

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

**THE GOSPEL TRUMPETER**  
**USPS #871620**

Periodicals postage paid at the post office in Newark, Ohio 43055.

POSTMAN, send form 3579 to the printer:

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

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

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

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

**THE CHURCH OF GOD BELIEVES IN:**

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

**SOME SPIRITUAL FACTS  
PERTAINING TO THE CHURCH**

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

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**Vol. 36 June 2006 No. 6**

# Guest Editorial

*"And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."*

Hebrews 10:24-25

*"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD."*

Psalms 122:1

## It's Camp Meeting Time!

Here it is, the first of June all ready, and we are rapidly moving into another camp meeting season at God's Acres. In just a few weeks (beginning June 18), we will be gathering together on the old campground. Again, it will be a time to be ushered into the presence of God and to worship together with the precious saints.

As always, camp meeting is a special time of the year when we come into a godly atmosphere, free from the hassles of life and, for a little while, have our souls renewed and refreshed. What a wonderful opportunity to feast on heavenly manna and enjoy the good things God has to share with us! He always prepares a bountiful table for His people, and He encourages the hearts that need to be lifted up. He enriches each one with greater understanding, and He challenges His saints to keep pressing forward to the goal.

We, too, are as the Psalmist, who said, "I was glad. . . ." He knew the importance of going to the house of the Lord. It was there he received help and understanding for his spiritual needs. Surely, he looked forward to having fellowship with others and hearing the Word of God proclaimed.

All things are being made ready for your arrival. The saints are hard at work getting the grounds and the facilities ready

for your stay. The appearance of God's Acres is certainly important to us, but that is not our highest priority. Having a spiritual atmosphere for people to come into is our greatest desire and purpose. Our burden, concern, and prayer is that the Spirit of God will be free to work and do as He pleases in each service. With the Holy Spirit in the midst and having His way, needy souls will be able to find help and hope. Camp meeting is a time not only for the lost and downtrodden to receive help but also for the saints to have their strength renewed and their souls encouraged. Some may be battle worn through the trials and persecutions that have come their way.

We are living in a day when all the forces of evil have been turned loose against the people of God. These forces, led by Satan, are determined to destroy our faith and defeat us, if possible. Satan's purpose is to turn away as many as he can from the path of holiness and true righteousness. Dear one, we need all the instruction and direction we can receive from the Lord. Learning about the good old paths and understanding those things that please God are more needful today than ever before. The Hebrew writer instructed each one to

*[continued on page 26]*

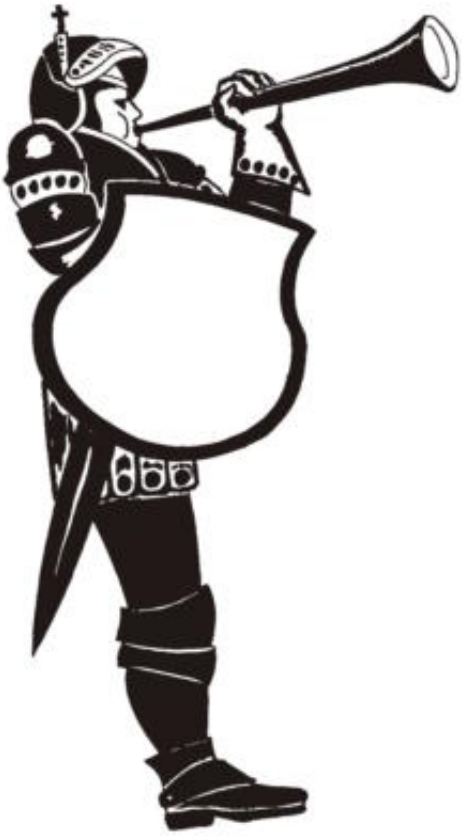
*Revelation 16:12 And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.*

*13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.*

*14 For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.*

*15 Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.*

*16 And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.*



# The Battle of Armageddon

*Brother Roger L. Decker*

## **A Symbolic Book**

I want to speak on a subject that is very controversial, especially to those who hold the thought of a literal reign during a millennium. The Revelation is a symbolic Book written to God's people. It was not written to the world or to the sinner, but it was written to spiritual people. Revelation 1:1 states, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John."

Who are God's servants? Romans 6:16-18 reads: "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his

servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." God's servants were once servants of sin, but now they obey God from the heart; that is exactly where obedience has to come from. While God's servants obey from the heart, they also do the will of God.

Ephesians 6:5-6 says: "Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as

the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart." God's servants do the will of God, and they do it from the heart.

If you attempt to interpret the Revelation as it is written, or literally, it will cause you much confusion, and you will miss the many truths contained therein. Let me give you an example. Revelation 12:1-2 states: "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered." To literalize these verses of Scripture would be absurd. The sun's mass is 330 times that of the earth. The diameter of the earth is 7,900 miles;

and the diameter of the sun is 862,400 miles. A star is about 150 times the mass of the sun. Any attempt to literalize these two verses would be out of the question. This woman also was with child. What do these symbols mean? The woman clothed with the sun is symbolic of the church, the moon under her feet signifies that she was standing on the foundation of the Law. The crown of twelve stars upon her head are symbolic of the twelve Apostles.

Symbolic language is common throughout the Word of God. Jesus talked about the sheep and the goats. In one Scripture, Jesus used four symbols. He said in Matthew 10:16, "Behold, I send you forth [Jesus was sending them] as sheep [telling them that they were to act as sheep do] in the midst of wolves [letting them know what kind of people they would encounter]: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves [telling them how they were to act]." The symbols used in this verse represent the commission that Christ gave to the disciples, and those disciples were to be as their Master, Jesus Christ. He told them who was sending them, how they were to act, and what kind of people they would encounter when He sent them out.

As you can see, symbols are used many times throughout the Word of God, from the Book of Genesis to the Book of Revelation. That which was literal in the Old Testament has spiritual fulfillment, or application, in the New Testament.

### **Spiritual Battles**

The Armageddon of the Old Testament was a literal battlefield (Megiddo), and on that battlefield great victories were won. God's people were victorious. The word *Armageddon*, as it appears in the Revelation, appears nowhere else in the Bible as it is spelled there. The land called *Megiddo* was a strip of land between Egypt and Damascus, and it was the scene of many hard-

fought battles. It was there that Barak and Deborah overthrew Sisera and his chariots. You can read about that in the Old Testament in the Book of Judges, Chapter 4. To the Jews, Megiddo was known as a bloody battlefield.

There is a battlefield where the redeemed, the saints of God, fight spiritual battles. The child of God does not take up arms and fight on a literal battlefield. He does not use carnal weapons, but he is just as much engaged in combat as though he were in an actual war zone. No, his weapons are not carnal, but he battles all kinds of spirits. We are in a spiritual conflict, or a spiritual battle. If only children of God could understand that.

Let me give you an example. A sister might have trouble with her unsaved husband. She may even get to the place where she feels that she can hardly take anymore. The thing she has to remember is this: if her husband had a changed spirit, she would not have that battle. The same individual, but with a changed spirit, would do away with that battle. We are in a heated, spiritual warfare.

John wrote in Revelation 16:13, "And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet." The devil does not come against a child of God with literal bullets, but the greatest weapons he uses are deceit and all kinds of spirits to war against your soul. In verse 14 John said, "For they are the spirits of devils [they are not clean spirits or God's Spirit; they are spirits of devils], working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty."

What kinds of spirits are in false religious institutions? The Bible tells us explicitly what kinds of spirits they are. Let us consider the dragon first, or Pagan Rome. Revelation 12:4 states, "And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did

cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born." Verse 7 reads, "And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels."

Verse 10 tells us, "And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night." By these three verses of Scripture, we know what type of spirit the dragon had. It had a devouring spirit, a fighting spirit, and an accusing spirit. This is revealed right in these three verses of Scripture. That was the spirit of paganism.

### **The Spirit of the Beast and the False Prophet**

John said in Revelation 16:13, ". . . and out of the mouth of the beast." The beast, which is the Roman Catholic Church, received its authority and its power from the dragon, or paganism. The beast is the dragon dressed up in religious garb. Revelation 13:2 explains its authority: "And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority."

What kind of spirit does the beast have? Revelation 13:4-7, speaking of this beast, states: "And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that

dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations."

What do we see? First, we see that Roman Catholicism is blasphemous. Next, we see that it is antichristian. It is a boaster and a ruler, or a dictator. That is the spirit that comes out of the beast, but John let us know that another spirit was manifested. In the latter part of Revelation 16:13 he said, ". . . and out of the mouth of the false prophet." What was he talking about? He was speaking of Protestantism. Someone may say, "I don't know how Roman Catholicism blasphemes." Let me tell you just what I heard on the news. They stated that Pope John Paul II is over in Heaven watching over the church. You talk about blasphemy. The last I read in the Word of God about headship is that Jesus Christ is the Head of the church. Pope John Paul II might have been the head of the Roman Catholic Church, but he is not the head of God's church.

Let us learn a little about the other beast called "the false prophet." John wrote in Revelation 13:11-12: "And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed." This beast received his authority from Roman Catholicism, or the beast before him.

Now, the thing that is more deceptive about Protestantism is this: Protestantism has some truth. The Roman Catholic Church neither had the Truth, nor dwelt in the Truth. John stated in verses 13-14: "And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do

in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live."

Along with these great wonders and great signs came deception. You must have some Truth to deceive people. Protestantism has some Truth, but its spirit is deceptive. These false religious spirits oppose the people of God. I want you to know that these spirits are still out there, and those three unclean spirits like frogs refer to paganism, Roman Catholicism, and the false prophet (Protestantism).

