rage, bitterness, and hatred. I went to the bars, and I always wanted to fight. It got to where my own friends did not even want to go out with me anymore, because all I wanted to do was fight. I longed for something more. I thought, "I didn't want to turn out like this, but here I am." I remember lying on my bed one night thinking, "What am I doing with my life?"

I had seen good homes and good Christian people growing up, but I did not know how I could change. Sin was all I knew; it was my nature. According to *Webster's Dictionary*, *nature* is an inner force, or the sum of inner forces and surrounding forces that control you and direct you. My life was full of sin. The inner controlling force was the sin, and it seemed nearly impossible for me to get free from it.

I wanted to change and live better, but I could not. Sometimes I said I was going to quit smoking, but the next weekend I was smoking cigarettes again. I always told myself as I was growing up that I was never going to take drugs, but one does not know how deep in sin he will go. One night when I was intoxicated with alcohol, I found myself smoking marijuana. When I awoke the next day, I could hardly believe that I had done that. I said, "I am never going to do that again." What happened? The next weekend I did the same thing. A controlling force inside was holding me, and I could not get free. I wanted to live the Christian way and to have a Christian nature, but I could not get free. I was bound.

The word *nature* also means, "the basic character of a person or a thing." Have you ever heard the saying that he or she gets it naturally? You may say, "Oh, little Susie can really sing. She gets it naturally, because her mom can really sing." We call the characteristics that we get from our parents genetics.

Sometimes it is uncanny how much individuals become like their parents.

I have a beagle, and I found it amazing that I could take that little puppy out and scoot it into the brush and it would chase rabbits. It does not chase birds or squirrels; it only chases rabbits. That is in its nature. If you have a bird dog, it will retrieve a bird, but it will not chase a rabbit. You may say, "Well, it is in the training." Well, training does help, but it is in its nature.

Having Godly Characteristics

I want you to consider the nature and the characteristics of a Christian. The Christian is holy, full of love, and obedient. His garments are without spot or wrinkle. Since the Christian lives a sinless life, he is an overcomer. He is righteous, full of joy, full of faith, a believer in Christ, and Spirit filled. As I was growing up, I lacked all these characteristics. I wanted them, but I did not really understand how to obtain them. I wondered how I could get that joy and love. I had hatred and anger. Whenever I met people who were truly saved, I noticed that they were so happy all the time. Christians are happy people.

The first time I went to the Church of God, I attended the Young People's service. In that service a brother gave his personal testimony about how he got saved, and he talked about the bondage of sin. I did not know anything about church or being born again. Then he began to talk about how he was bound with alcohol, tobacco, and drugs. I thought, "Yes, that's me." It was as though he was holding a mirror up before my face. Next, he began to talk about being born again and how he was free from all those things that once had him bound.

I began to think, "Well, He changed that brother, and he had all the same things that I have. I need something. How do I get what these people have?" You cannot buy the characteristics that a Christian has. If

I could have bought them, I would have run my credit cards to the maximum that day. You cannot beg for it, you cannot take it from someone else, and you cannot inherit it from your parents. Some try that, but it does not work. How do you get these godly characteristics? You are born with them, not physically but spiritually. You must be born again.

When I think of the phrase "Ye must be born again" and think about witnessing to people, it is very rare that you ever hear someone say, "I am a born-again Christian." Often people look at a person rather strangely when he says he is a born-again Christian. Friend, if you want all the characteristics of a Christian, you must be born again. When you are born again, you have a new Father and a new mother. The mother is the church. The church, which is from above, is free, and she is the mother of all the saints. The church is the bride of Christ, the obedient, submissive wife. If you have been born again, you are married to Christ, and He is the Bridegroom. He is the Head of the house, and He tells the bride what to do. There is no strife in the church; therein is love.