### **Unclean Spirits**

These unclean spirits can get hold of the people of God. It is one thing to deal with them out in Roman Catholicism and in Protestantism, but it is another thing to deal with them around the Church of God. We are in a spiritual conflict, and these unclean spirits can get in your home. They will cause children to rise against their parents and do things that they would not have dared to do years ago. When my mother or father asked me to do something, had I said no, I would have had to have prepared for a good landing. Never did I say no to my parents or say, "I'm not going to do it." Had I done so, about that time, I would have been disciplined.

Today some children tell their parents, "No, I'm not going to do it." Well, God is looking down, and He sees that. A young lady who rebels against her parents would rebel against a husband. She would not make a good wife. Young man, you should not consider marrying a young woman who is rebellious and sassy to her parents. You would experience the same problems in your home. Young lady, the same is true of a young man. If he rebels against his parents, you should not consider marrying him. If a young man is sassy with his mother and father, he would be the same way in

your home, and he would work you over. He might not work you over physically, but he would work you over mentally or verbally.

One thing I cannot stand, and I know God cannot stand, is to see a sassy child. No child should sass his parents. Of course, some young people will try to take advantage of the mother when the father is not around. I am still talking about spirits and the battle of Armageddon. We are right in the midst of it. All some people can see in this battle are the false prophet, Roman Catholicism, and the dragon. However, these spirits get closer to us than that. They cause young people to be disrespectful and lazy. Some young people do not even know what it is to do a day's work. If you ask some young people to get up and do something, they reply, "I'm too tired." It thrills me to see young people take hold in the work of God. More young people need to take part in His work.

There are spirits that cause children to want everything they see. Their attitude is "give me, give me, give me," but they do not want to do anything. We are in a real battle. These spirits sometimes get in congregations, and then people do not want to follow the instructions of their leaders in the church. We do have leaders in the church. We have a government in the church. We have a ministry in the church.

### **What Is the Battle Over?**

We find that the next beast had two horns like a lamb and spoke as a dragon. It has the same spirit as the dragon. The authority that this beast received came from the first beast, Roman Catholicism, which got its power and authority from the dragon. Saint, there is a spiritual gathering going on. Many who profess to be Church of God are caught up in these things. They no longer sing to the glory of God; they have an entertainment spirit. Gospel quartets sing anywhere, but they do not preach the Gospel anywhere.

Singspirations are a great tool of the enemy. It will make you think that everyone loves Jesus Christ, but that is not true. Those people will sing all night, but they will not take five minutes of the pure Gospel.

The Apostle Paul said to Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:7, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." This lets you know that the battle is over the faith. In 1 Timothy 1:18 Paul said, "This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare." To keep from getting wounded in this battle, you must make sure that when you go to battle you have the right weapons. You cannot fight in the flesh, or carnally. In 2 Corinthians 10:4 the Apostle Paul instructed, "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds."

Religious spirits will work on the people of God, and it takes the Truth to reveal those spirits. The warring spirit that Roman Catholicism and paganism had can get in among the saints, and then they will become carnal with one another. Warring spirits will cause people to say things that should not be said. Saints of God should not become carnal with one another and do everything but swing their fists. That is not how God's people battle. Our weapons are mighty through God.

What reveals these spirits? It takes the pouring out of judgment; that is right in the Bible. Verses 12-13 of our Scripture text read: "And the sixth angel poured out his vial [judgment, wrath, and the plagues] upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet."

I am not going to delve into all these symbols because I want to

continue our study of the battle of Armageddon, but the Scripture tells us that "the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared." Symbolically speaking, the kings of the east are knowledge and understanding. For anyone to come out of Babylon, he must have knowledge and understanding. Also, before God calls him out of Babylon, He must prepare a place for him to go.

### **Giving Heed to Unclean Spirits**

When judgment was poured out on Babylon, three unclean spirits like frogs appeared, and that was their foundation. The frogs represent uncleanness and plagues. Frogs have empty and meaningless speech. All they do is sit around and croak. A frog might have some understanding, but certainly it has empty, meaningless speech. Frogs are connected with darkness, and they are also connected with mire. The Scripture says these unclean spirits are the spirits of devils. They will affect your lifestyle, your thought life, your attitudes, and your personality.

Paul said he had kept the faith, but these unclean spirits will destroy your faith in God as well as your faith in your brothers and sisters in Christ. These unclean spirits will get into your thought life and cause your thoughts to become unclean. You will start to think on things that you should not be thinking upon. These unclean spirits will cause you to start thinking about someone who is not your husband or your wife. Now, to be an adulterer, you do not have to commit the act of adultery; it comes out of the heart. Jesus said in Matthew 15:18-20: "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. . . ." Adultery, fornication, lying, and the

other sins Jesus mentioned come out of the heart. These are the things that defile a person.

These unclean spirits are loose and have wounded many a soldier and have even killed some, spiritually speaking. Some people who used to wave their hands and shout to the glory of God and testify about the oneness of God's people and the beautiful church now walk into Protestant churches and sit down and feel at home. They had to have laid aside some truths to end up in that condition. They laid aside the name of the church, the entrance to the church, the truth concerning a millennium and the rapture, and the battle of Armageddon. In other words, they laid down the Bible. This has happened, and it is happening. We are in a spiritual battle. If you give heed to unclean spirits, there is no telling where they will take you.

Many children and grandchildren have been affected because their parents have given heed to these unclean spirits. They do not even have confidence in God today, much less in the church. Division does not affect only those who are divided, but it also affects their children and their grandchildren.

Many people who have given heed to these unclean spirits have no trust in God and no faith in God. These spirits have taken hold of people to the degree that they have no vision and no concept of the church; that is sad. To them, the Church of God is just as any other church, but that is not what the Bible says. It is the family of God. The devil is doing his best to cause people to allow more and more carnality in their lives, and yet they go on as though that is acceptable.

### **Blessed Is He Who Watches**

Dear one, the battle of Armageddon started in the Garden of Eden. Do not get all caught up in thinking that it is a literal battle on a bloody battlefield. If you are living for God, you are in the battle of

Armageddon right now. When you get saved, everything is not going to be just fine all the time. The devil gets stirred when you get saved. You cannot just lay back and put your feet up; you are in a battle. You have some weapons with which you can use to fight in this battle, but your weapons are not carnal.

We are in the heated stage of the battle of Armageddon, but we are also in the great day of God Almighty. God is revealing who has an up-to-date experience of salvation and who does not. There is a line of demarcation. If you do not have it, it is not going to be long until it will show up. God's way is going to stand out as the way that is right, not a way that seems right. While the devil has ones looking for it, dear one, we are right in the midst of the great day of God Almighty. This is a great day!

You may say, "I would have liked to have lived in that day." No, this is the great day of God Almighty. It started in the sixth-seal age and continues right on through until eternity. There are going to be great victories and much overcoming, because we have a great God, a great church, a great salvation, a great High Priest, a great Sacrifice, and a great Offering. Everything about this is great! It is wonderful to be a child of God today!

What was John's admonition to the church? He said in Revelation 16:15, "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame." John said, "Blessed is he that watcheth." You can read much about watching throughout the Scriptures. John said you need to keep your garments, lest you walk naked, spiritually speaking, and they see your shame. Dear one, to be victorious, you must put on the whole armor and crouch up close to God. You cannot lay down one piece of the armor and succeed in this battle.

If you are having struggles in your life, do not quit God. Do not take those struggles out to the world. They will increase and grow by leaps and bounds. You need to take your burdens and troubles to the Lord. He can help you. God desires to help His people. Just as God's people had victorious battles in the days of Barak and Deborah, we have great victories today in Jesus Christ. You should not turn away from Him and go another direction. Do not throw up your hands in defeat and walk away.

You may say, "Well, the one I saw wasn't doing so well, and he professed." Friend, you need to get your eyes off people. I can remember one time when I was having a real struggle, especially at

the factory where I worked. My struggle was over what I thought to be seasoned Christians. I had not been saved long, so I went to the pastor and told him, "So-and-So is doing such-and-such, and I don't understand that. How he can do that?" (Of course, I was a newborn babe at that time, and no doubt, I was doing things that others would not do.)

He said, "Brother Decker, keep your eyes right on Jesus. You are going to run into people like that, and they don't represent Jesus Christ. Keep your eyes right on Christ." I am so glad for that admonition; that is what I did. I have seen many things and have been disappointed many times, but I have never been disappointed in Jesus. He has always been there, and He will be there for you right on through to eternity.

Saint, we are in the battle of Armageddon. This is no time to shrug your duty, rest, or take a detour. You need to stay right in the battle. Why? It is the great day of God Almighty! God has great things for us! It is not a time to relax your efforts or drag along behind. It is a time to get right up in the front line. We have a great work to do in this great day of God Almighty.

*(Cassette C-5406M)*

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



*Romans 8:31 What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?*

*32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?*

*33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.*

*34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.*

*35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?*

*36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.*

*37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.*

*38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,*

*39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

# ***Being More Than Conquerors***

*Brother James Lovingood*

## **Conquering Through Jesus Christ Our Lord**

The Apostle Paul set forth the things Christ has done for us, and then he made a strong statement in verse 37 when he said, "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." In verse 39 he stated he was persuaded that neither height, nor depth, nor creature could separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus. It is very encouraging for the saint of God to know that nothing can separate him from the love of God.

In the Book of Luke you can read about the prodigal son. He left the father's house and asked for all that was coming to him of his inheritance, and then he left home and went to a far country. The Bible lets us know that after he had spent all he had, a famine came, and he was down in a hogpen, feeding the hogs and desiring to eat husks with the hogs. Finally, he came to himself and returned to his father's house. That is what people must do today. They need to come to themselves and let God show them where they are and where they need to be.

I want you to notice that God

has given His people the Word and the Spirit. The church is a conquering church through Jesus Christ our Lord. We can do nothing in our own strength. In 1 Corinthians, Chapter 13, the Apostle Paul gave a discourse on the love of God. Much of our conquering is through the love of God. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, and it is through His love that we can love others. Child of God, you could not even love yourself, and especially not others, before God saved you. After He shed His love abroad in your heart by the Holy Ghost, then you could love others.

In the Greek there are three definitions of love. The word *agape* sets forth the unconditional love of God. We are not to love others on certain conditions. Just as God loved us unconditionally, we must love others the same way. First Corinthians 13:4-6 says: "Charity suffereth long [I am talking about being more than a conqueror], and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth." In your own life love is what you overcome with, and it is the only way you can help others to overcome.

I want you to notice what Jesus said in John 16:32-33: "Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." Because Christ overcame, in Him you can overcome. You can go forth conquering.

In Revelation 6:2 John wrote, "And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer." The rider on the white horse is Jesus (the white is symbolic of purity, and the horse is symbolic of warfare). I want you to see that the church is going forth conquering. When the Holy Spirit came on the Day of Pentecost, He equipped the church to go forth conquering. The Kingdom of God was launched that day, and those who entered the kingdom were filled with the Spirit of God. It is Christ *in* His church that enables His people to conquer. Jesus told the disciples in John 16:33 to "be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." Since He has overcome, we can overcome.

## Overcoming in the Power of His Might

I want you to notice that if you overcome, you must do something else. Ephesians 6:10 states, "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might." This is a commandment. There is no other power that can help you but the strength of Almighty God. John 1:12 reads, "But as many as received him, to them gave he power [or ability] to become the sons of God." God has invested some things in the church, and He has given His people strength and power.

Paul encouraged the church at Ephesus in Ephesians, Chapter 6. After he instructed them to be strong in the Lord, he said in verse 11, "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." That takes effort. You are not going to know what the armor is if you do not get into the Word. You should never give the devil any glory. The Bible tells us that even the devil believes and trembles. Satan knows you better than you think he does, and he is ever laying a snare for you. The first thing he wants to do is drain you of the power of God.

If you do not put on the whole armor of God, you cannot stand against a relentless enemy. The devil is ever setting snares for you. You may think that you know what your weakest point is, but you may not always be accurate. James said that the fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. I am glad of that, aren't you?

Paul went on to say in verse 12, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world." Paul said that we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers of the darkness of this world and against spiritual wickedness in high places.

In Acts, Chapter 5, we will look at a first hand example of this. The disciples had gone forth preaching

the Word, and souls were being saved and brought into the kingdom. God saved three thousand in one day. The disciples stayed in the Upper Room at Jerusalem just as Jesus had instructed them to do, until they were endued with power from on high. After they were filled with the Spirit of God, they came down from the Upper Room. Peter went right out with a bonus in his soul and began to preach the Gospel with boldness. The kingdom was launched because of the Gospel of the kingdom. It was not long until these brethren were neck deep in trouble. They did many signs and wonders. Acts 5:17 reads, "Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation."

## Be Strong in the Lord

In Psalm 2:1 the Psalmist asked the question, "Why do the heathen rage . . . ?" The people raged against Christ. They directed their envy and hatred at Him, but He used the Apostles to sound forth the Word of God. They were up against the rulers of darkness and spiritual wickedness in high places. The high priest and the Sadducees laid their hands on the Apostles and put them in prison.

Acts 5:19-20 tells us: "But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said, Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life." Persecution is going to get more fired up, but we are serving God, and He will see us through every trial and every persecution, no matter what. We must be determined to be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. We cannot do it by our abilities or through our intellect.

After the Apostles went back into the temple and began to preach the Word of God again, what happened? The rulers apprehended them again. Verses 27-28 tell us that they brought them before the coun-



cil, and the high priest asked them, "Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us."

I want you to notice the Apostles' answer. Verse 29 says, "Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men." All over this world, millions of people are obeying and adhering to men's ideals and men's counsel, but none other can save us but Christ.

Jude, verses 20-21, admonishes: "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." If you will, you can overcome every power of the enemy, not only for yourself but for your brother.

Paul said we war against spiritual wickedness in high places. He said in Ephesians 6:13, "Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God [not just part of it], that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand." I think most people would agree that we are in an evil day. We are living in a time when the name of God is being cast down in so many places. Child of God, you ought to praise Him, lift Him up, and give Him glory for all that He has done. Too many times people do not really praise Him and give Him the glory that is due Him. Too many times the flesh is considered above really loving God and helping others.

### **Living Righteously**

Paul said in verse 14, "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness." As Paul was writing this letter, sitting in a Roman prison, no doubt, he looked at a guard and saw the breastplate, the helmet, and the rest of his armor, so he began to see a

spiritual lesson and used it to instruct the church at Ephesus. He said they needed to have on the breastplate of righteousness.

I want you to understand that God has clothed the saints with the robe of righteousness. In Revelation 19:8 John wrote, "And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." Another translation says, "the righteous acts of saints." We are to live righteously, soberly, and godly in this present world. You need to honor God by living righteously. You must read the Word of God and appropriate it into your life so that you can stand against the wiles of the devil.

The Apostle Paul told young Timothy in 1 Timothy 6:12 to "Fight the good fight of faith." He told the church at Ephesus to "Put on the whole armour of God." Then in 2 Corinthians 10:3 he told the church at Corinth, "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh." Christian friend, God saved you, but you still have a fleshly body, and you will be in that body until death comes upon you; then you will move out of it. Though you are in the flesh, you should not walk after the flesh.

Paul stated in verses 4-5: "(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal [or fleshly], but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God [many things and many religions exalt themselves against the knowledge of God], and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." God even intends for you to control your thoughts.

I want you to notice that God thinks controlling your thoughts is so important that He had Paul write about it in Philippians, Chapter 4. You must remember that your mind is the doorway to your heart. Where does evil first appear? It appears in the mind, or in your thoughts. If you

will pray, God will give you the power to shun all appearance of evil. The enemy will try to invade your mind with evil thoughts; therefore, you have to pray. Prayer is a weapon of this Christian warfare. You have to put it on; it is part of the armor. You have to take the weapons of warfare and stand.

In Revelation, Chapter 12, you can see the militant phase of the church. God's church is an army marching forward in this old world with the armor and the weapons God has provided. To conquer the enemy, you must put on the whole armor and use the weapons.

Paul stated in Philippians 4:8, "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just [he was giving you some things to think on, and your thoughts should stay on these things], whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." God gave you a mind for multiple reasons. Just as David of old, you can recall precious memories. When David faced Goliath, he remembered the bear and the lion that he slew. God gave you a memory, and it can serve you well if you use it to think on the good things.

### **Endure Hardness as a Good Soldier of Jesus Christ**

Notice how the Apostle Paul instructed Timothy, a young minister in the service of the Lord in the Church of God. He told him in 2 Timothy 2:1, "Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." The grace that is in Christ Jesus is your strength, and His grace provides you with everything you need for the armor of God and for the weapons of this warfare. Paul was used to praying and getting prayers answered, but he asked the Lord three times to remove a thorn in his flesh. God finally gave Paul an answer, but He did not

remove the thorn. In 2 Corinthians 12:9 you can read that the Lord told Paul, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness."

The Apostle Paul went on to tell Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:2-3: "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."

Paul said we are in a warfare. Christian friend, you are in the army of God, and Paul said "having done all, to stand." Where do you stand? You must stand on the Word of God, the Truth of God. You must live your life by the Word of God, the righteousness of God, and the holiness that He has given and created in you.

Jesus is your leader in this battle, and you must trust and follow Him. In John, Chapter 8, you can read about the woman who had been taken in adultery. Her accusers were not trying to uphold the Law; they were trying to trap Jesus. He said to them in verse 7, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." One by one her accusers left, because they were convicted by their consciences. Then Jesus asked in verse 10, "Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?" Verse 11 reads, "She said, No man, Lord." Jesus said to her, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." This is the same message that God has for every sinner: go and sin no more; then put on the whole armor of God and take the weapons that He has provided for you in this warfare. You are to live for Him in righteousness and true holiness.

In Isaiah, Chapter 53, the Prophet Isaiah prophesied of the sufferings of Christ and of how He was bruised for our iniquities in His own body. In verses 11-12 Isaiah wrote: "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall

bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." Notice that Isaiah said Christ would divide the spoil with the strong. Friend, if you put on the whole armor of God and use the weapons that He has given you, you can be more than a conqueror in every battle, and Christ will divide the spoil with you. Christ suffered and poured out His soul unto death so that you could be an overcomer.

### **The Hidden Manna**

John wrote in Revelation 2:17, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh [the word *overcometh* means overcoming continuously, not in your own strength and ability, but by the Word of His grace] will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it."

John spoke of "the hidden manna." No one tastes of the hidden manna except those who are living in the will of God and abiding in His church. The lost, or those who are without Christ, can come and taste of it if they believe that God is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him and then repent of all sin and obey God.

This hidden manna comes from the Word of God, and it comes as you overcome. God will give it to you daily. You are not supposed to take this manna and lay it upon a shelf. No, it is important. You need it every day. You need the Word of God far more than you might realize. You need strength from Heaven, and it comes through the Word of God by the Spirit of the Living God. You cannot be an overcomer any other way.