When a husband and a wife really love each other and are really close, they produce children. If you want to see people saved and help them get godly characteristics, you must be the obedient wife of the Bridegroom. You must have a really close, loving relationship with Christ. The more we love Christ, the more He loves us. When we as God's people work together with Christ, we will bear children in the Kingdom of God.

As Christians, we cannot go out and win souls without Christ, and He cannot win souls without us. He must have human instrumentality, and He is relying on us to do our part in that equation. When you have been born again, you have a new Father and a new mother, and everything is new. That is the good part. To have a Christlike nature, you must be born again.

A New Life in Christ Jesus

Verse 1 of our Scripture text reads, "There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews." Nicodemus was a Pharisee, which was a religious sect of the Jews, and he was a ruler, or a spiritual leader. The rulers of the religious groups were responsible for teaching. Nicodemus taught the people who came to the worship services, and he was also responsible for teaching the preachers.

Nicodemus went to Jesus at night. Why did he do that? He was a teacher of the preachers. He was one who taught others all the doctrines, so what did he do? He waited until it was dark, and then he went to talk to Jesus. Perhaps he did not want anyone to know that he was seeking answers to the questions he had. It could be that Nicodemus did not want to seek Jesus publicly because he had some pride and he did not want to admit that he did not know it all.

Verse 2 of our Scripture text says, "The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." Nicodemus did not ask Jesus a question; he just made a comment. Although he had not even asked Jesus a question, Jesus had the answer. In verse 3 Jesus answered, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Then in verse 7 Jesus said, "Ye must be born again." Jesus did not rebuke Nicodemus for not knowing that He was the Messiah, but He simply said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." The same problem that Nicodemus had exists in the religious world today: they do not understand the born-again experience. People quote, "Ye must be born again," but it is merely words. They have not really experienced being born again.

When you are born again, something happens! It makes you

want to shout and praise God. When a little baby is born, it is a miraculous event. When a baby is first born, you are waiting to hear that first cry, and then you are relieved and thankful that he (or she) is alive. Likewise, when a person is born again, there is some crying and praising the Lord.

Second Corinthians 5:17 says, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." Praise the Lord! *All things* are become new when you are born again. A change takes place. Why should you be born again? To change some things. As I grew up, I lacked some things in my life. I lacked happiness, joy, and peace. How could I change that? I had to be born again.

If you could be born again physically, maybe you would want to be taller or perhaps you would want a different hair color. Many people would probably like to change something. That is the reason for the rebirth. You have characteristics that have brought spiritual death, and you need to be born again. You need to change all of that and get rid of all the ungodly habits of life, such as the smoking, the drinking, the drugs, the lying, the cheating, the gossiping, the backbiting, the bitterness, and the hatred. If you want to get rid of these things, you must be born again and take on a new nature: the nature of Christ must be in your life. You have to crucify the flesh.

Today in the religious world the new birth is nothing more than making a decision. People say, "I have made a decision to accept Christ as my Savior, and I am going to live forever," but it is only words. Sometimes false preachers give an individual a little piece of paper and instruct, "Say this prayer and insert your name on the blank, and you will live forever." Friend, that sounds good, and you may think, "That is pretty easy." On the contrary, that is not the way it works. Nevertheless, that is what being

born again means to many religious people in this world today. Being born again is about new life in Christ Jesus. That is very personal.

The Gift of Life

I want you to take a look at the words of Christ in John 3:7, where He said, "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." I want you to consider those last five words. The very first word there is "Ye"; that is a personal word, and it means "you." *You* must be born again. This is not joining a group or clustering yourself with a certain people or a clan. It is an individual matter. The words that Jesus spoke to Nicodemus were personal.

Those same words are personal for each of us. He is speaking directly to you. You cannot blame your parents for how you end up, no matter how bad your upbringing might have been. If your parents are saints, you cannot ride on their experience, no matter how wonderful it is. You, individually, must be born again.