Revelation 2:17 is a promise to

overcomers. The beginning of this verse admonishes, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." Notice in verse 12 that Christ addressed this to "the angel of the church," or the pastor. Then he said, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith." To do that, you must hunger and thirst after righteousness. When God saves you, God puts that desire in you, but you have to keep it fresh every day.

When you come to God's table, you will be hungry if you love God. If you love Him, you want what He has for you. We are in a warfare, and if you do not stay with Him and keep on the whole armor of God, you will be overcome by the enemy. The devil is shooting at you every day, but thank God, you can be more than a conqueror through Christ. Hallelujah! I am glad for the Truth! It will build a fire down inside you and cause a hunger and a thirst that no devil can quench. If you will stay with the Truth of God and love it and live it, you can overcome.

God's people are not a group of people who do not know where they are or where they are going. We are peculiar people that God has saved and placed to be a light to others. He has put each member in the church where we are to do our part in the body of Christ.

### **Stand on the Word of God**

John wrote in Revelation 2:11b, "He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." When God found you, you were dead in trespasses and sins, but He saved you and quickened you and made you alive spiritually. He has lifted you up, thank God! You are saved by the grace of God, and you have an armor that the devil cannot penetrate, if you will stay with God and stay with the church.

I want you to know that spirits can cause you to exalt yourself and make you feel that you are better than someone else if you are not

careful. You should always prefer your brother and esteem others better than yourself. If you will humble yourself, in due time God will exalt you. You cannot depend on the flesh. You need to depend on Almighty God and His wonderful Word and grace.

I want you to notice how God clothes His people. We are clothed with robes of righteousness when we get saved, and God will keep us clothed. Friend, He does not want your nakedness to appear. There is too much of that literally and spiritually today. God wants you to live by the dictates of His Word. To do that, you must dress right, act right, live right, and be what God wants you to be. God has called His people to live holy and righteously. People may think you are peculiar, but you need to be what God has called you to be by the grace of God.

Jesus said in Revelation 3:12, "Him that overcometh [to stay in the love of God and walk with Him, you must walk in the light of His Word daily], will I make a pillar in the temple of my God." A pillar is something that supports buildings. According to 1 Corinthians 3:9, we are God's building. Psalm 127:1 reads, "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it." We are the house that the Lord built. This house does not consist of brick and mortar or stone, but of redeemed men and women. It is where God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit dwell. God's people constitute the body of Christ. I have never been in a better place in all my life than in the Church of God. God's people are an overcoming people. We are where we are because we have overcome by the grace of God through Christ.

Dear one, if you are going through a trial or a hardship, you need to stand on the Word of God and live by it. As I mentioned earlier in the message, James said if you will humble yourself, God will exalt you in due time. If you pray and get hold of God every day, He promised

that He would come on the scene. We do not walk by feelings; we walk by faith.

### **Hold Fast Till Christ Comes**

Jesus said in Revelation 2:25, "But that which ye have already hold fast till I come." Jesus said to hold fast until He comes. The people in the Thyatira church age were going through terrible persecution. Jesus said some of them had known the depths of Satan, but he told them in verses 25-26: "But that which ye have already hold fast till I come. And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations." The church had gone through a dark time, a very serious time of persecution. Persecution does not feel good, but in overcoming you are gaining ground. You are gaining the victory over the things that the devil throws at you in this old world. There are many allurements and temptations out there. God has given you power to overcome them. Even Jesus was tempted. The Spirit led him in the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. The devil is still a tempter, but God will give grace through His Word.

Jesus said in verse 26 that He would "give power over the nations." Church, we are in a holy nation; we are in the Israel of God. Many religious people are looking for Jesus to come back and go to old Israel and stand on the Mount of Olives, but He has finished His work there, and now He is sitting at the right hand of the Father.

What did Jesus mean when He said, "He that overcometh, . . . to him will I give power over the nations?" He was speaking of the things that have the nations bound. It is sad when we look globally at what has happened to nations. All of that is happening to them due to what sin is doing to them. Sin is taking them down, but God has given His people victory over all of that and saved us from it. Sin is not in our vocabulary anymore. We are

no longer in bondage to it. We are free! Jesus said in John 8:36, "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." Sin is the thing that is holding other nations in bondage. Even old Israel is bound, still holding to Old Testament Jewish traditions, still bound in their own iniquities.

In John 7:37 Jesus said, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." Everyone can get this. I am so glad it is not just for a select few. God is no respecter of persons. In Matthew 7:13-14 Jesus said: "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

Jesus said in Matthew 19:28, "Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Jesus never set the disciples on literal thrones, but He was talking about the authority that He was going to give them. He said in verse 29, "And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life."

### **Are You Free?**

In Matthew, Chapter 23, Jesus spoke of those who sat in Moses' seat. They wanted that authority. Jesus was telling the disciples that He would give them authority by giving them the Word of God, and He was going to send them into all the world. You can read about it in Matthew, Chapter 28.

In verses 18-20 Jesus said: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. [Jesus was going to delegate some of His power and authority. He had done that already when He sent the disciples out in

Matthew, Chapter 10, to heal and to preach the Gospel.] Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

Jesus was going to be with them to the end of that old Jewish age. He went right to the end with them, and on Calvary He took those old rituals and that which was against them and nailed them to the Cross. He had commanded His disciples to go and preach the Gospel. Those who heard and believed and were baptized were saved. Jesus said, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." He went right with them as they obeyed Him and kept His Word.

John wrote in Revelation 15:1-2: "And I saw another sign in heaven [speaking of the church], great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is

filled up the wrath of God. And I saw [this is a vision] as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God."

John was talking about the church and where she stands. That is the reason she has overcome through the ages of time. She stands on the Word of God, just where God has placed her, and He has given her the victory through the Word of God over every power of the enemy and over religious spirits.

The first beast spoken of in Revelation, Chapter 13, came up out of the sea, or from among people. The second beast that followed it came up out of the earth, or from the teachings of men. The saints of God who are hooked up with earthly religion need to come out of Babylon, just as God has commanded. Revelation 18:4 says, "Come out of her, my people [why?], that ye be

not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." You can overcome by God's Word in the city of God where God has placed you. You can overcome every power of the enemy. The devil wants to undermine the work of God and hold souls in bondage.

The Son of God can make you free. It is not some man that brings freedom to you, but it is God, when Christ comes into your heart. He showed me what I can be for God and what I can help others to be.

I am not home yet, but one day I am going home when the Lord is finished with me. I will say goodbye to this old world and good morning over yonder. Is that your hope? If anything is keeping you from overcoming, you need to get help from God. You cannot overcome in your own strength, but you can overcome by God's Spirit. If you have a need in your heart, won't you take it to the Lord?

*(Cassette C-5291E)*

## ***A Little Perspective***

*If you own just one Bible, you are abundantly blessed; 1/3 of the world does not have access to even one.*

*If you woke up this morning with more health than illness, you are more blessed than the million who will not survive the week.*

*If you have never experienced the danger of battle, the loneliness of imprisonment, the agony of torture, or the pangs of starvation, you are ahead of 500 million people around the world.*

*If you attend a church meeting without fear of harassment, arrest, or torture of death, you are more blessed than almost three billion people in the world.*

*If you have food in your refrigerator, clothes on your back, a roof over your head, and a place to sleep, you are richer than 75% of this world.*

*If you have money in the bank, in your wallet, and spare change in a dish someplace, you are among the top 8% of the world's wealthy.*

*If your parents are still married and alive, you are very rare, even in the United States.*

*If you hold up your head with a smile on your face and are truly thankful, you are blessed because the majority can, but most do not.*

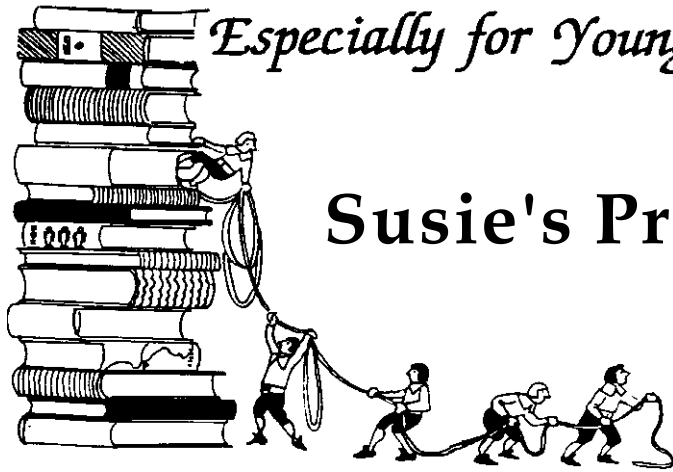
*If you can hold someone's hand, hug them, or even touch them on the shoulder, you are blessed because you can offer God's healing touch.*

*If you prayed yesterday and today, you are in the minority because you believe in God's willingness to hear and answer prayer.*

*If you can read this message, you are more blessed than over two billion people in the world that cannot read anything at all.*

*PS: Sometimes we need to put things into perspective, we expect so much and appreciate so little!*

*Especially for Young People*



## Susie's Prayer



It was a half holiday. The children were gathered on the green, and a right merry time they were having.

"Come, girls and boys," called out Ned Graham, "let's play hunt the squirrel."

They were all eager for the game, and a large circle was formed with Ned Graham for leader because he was the largest.

"Come, Susie," said one of the boys, to a little girl who stood on one side and seemed to shrink from joining them.