Nicodemus was a well-respected religious leader, a Pharisee, a ruler among the Jews. He was a theologian who taught the teachers; he was a teacher of teachers. This man was a high-ranking leader among the Jews, but he was dead, spiritually speaking. He was without life before God and totally ignorant of all spiritual things. He was a lost man. If you are yet without spiritual life, this message is for you. If you are unsaved, you must be born again.

The next word of that five word phrase in verse 7 is "must." This lets you know that it is a pressing need. You are being urged to take action quickly. You need to consider the seriousness of that. Time is short! Jesus said in Mark 8:36, "For what shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Being born again is not just a good recommendation or wholesome advice; it is a necessity: "Ye *must*. . . ." In other words, you

cannot get around it. If you want to go to Heaven, you *must* be born again, otherwise you will perish. People do not like to talk about hell or even think about it. They try to put the thought of dying out of their minds. They do not want to think about being lost eternally or about the torments of hell, but that does not change the fact that hell is a reality.

Some time ago I was reading about a survey concerning the number of people who believe in Heaven, and it was a high percentage. In the same survey the percent of people who believe in hell was approximately 30 percent. Many people believe in Heaven but not in hell. Nevertheless, hell is as real as Heaven is. If you want to go to Heaven, you *must* be born again. You may get baptized, but that will not give you the new birth. You might have a religious devotion and drop some sinful habits, but that is not the new birth.

Again, Jesus said in verse 7 of our Scripture text, "Ye must be born again." The next word I want you to consider is the word "born." That is a powerful word. I am talking to you about a gift, but it is not just an ordinary gift. I am talking to you about the gift of life. When you were born as a little baby, you were pure, without sin. Had you died as a baby, you would have gone to Heaven. Sin comes when one comes to the age of accountability and knowingly does wrong. Romans 3:23 states, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Each of us has failed, and when that happened, spiritual death came. When you commit sin, you die spiritually.

Born From Above

One of my favorite Bible lessons is the topic of resurrection. One example of resurrection was when Lazarus was raised from the dead. Mary and Martha thought Jesus was too late because Lazarus was dead. When they went to the tomb, Jesus told the people to roll away the

stone, and then Jesus said, "Lazarus, come forth." Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead; that was miraculous. Also, Jesus raised Jairus' daughter from the dead. What happened after that? Well, they went on and lived out their lives, and then they eventually died again.

When Jesus was resurrected, He did not die again. When Jesus was resurrected from death to life, what happened at the end of His time here on this earth? He ascended back to the Father. When a person is born again, if he stays true to God, he will never die spiritually again. Oh, yes, the flesh will die physically, but the soul will go back to the Father. Isn't that glorious? This is not a life about being born again and then going back into sin. God never intended salvation to be an up-and-down experience. Jesus gives life more abundantly. We never have to perish. When we are born, we are given new life. This is not just life, but eternal life.

Jesus said, "Ye must be born again." The last word I want to examine is "again." It is a profound word. The new birth is a mystery to many people. It is the mystery of God's grace. In verse 9 of the Scripture text we read, "Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be?" He did not understand it. The new birth is a mystery; it cannot be explained or fully understood. It is a work of God beyond our comprehension.

When our Lord said, "Ye must be born again," that is what He meant. You must be born from above. James 1:17-18 tells us: "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. Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth."

When you were a little baby, you were born for the first time. Your first birth was of the flesh. When you came to the age of accountability, spiritual death came. That is the reason you must be born again. You cannot continue in the

sinful state you are in if you want to go to Heaven when you die. You need new life; you need to be resurrected from death to life. How can that happen? Can a man enter his mother's womb and be born again? No, you must be born from above.

Examine Yourself

The nature of the Christian is a new nature, one that is gained only through the new birth. It is so much more than a few words spoken. It is so much more than just a trip down the aisle to an altar. It is so much more than shaking a preacher's hand, signing a commitment card, or saying an oath. It is a new life in Christ Jesus.