"Oh, never mind *her!*" said Ned, with a little toss of his head. "She's nobody, anyhow. Her father drinks."

A quick flush crept over the child's pale face as she heard the cruel, thoughtless words.

She was very sensitive, and the arrow had touched her heart in its tenderest place.

Her father *was* a drunkard, she knew, but to be taunted with it before so many was more than she could bear; and with great sobs heaving her bosom, and hot tears filling her eyes, she turned and ran away from the playground.

Her mother was sitting by the window when she reached home, and the tearful face of the little girl told that something had happened to disturb her.

"What is the matter, Susie?" she asked kindly.

"Oh, mother," said Susie, with the tears dropping down her cheeks, as she hid her face in her mother's lap, "Ned Graham said such a cruel thing

about me," and here the sobs choked her voice so that she could hardly speak. "He said that I wasn't anybody, and that father drinks."

"My poor little girl," Mrs. Ellet said, very sadly. There were tears in her eyes too.

Such taunts as this were nothing new in that family.

"Oh, mother," Susie said, as she lifted her face, wet with tears, from her mother's lap, "I can't bear to have them say so and act just as if *I* had done something wicked. I wish father wouldn't drink! Do you suppose he'll ever leave it off?"

"I hope so," Mrs. Ellet answered, as she kissed Susie's face where the tears clung like drops of dew on a rose. "I pray that he may break off the habit, and I can do nothing but pray and leave the rest to God."

That night Mr. Ellet came home to supper, as usual. He was a hard-working man and a good neighbor. So everybody said, but he had the habit of intemperance so firmly fixed upon him that everybody thought he would end his days in the drunkard's grave. Susie kissed him when he came through the gate, as she always did, but there was something in her face that went to his heart. A look so sad and full of touching sorrow for one so young as she!

"What ails my little girl?" he asked as he patted her curly head.

"I can't tell you, father," she answered slowly.

"Why?" he asked.

"Because it would make you feel

bad," Susie replied.

"I guess not," he said, as they walked up to the door together. "What is it, Susie?"

"Oh, father," and Susie burst into tears again as the memory of Ned Graham's words came up freshly in her mind, "I wish you wouldn't drink any more, for the boys and girls don't like to play with me 'cause you do."

Mr. Ellet made no reply, but something stirred in his heart that made him ashamed of himself, ashamed that he was the cause of so much sorrow.

After supper he took his hat, and Mr. Ellet knew only too well where he was going. At first he had resolved to stay at home that evening, but the force of habit was so strong that he could not resist; so he yielded, promising himself that he would not drink more than once or twice.

Susie had left the table before he finished his supper, and as he passed the great clump of lilacs by the path on his way to the gate, he heard a voice and stopped to listen to what she was saying.

"Oh, good Jesus, please don't let father drink any more. Make him just as he used to be when I was a baby, and then the boys and girls can't call me a drunkard's child or say such bad things about me. Please, dear Jesus, for mother's sake and mine."

Susie's father listened to her simple prayer with a great lump swelling in his throat. When her prayer was ended, he went up to her, knelt down by her side, and put his arm

around her.

"God in heaven," he said very solemnly, "I promise tonight never to touch another drop of liquor as long as I live. Give me strength to keep my pledge and help me to be a better man."

"Oh, father," Susie cried, her arms about his neck, and her head upon his breast, "I'm so glad! I shall not care

about anything they say to me now, for I know you won't be a drunkard any more."

"God helping me, I will be a *man!*" he answered, as taking Susie by the hand, he went back into the house where his wife was sitting with the old patient look of sorrow on her face, the look that so often rested there.

I cannot tell you of the joy and

thanksgiving that went up from that hearthstone that night. I wish I could, but it was too deep a joy which filled the hearts of Susie and her mother to be described.

Was not Susie's prayer answered?

Selected

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## "My Brother's Hands"

Back in the fifteenth century, in a tiny village near Nuremberg, lived a family with eighteen children. Eighteen! In order merely to keep food on the table for this large family, the father and head of the household, a goldsmith by profession, worked almost eighteen hours a day at his trade and any other paying chore he could find in the neighborhood.

Despite their seemingly hopeless condition, two of Albrecht Durer's elder children had a dream. They both wanted to pursue their talent for art, but they knew full well that their father would never be financially able to send either of them to Nuremberg to study at the Academy.

After many long discussions at night in their crowded bed, the two boys finally worked out a pact. They would toss a coin. The loser would go down into the nearby mines and, with his earnings, support his brother while he attended the academy.

Then, when that brother who won the toss completed his studies, in four years, he would support the other brother at the academy, either with sales of his artwork or, if necessary, also by laboring in the mines. They tossed a coin on a Sunday morning after church. Albrecht Durer won the toss and went off to Nuremberg.

Albert went down into the dangerous mines and, for the next four years, financed his brother, whose work at the academy was almost an immediate sensation. Albrecht's etchings, his woodcuts, and his oils were far better than those of most of his professors, and by the time he graduated, he was beginning to earn considerable fees for his commissioned works.

When the young artist returned to his village, the Durer family held a festive dinner on their lawn to celebrate Albrecht's triumphant homecoming. After a long and memorable meal, punctuated with music and laughter, Albrecht rose from his honored position at the head of the table to offer special thanks for his beloved brother for the years of sacrifice that had enabled Albrecht to fulfill his ambition.

His closing words were, "And now, Albert, blessed brother of mine, now it is your turn. Now you can go

Nuremberg to pursue your dream, and I will take care of you."

All heads turned in eager expectation to the far end of the table where Albert sat, tears streaming down his pale face, shaking his lowered head from side to side while he sobbed and repeated over and over, "No . . . no . . . no . . . no."

Finally, Albert rose and wiped the tears from his cheeks. He glanced down the long table at the faces he loved, and then, holding his hands close to his right cheek, he said softly, "No, brother. I cannot go to Nuremberg. It is too late for me. Look, look what four years in the mines have done to my hands! The bones in every finger have been smashed at least once, and lately I have been suffering from arthritis so badly in my right hand that I cannot even hold a glass in my hand, much less make delicate lines on parchment or canvas with a pen or a brush. No, brother . . . for me it is too late."

More than 450 years have passed. By now, Albrecht Durer's hundreds of masterful portraits, pen and silver-point sketches, watercolors, charcoals, woodcuts, and copper engravings hang in every great museum in the world, but the odds are great that you, like most people, are familiar with only one of Albrecht Durer's works. More than merely being familiar with it, you very well might have a reproduction hanging in your home or office.

One day, to pay homage to Albert for all that he had sacrificed, Albrecht Durer painstakingly drew his brother's abused hands with palms together and thin fingers stretched skyward. He called his powerful drawing simply "Hands," but the entire world almost immediately opened their hearts to his great masterpiece and renamed his tribute of love "The Praying Hands."

The next time you see a copy of that touching creation, take a second look. Let it be your reminder, if you still need one, that no one, no one, ever makes it alone!

Author Unknown

*"I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5).*

# My Personal Testimony

My name is Mabel Whittington, and I attend the Church of God in Newark, Ohio. I would like to tell you how the Lord saved me from sin and gave me a new life in Him. My mother and father loved each other and us children. However, my father started drinking, and he wanted my mother to be with him, so she went with him to keep the home together.

One day a Nazarene preacher was visiting the neighborhood and inviting people to church. My mother told him that she could not go, but that she had three girls who would go. We went to church there for about six months. After that, we moved away and did not go to church anymore.

After I grew up, I was living in Newark, Ohio, with my brother and his wife, but I wanted to go home to Marietta, Ohio. I asked a friend, Lang Whittington, to take me home, and he did. Lang came to see me a few times, and he wanted me to move back to Newark. I did, and I stayed with my sister and her husband. Soon Lang and I were married. He was thirty-six, and I was sixteen. Lang always worked hard, but he liked to drink.

One of Lang's friends died in his sleep about the same time that former President John F. Kennedy was assassinated. News of the assassination was all that was on television during that time. Lang's nerves got bad, so he began to take nerve pills and asked me to start going to church. I said, "Okay." My oldest daughter was about eighteen months old at the time. We started going to church in December of that year.

I made a New Year's resolution the following January that I was going to quit smoking, and I have never smoked since then. Thank the good Lord!

The Lord began to deal with me the first time I went to church, but I did not go to the altar. I prayed at home, but it had to be done God's way.

One Sunday the latter part of January, an evangelist was preaching. I did not realize it at the time, but the church was having a revival, and they were praying for me. That evening I asked Lang if he was going to church, and he said no. I said, "I am," so he took me to church and then left. I went in the church building early, and only the preacher and a few people were there.

The preacher said, "Let's gather together for prayer before church." They started praying, and down the aisle I went. Thank the good Lord! He saved me, and He has kept me all these years. I have never been sorry!

After I was saved, the preacher said to me, "No Bible, no breakfast." So I started reading the Bible to Lang every morning. My father heard me reading the Bible, and he and my mother started going to church. Soon they, too, were saved. Thank God!

I went to church there for five years, and then the Lord led me out to the Church of God. About two years later, my sister's husband Junior had a chest x-ray at work and found that he had lung cancer. He began to earnestly seek the Lord. He died about two or three months later, but he was saved. The brother who preached the funeral said, "I

never saw anyone die as peacefully as Junior did." Thank the Lord!

The Lord has always given me a Scripture or a song in times of trials or needs. He has never failed me! My husband Lang found out that he had lung cancer and became serious about serving the Lord. He was saved and really lived for God. He told me, "I'm glad you stayed true to God."

I am writing this testimony to encourage those who might be serving God alone, those whose companions do not go to church with them. Your family knows how you live, and it may be that your life will win them to the Lord.

Mabel Whittington

## *What Makes A Dad?*

*God took the strength of a  
mountain,*

*The majesty of a tree,  
The warmth of a summer  
sun,*

*The calm of a quiet sea,*

*The generous soul of nature,  
The comforting arm of  
night,*

*The wisdom of the ages,  
The power of the eagle's  
flight,*

*The joy of a morning in  
spring,*

*The faith of a mustard seed,  
The patience of eternity,  
The depth of a family need,*

*Then God combined these  
qualities,*

*And then there was nothing  
more to add,*

*He knew His masterpiece  
was complete,*

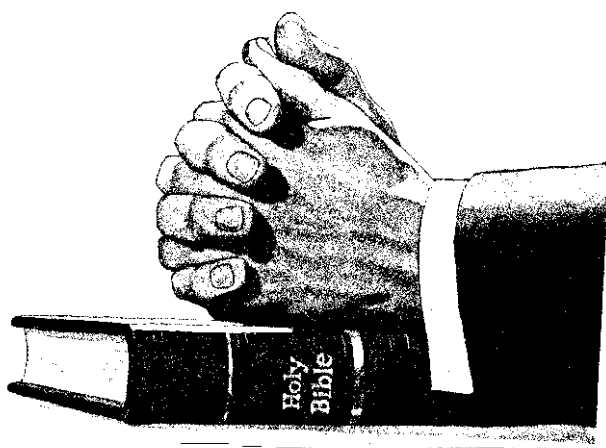
*And so, He called it—Dad.*

*Author Unknown*

*1 Corinthians 2:7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:*

*8 Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.*

# Knowledge That Makes a Difference



*Brother Allen Polston*

## **The Hidden Wisdom**

I want to point out a few things in this Scripture lesson. First, I want you to notice that verse 7 says, "But we speak . . . even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory." Knowledge may be something that you do not want to think about or gain any more of after you graduate from high school or college. However, we could partially define life as a collection of learning experiences. We are constantly engaged in learning throughout our lives. It seems that when we become comfortable with our surroundings, often we are introduced to new things. We have

many sources from which secular knowledge flows. For instance, we may read reports or articles. We may gain knowledge from professors, teachers, and experts in various fields. We can also learn from skilled tradesmen. Experience can also serve as a well-qualified teacher. One brother said once that it is usually better if you can learn from someone else's experience. You can learn much from others, especially from those who have suffered through some experiences.

In our Scripture lesson the Apostle Paul mentioned "hidden wisdom." This is something that is not readily available. It is not something that you can obtain from local

media or the printed page. We all know what it means for someone to hide something: it is not in plain view, and it is not easily found. Hidden wisdom is not available like the knowledge we get from other sources in this world.

The Apostle Paul said in verse 7 of our Scripture lesson, "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery. . . ." In verse 6 he said, "Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought." Paul was dealing with something greater than the knowledge and the wisdom that we can obtain in this world. Having an education is very



valuable. It can be very beneficial in life. However, what I want to focus on in this message is something that we cannot obtain from schools, colleges, or any worldly sources.

First Corinthians 1:24 says, "But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." The Apostle Paul let us know that Jesus Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God.

The Apostle Paul said that we speak wisdom among them that are perfect. In 1 Corinthians, Chapter 1, he let us know that the wisdom of God is Jesus Christ. Unfortunately, to many people the subject of hidden wisdom is a mystery. They do not really comprehend it. They believe that the preaching of Jesus Christ has its place, but it does not mean much to them. They consider it somewhat of a waste of time. Many people feel that it is foolishness, even as the Apostle Paul said in First Corinthians, Chapter 1.

### **Understanding and Wisdom That the World Does Not Possess**

People sometimes think that Christians who attend church services regularly are weak-minded. Most people have little to do with the services and the places where Jesus Christ is preached. They would much rather go to a ball game, to a home sales party, or to another place than to be where Jesus Christ is preached.

The wisdom that the Apostle Paul was talking about does not have much of a place in their lives. This is the reason so many people forsake the house of worship for other things. It does not take much for some people to find an excuse for not attending the worship services. I want you to see that this hidden wisdom is very valuable; it is rich and very rewarding. It can be the greatest thing you have ever experienced when you discover it.

Notice again in verse 7 of our Scripture lesson that the Apostle Paul said, "But we speak the wis-

dom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory." God has designed a way for His people to be encouraged, inspired, and lifted up, even when life deals them hard blows. He never told us that we would not have trials. He never said life would be a bed of roses or that following Him would be free of problems. In fact, many times it seems that life is the other way around for the Christian. At times it seems that we go through more trials during some periods of our lives.

The Psalmist David became a little discouraged when he started to look at circumstances. No doubt, He felt that his trials were amplified and that his life was more difficult than the sinful world around him. In Psalm 73:12-17 you can read that David felt that way until he went to the sanctuary, and then he understood their end. He received wisdom when he heard the Word of God; then he began to see things much differently.

Child of God, no matter what your past has been or if you would have done things differently, God has designed a way that you can be encouraged and lifted up. He designed this before the world ever began. What is that way? He said in verse 7 of our Scripture lesson: "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory." God will give you understanding and wisdom that the world does not possess.

### **Keeping the Flesh Under**

Bringing the flesh under is sometimes difficult because it tends to rise up. The "old man" will try to resurrect. It is not always easy, but right in the midst of keeping the flesh under, God has provided a way so that we can enjoy thrills and blessings and rich bestowments from Him. The Apostle Paul had to keep his body under. He said in 1 Corinthians 9:27, "But I keep under

my body, and bring it into subjection." Right while God calls on you to keep the flesh under, He will give you wisdom and understanding.

Each of us has a responsibility not to go along with whatever feels good or to follow after the flesh or our feelings. Feelings will fail you if you live by feelings. They will cause you to end up in the wrong place. At times I do not feel like getting up and going to work, but the bills need to be paid. I want to eat when supertime comes around, I want to be able to put fuel in my vehicle and have electricity when I flip a switch. Sometimes we may not feel like doing things, but we have to overcome our feelings.

Feelings will rise up if someone tells you off, but you have to submit yourself to the will of God. When someone has wronged you, you will feel like getting revenge, but you have to overcome those feelings. God can help you to be an overcomer in all things. You may find it hard at times to bring the flesh under, but the Lord will reward and bless you if you do.

First Peter 5:6 states, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time." When God sees it is due, He will exalt you. He will take care of the balance, whatever it may be. Hebrews 6:10 says, "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister." God does not forget or lose track of what you do for Him.

A couple of young men help me with construction work, and I have to keep track of their hours and fill out their time cards. If I am working in one place and they are working somewhere else, I have to keep track of their hours of labor. Humanly speaking, losing track of those details is possible. I could forget an hour or add a few minutes. They might take either a longer lunch or a shorter break, so I could lose track of

## Call Upon the Lord While He Is Near

some details, but God never forgets. What you do for God does not have to be in front of someone. He will repay you for your labors in His kingdom because He does not forget. Sometimes it may seem that He has forgotten or you may think He is late, but He is always on time. He will reward you with exactly what you have coming.

God has designed a way for you to have glory in your life, to have blessings, and to be exalted in due time. He does not want you to be exalted in a fleshly sense. Look at the world around you. People are doing all manner of things to try to exalt themselves, and there is seemingly no end to that pursuit. God can exalt you with spiritual blessings. He can bless you and lift you up to heavenly places. Your life can be rich and rewarding from the knowledge, the wisdom, and the understanding that God gives.

### The Deception the Devil Brings

I found that quite striking as I studied for this lesson when I thought about what the Apostle Paul actually said. Again, he stated in verses 7-8: "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew. . . ." Here we find that God prepared something for us before the world began, which lets us know that it was important, or valuable. It was not something that He came up with later. He did not say, "Well, I must fix this. Something is wrong here, so I will throw this in." This was something that God put into motion before the world began. He deemed it important, and it is available for you and me. God set it up and established it.

The Bible says that none of the princes of this world knew about it. When I think of a prince, I think of one who is powerful and wealthy and has time to search out matters. He has earned that title because he has had some accomplishments.

He is not an average fellow. He has a higher position of authority, or rule.

The devil tells people, "You need to get your finances in order and make certain accomplishments in your life; then you can give some time to God." Is that not how the devil works? That is how he worked on me, and I am sure that is how he has worked on others. "Wait until this is behind you; then you can begin to give yourself to the Lord and pursue a life for Him," the devil says. Friend, the princes of this world do not know about this hidden wisdom.

You would think that a prince would have the ability to give some time to God, but that is the deception the devil brings. He is very successful in selling that deception to people. He gets people to think there is a future time when it would be easier, more convenient, and more accommodating to give themselves to God.

I thought about the rich man in Luke, Chapter 16. The Bible says he "fared sumptuously every day." That is quite a testimony. He did not suffer any. Every day he had plenty, and he was clothed in fine linen. He had much going his way, but he did not even have the time or the concern to attend to one lowly beggar who was laid at his gate. Now, you cannot tell me that the rich man never knew the beggar was there. He probably did not go and look at him regularly, but he knew about him.

In Luke 16:25 Abraham said to the rich man, "Son, remember. . . ." Abraham reminded him of Lazarus. Had the rich man not known about Lazarus, then Abraham would not have reminded the rich man of him. The fact of the matter was, he was a rich man who had no concern, no compassion, and no time for a beggar to whom the dogs tended. That Scripture helps me to understand how the princes of this world who have much going their way know nothing of the wisdom I am speaking of.