How do you know whether you have been born again? If you have been born again, you will know because you have a new nature and new characteristics. You have a new Father, a new mother, a new way of living, and a different aspect on life. You will no longer just worry about yourself all the time. You will be concerned about others, because you do not want anyone to be lost. Again, "Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." When one is born again, there is a total change; everything about him is new, thank God.

Many times the Lord says to individuals, "I want to give you a new life." Before I got saved, I was sick of smoking and drinking, and I was sick of sin. I could hardly stand myself. My life was a mess. The good news is that the Lord offered me a new life, and I accepted.

When Nicodemus came to Jesus, He was not taking questions; He was giving answers to what was wrong with religion. The problem is still the same today. What was wrong then is still wrong now: without the new birth there is no change in people's lives. If you could be born again physically, what would you change? Whatever it would be, that is petty in the light of eternity. If you could change some things in

your own heart and life, would you want to? If you have things that are holding you in bondage, Christ is the answer. You must be born again.

Before I was saved, I was in a place in my life where I needed to change. I was sick of sin. I was spiritually dead, but what happened? Praise God! I was born again. I am not ashamed to say, "I am born again." I am not ashamed to say,

"Old things are passed away, and behold, all things are become new."

Friend, are you really born again? Have you really changed? It is examination time. You need to be honest with yourself. God knows the truth anyhow, so you need to be honest with Him. Have you been regenerated with new life? Do you know without a doubt that you are born again? What does God really

see in you? If you are unsaved, the message is the same today as it was two thousand years ago: "Ye must be born again." Today is the day of salvation. You can be changed beyond belief. He wants to do a work in your life. If you are not really born again, then this message is for you. You must be born again.

(Cassette C-5499E)

When It's the Other Fellow

HAVE YOU EVER NOTICED?

When the other fellow acts a certain way, he is "ill-tempered"; when you do it, it's nerves.

When the other fellow is set in his ways, he's "stubborn"; when you are, it is just firmness.

When the other fellow doesn't like your friends, he's "prejudiced"; when you don't like his, you are simply showing that you are a good judge of human nature.

When the other fellow tries to treat someone especially well, he is a "flatterer"; when you try the same thing, you are using "tact."

When the other fellow dresses extra well, he is proud; when you do, it is simply "a duty one owes to society."

When the other fellow runs great risks, he is "foolhardy"; when you do, you have great faith.

When the other fellow says what he thinks, he is "spiteful"; when you do, you are "frank."

When the other fellow denounces your faults, he is throwing clubs; when you denounce his, you are just uncovering his sins.

When the other fellow disagrees, he is carnal. When he agrees with you, he has a sweet disposition.

When the other fellow does not approve of the one you picked, well the church is in a bad condition. When you don't approve of the one he picked, he has very poor judgment.

When the other fellow sees something different than you do, he is off the track; when you do, it is just wisdom.

When the other fellow gets his way, he is bossy or just running everything; when you do, it is good common sense.

When the other fellow gets stirred up or his feelings are hurt, he is carnal; when you do, you are just hurt.

When you think you can read the other fellow's face, don't forget that he can read yours just as easily.

There is surely a great difference when we look at the other fellow, but if we could see what the other fellow sees when he looks at us, no doubt we would not be so quick to criticize or judge the other fellow.

We cannot see our own faults and shortcomings, while in others we see the fault in its native ugliness intensified by its unpleasant effects.

Our own faults come so natural and fit right in with our disposition, while the unaccustomed faults of others grate upon our minds. About the hardest part of correcting our own faults is finding them.

An ancient writer says that people carry faults in two bags: the one containing their own faults is slung behind them out of sight, while the other, holding their neighbor's faults is borne in front, in sight and often counted.

Ten thousand faults in my neighbor should be of less consequence to me than one of the smallest in myself. "He who lives in a glass house should throw no stones." There are two kinds of critics: those who complain that the rose has a thorn and those who are grateful that the thorn has a rose. God grant that we may be of the latter kind.



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