Isaiah 55:6 says, "Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near." Could these princes have known about this wisdom and what God had ordained before the world began? Our Scripture text says in verse 8, ". . . had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." I am preaching about knowledge that makes a difference. The knowledge we obtain during our years of formal education is valuable because it can help us in obtaining good jobs, in public relations, and in different settings of our lives. Many people make education a high priority and put much emphasis upon it. Now, it is good to devote yourself to studying, making good grades, and doing well. However, I also want you to realize that the knowledge the Apostle Paul was talking about can really make a difference in your life. Had the princes of this world known about it, they would have made a different decision concerning Jesus Christ.

We each make decisions every day. Each of us is making decisions that will determine where we spend eternity. You may think you are going to make it to the next camp meeting, but you do not have that promise. God could call you before then. None of us knows what the future holds. We only know and have what God has given us up to this point. Many people would choose to go back and do things differently if they could. Billions of people would choose to make a different decision concerning Christ if they could go back and do so. Probably even those in paradise who will go to Heaven would say, "I should have given my life to God much sooner" or "I wish I had done more for God." Knowledge influences our decisions. None of the princes knew about that which God has ordained for our glory. Had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

The Apostle's description of our Lord, calling Him "the Lord of glory," lets us know that no one and nothing is higher than God. If you are looking for a rich life, He is the Lord of glory. He is the Highest and the Supreme. He can give more to you than anything in the world. Some people never go out in deep sin and become drunkards or drug addicts. Some are decent people; nevertheless, they are unsaved.

The Lord of glory can give you more than any lifestyle you could choose in this world. Whatever you might choose, He is much greater than that if you will serve Him and allow Him to be your King. Had the princes of this world known there was such blissfulness and blessedness awaiting them here on this earth, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

### **The Grace of God Appears to All Men**

Could these princes have known? The Bible lets us know that God is no respecter of persons. He is concerned about each of us. He is concerned about the world around us. Titus 2:11 states, "... the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men." The grace of God does not just come, but it also teaches us. The grace of God appears and begins to work to show you spiritual things. I may not know when it happens to you, and you may not know when it happens to me, but the grace of God visits every man. Many people have never had the opportunity to sit in a congregation of the Church of God; however, that does not change the fact that the grace of God comes to them at some point in their lives.

The Spirit of God shows them the moves they need to make. From there, He leaves the decision with them. Jesus said in John 16:13, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth." He also let us know that He would reprove the world of sin. The Spirit of God does not waste

time. When the Spirit of God comes to visit you, He means business. He does not come to joke around. Sometimes in this life we enjoy times when we joke with one another, but when God's Holy Spirit comes to visit, that is not a joking time. He will let you know your true condition, and He will let you know what needs to be done.

I am convinced that the princes mentioned in verse 8 of our Scripture lesson had an opportunity. God visited them in some way. Whatever dispensation of time they were in, God in His faithfulness did not leave out those individuals. Even in remote jungles, God is faithful. We are serving a God who does not miss anything. He does not overlook anyone. He is just as concerned about people on the other side of the world as He is people here.

Every man, woman, boy, and girl has an opportunity afforded them. The Spirit of God visits each individual and speaks to them so that they might realize what needs to be done. God does not go much beyond that as He comes and visits. In other words, He does not give you more knowledge, wisdom, or understanding than that. He visits individuals and lets them know the needs in their lives, whatever they may be.

The Bible lets us know that God knows and sees all things. He knows exactly what each of us is like. We cannot hide anything from Him. We cannot sneak around God or keep anything secret from Him. He knows us through and through. Therefore, when He comes to us, He does not come handing out great amounts of knowledge, understanding, wisdom, or expertise. He comes to each of us to address our needs.

### **God Will Not Strive With You Indefinitely**

Just as with the rich man mentioned in Luke, Chapter 16, and the princes spoken of in our Scripture lesson, God comes with the ability to do something about each

person's condition. Even in the Old Testament, in Genesis 6:3, God said, "My spirit shall not always strive with man." What does this tell us? His Spirit strives and works with man, but He will not always do so. In other words, the grace of God, or the Spirit of God, will not strive with an individual indefinitely.

Dear one, if you refuse God and rebel against Him repeatedly, He will leave you alone. When God leaves, the knowledge and the wisdom that He has ordained for you to have, which would have made your life rich, will never be imparted to you. If you fail to get the need of your life addressed and God departs from you, you will not receive the rich blessings of God. God is very orderly, and He does good business. When He shows you a need, He is saying, "This is your need, and this is what you need to do." When that need is taken care of, then you can move on. Sometimes the devil tries to convince a person that he can deal with his need later, so he puts it off. The devil does not tell that person he will be at a standstill with God until he addresses his need.

Jesus said in John 3:7, "Ye must be born again." John 3:3 states, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." To see the Kingdom of God is to see the hidden wisdom that the world cannot see. Seeing the Kingdom of God is a wonderful blessing, and it will cause you to rejoice. Some people may wave their hands and others may shout. They confirm the message by saying, "Amen!" or "Praise the Lord!" or "Hallelujah!" When they see the Kingdom of God, wisdom is brought into their view, and they begin to visualize it.

God created many places of beauty in this world where the scenery, the landscape, and the attractions are magnificent. When you see them, you stand in awe. The mountains and the waterfalls are so beautiful. Though we might have seen them before, we desire to see them again.

Several years ago while we were

traveling, we saw the Grand Canyon. I had seen pictures of it, but it surpassed the pictures by a long way. To see it in person was awesome and exciting. Those natural beauties are so rewarding to look upon, and they affect our decisions because we want to go back to see them again.

Friend, that is how it is with the Kingdom of God and with Jesus Christ. That is how it is with the hidden wisdom that God has. Although we caught a vision of Him before and it thrilled our souls, we love to see Him again. Thank God! It is wonderful when the Kingdom of God is laid out before us and we see these things again. It is a rich blessing! Jesus said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." First, you must be born again before He will take you by the hand and start showing you spiritual blessings.

### Take Heed How You Hear

Though the princes of this world held high positions, they did not know anything about what God had set in order for them before the foundation of the world. To them, Christ was of no value. They cried, "Crucify Him. Crucify Him." People are crucifying the Lord yet today by the decisions they are making and by the things they are doing. Why are people making those choices, especially those who have been taught about the Lord? They are like the princes mentioned in our Scripture text. They do not really know. Had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

Knowledge, understanding, and wisdom have been hidden from those who reject God. However, it can make a difference, not only in the decisions you make in this time world, but also in where you will go when this life is over. To have this knowledge, you must obey God when He shows you a need. You cannot have this knowledge if you are disobeying God. If you have disobedience in your life, you

cannot go any further. You must address that first, and then you can go forward in your experience with God.

I am convinced that these princes had an encounter with God and rebelled against Him at some point. Therefore, they did not gain any further knowledge or understanding. They might have been able to quote some Scriptures, and they might have had a church membership, but they did not have that which God had ordained for them from the foundation of the world.

You do not have to have a high IQ for God to show you His kingdom. You can have an understanding of that. You do not have to know what every verse of Scripture means to have the hidden wisdom. You can know Jesus Christ and walk with Him, and your life can be richly blessed. You simply have to build on what God has given you already and be obedient in that which He has shown you.

Jesus said in Luke 8:18, "Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have." Isaiah 28:9-10 reads: "Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts. For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon

line; here a little, and there a little."

God can give you understanding and wisdom that has been hidden from the world. The world does not really know the joy, the happiness, and the blessing that you can have by submitting yourself to the Gospel, by living the standard, by being true to the Bible, and by being faithful to God. Many people in the world think it is foolishness. When it is hot outside, they wonder why we wear modest clothing. They do not understand. On a Sunday when the weather is pleasant, they go to the lake to go boating and fishing, but we are in the house of worship. They think we are foolish.

Often we attend camp meetings and revival services, and they think we are foolish. They do not understand, because it has been hidden from them. We can tell them about it excitedly, but it is a mystery to them because there are places in their lives where they have not been obedient to God. Had the princes of this world had this knowledge, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. If you have this knowledge, understanding, and wisdom, it will affect the way you live. You will not do things contrary to God and righteousness. This knowledge will make a difference in your life here, and it will make a difference in where you will spend eternity. May God bless you.

*(Cassette C-5214E)*

**"The LORD redeemeth the soul of His servants: and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate."**

*Psalm 34:22*

# The Power of a Godly Example



*Brother E. David Stegmeier*

## Setting the Pattern

I believe God has always held a man most responsible for the tenor of the family. At the dawn of history, God said of Abraham in Genesis 18:19, "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment. . . ." I pray daily, "God, help me to be a better pastor, a better husband, and a better father." Do you ever pray that way? I believe we all have room for improvement. At times I lie awake at night thinking about my responsibility in rearing my children and pastoring my congregation. Those are tremendous responsibilities.

Ephesians 6:4 says, "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." You cannot bring them up in

the nurture and admonition of the Lord unless you live a godly life. Unless you live the life before your children, they will not want to live for God. Children want something real, something satisfying, something that will answer life's questions. As a father, you have the responsibility of setting the pattern of obedience for your children. You must be obedient to God, the man of God, and the laws of the land.

A bulletin board in front of a church in our community displayed this statement and question: "Your home is a classroom. What are you teaching?" I believe the enemy is out to destroy marriage and the home. One day as I listened to the news, a commentator said that the institution of marriage is almost gone in the country of Sweden. He went on to say, "Of all the nations in the world, the United States still has the greatest degree of respect for the

ways of God." That made me feel good, but I believe we need help as a country. Years ago a minister said, "Whenever the family has been destroyed by social influences, the whole society has suffered." I do not know about you, but I want my home to be a godly example in my community.

I believe in the Church of God. It is God's family, and it is the apple of His eye. The founder of the American Society of Family Relations said, "No society has ever survived after its family life deteriorated." Church of God, we have the plan, or the blueprint, and we should be sharing it. David said in Psalm 9:17, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God."

Sad to say, America is losing its godly mooring. What are some of them? On every coin and on every piece of our nation's currency it reads, "In God we trust." Sometimes

it looks as though people have forgotten that. Slowly, satanic forces are tearing our nation from these spiritual moorings.

### Passing God's Approval

As my Scripture text, I want to use Deuteronomy 6:4-15. In these verses of Scripture, God was warning ancient Israel about the consequences of forgetting Him, and I believe this is so applicable to our day. Verses 4-7 read: "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children. . . ." Wherever I go and whatever I do, I try to incorporate spiritual concepts and spiritual principles in my living.

A new convert told me about a questionable-looking character coming to the door of their home. He hollered in to the children, "Keep our ferocious dog in there." As he said "ferocious dog," the man at the door left. Now, they did not have a ferocious dog, so he was being deceptive. Your children pick up on what you say and do. You need to be very careful. The man said one of his children said, "I didn't know we had a dog." Everything you say and do should pass the inspection of God's eyes and ears.

Verse 8 of the Scripture text reads, "And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes." In other words, they should guide you in the pathway of godliness and righteousness. There is One who sees all that you do, and that is God. Therefore, you ought to live so that what you do passes the approval of God. You need to remember that God is a silent observer and the silent listener. If what you say and do passes His approval, it should pass anyone's. If it does not pass His approval, neither should it pass yours.

Verses 9-15 state: "And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates. And it shall be, when the LORD thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildedst not, And houses full of all good things, which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not; when thou shalt have eaten and be full [affluence and the acquisition of material possessions can lead to some people's spiritual downfall]; Then beware lest thou forget the LORD, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name. Ye shall not go after other gods [many things will steal your affection, if you are not careful; then you will begin to neglect the house of worship, and that is a sin], of the gods of the people which are round about you; (For the LORD thy God is a jealous God among you) lest the anger of the LORD thy God be kindled against thee, and destroy thee from off the face of the earth."

### Standing in the Face of Opposition

I think most of us are aware of the situation that occurred in the state of Alabama between Judge Roy Moore and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). Judge Moore was sued by the ACLU for displaying the Ten Commandments in his courtroom foyer. Most public buildings in our nation have some kind of reference to God. Some time back I was in the building that houses the Oregon House and Senate, and almost all chambers have some inscription that refers to God or the Word of God. I thank God for that! I thank God for men who will stand for that which is right. Judge Moore was stripped of his judgeship, and now they are trying to

strip him of his right to practice law in the state of Alabama.

"America the Beautiful" is one of the most beautiful patriotic songs our nation has. It was inspired by a college professor in Boston, Massachusetts, who made her way across America to teach for a summer in Colorado. She journeyed across an absolutely gorgeous country where she saw the lights of Chicago and the wheat fields of Nebraska and Kansas. When she reached Pike's Peak, she was inspired to write "America the Beautiful." God has blessed this nation tremendously. I appreciate the privilege of living here. It is a privilege that has been afforded us by God.

Judge Moore's rendition of this song was as follows:

*America the Beautiful,  
or so you used to be.  
Land of the Pilgrims' pride;  
I'm glad they'll never see.*

*Babies piled in dumpsters,  
Abortion on demand,  
Oh, sweet land of liberty;  
your house is on the sand.*

*Our children wonder aimlessly  
poisoned by cocaine,  
Choosing to indulge their lust,  
when God has said abstain.*

*From sea to shining sea,  
our Nation turns away  
From the teaching of God's love  
and a need to always pray.*

*We've kept God in our temples,  
how callous we have grown.  
When earth is but His footstool,  
and Heaven is His throne.*

*We've voted in a government  
that's rotting at the core,  
Appointing godless Judges  
who throw reason out the door,*

*Too soft to place a killer  
in a well deserved tomb,  
But brave enough to kill a baby  
before he leaves the womb.*

*You think that God's not angry,  
that our land's a moral slum?  
How much longer will He wait  
before the judgment comes?*

*How are we to face our God,  
from Whom we cannot hide?  
What then is left for us to do,  
but stem this evil tide?*

*If we who are His children,  
will humbly turn and pray;  
Seek His holy face  
and mend our evil way:*

*Then God will hear from Heaven  
and forgive us of our sins,  
He'll heal our sickly land  
and those who live within.*

*But, America the Beautiful,  
if you don't – then you will see,  
A sad but Holy God,  
withdraw His hand from Thee.*

I am concerned about the future of our country. I enjoyed the house of worship immensely when I was a young person. It was the joy of my life, and it still is. It is my desire (and I believe it is extremely important) to implant the truths of God's Word and the Church of God teachings in the minds and the hearts of our children. I am not ashamed of what the Church of God stands for.

A sectarian minister once asked me, "How do you differ from us? We both have the same church name? Can I read our articles of faith to you?"

I said, "Sure, you can read them. We not only believe them but we put them into practice."

At the campground where we used to have camp meeting services, the director would meet with his employees and say, "Now, when the Church of God comes, you women are to wear modest dresses," and so on.

The workers asked, "Why do we have to do that when the Church of God comes?"

He said, "Because they read it in the Bible, and they practice it. We read it, but we don't practice it."

Since when do we have the prerogative to read from the Word of God and not practice it? We are to implement it and practice it in our daily lives.

### **Creating a Legacy of Godly Memories**

Our Scripture reading in the Book of Deuteronomy should serve as a divine model for instilling the faith of God and the Church of God teachings in our children. How can we do that? First, we should foster a close relationship with each of our children by spending quality time with them, and we can spend no better quality time with them than to take them to church. Once a young businessman who was very successful said to me, "Brother Stegmeier, we spend too much time in church. It doesn't give me enough family time."

I said, "Dear brother, it is not the time you spend at church; it is the time you spend working. You need to get home at a decent time in the evening to spend time with your children. "Do not neglect the house of worship, because that is quality time. When you go, go as David did when he said, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD" (Psalm 122:1). Your children will know whether you would rather be working or heading for the church house. They will read those nuances. If you want your children to enjoy the house of worship, then you need to get in there and enjoy it to the utmost. Father, mother, you need to build close relationships with your children, spend quality time with them, and take every opportunity you have to communicate your faith in God to them.

Father, you should take your children fishing and talk to them about fishing for the souls of men and the far greater joy there is in fishing for the souls of men. Brother Mullen was such an awesome example to me. He was an avid hunter and a fisherman, but he never went

fishing or hunting when church services were going on.

Solomon wrote in Proverbs 10:7, "The memory of the just is blessed: but the name of the wicked shall rot." When a person who has left a good example dies, his or her memory is very precious. Each one leaves us a legacy of godly memories.

Our Scripture lesson is on the power of a godly example. In 1 Corinthians 10:6 Paul wrote, "Now these things were our examples." We have many godly examples in the Word of God, not only of kings, of priests, and of prophets but also of children. How about the little maid who was a servant to Naaman's wife? She spoke up at the right time. How about Joseph, when he was a young man? He stood up for God. Daniel and the three Hebrew children became godly examples. God wants you to be an example of what the believers ought to be. There is power in being a godly example.

### **Exhibiting Godly Qualities**

The Bible has many examples of those who did not leave godly influences. Many people have followed Ahab's ungodly example. When Elisha sought an example, he stayed very close to Elijah. He watched Elijah, and Elijah was his mentor. Everything Elijah did, Elisha wanted to do. Elijah was a godly example.

While I was growing up, I watched the lives of many ministers. When I met Brother Emerson Wilson, I admired the way he handled people. If you do not love people, you cannot help them. If you are a pastor and you do not love people, you are in the wrong profession.

Joseph is one of my heroes. When we look at the life of Joseph, we can see many godly qualities. The same is true of Samuel, Daniel, the three Hebrew children, and Queen Esther. She saved a whole nation. Being a godly example is powerful. Consider Abraham Lincoln, who was one of the most popular presidents in America. When I think of him, I think of

honesty, fairness, integrity, and equality.

When the name Martin Luther is mentioned, I think of a man of strength and fortitude. Sister Myrtle Mullen was a great influence upon my wife and me. When I think of her, I think of one who carried a real burden for souls, and she never waned in her zeal for the furtherance of the Gospel. How is your influence? Is it something that others should emulate? Is it something that should be copied? Child of God, your life should be an example of godliness.

Jesus is our ultimate example. First Peter 2:21-24 reads: "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed." We are not finished products. God is still working on each of us. James 5:17 reads, "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are." We all have things that we need to work on.

The poem entitled "A Psalm of Life," by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, speaks of the power of a great influence. In part, it reads:

*Lives of great men all remind us  
We can make our lives sublime,  
And, departing, leave behind us  
Footprints on the sands of time;*

*Footprints, that perhaps another,  
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,  
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,  
Seeing, shall take heart again.*

*Let us, then, be up and doing,  
With a heart for any fate;  
Still achieving, still pursuing,  
Learn to labor and to wait.*

### **Are You an Example of the Believers?**

Fathers should be examples of what they want their children to be. You might only have your children for twenty years or so, and God wants you to have a godly influence on them. Then after they leave home, you can still have a powerful influence in their lives. We want our children to further the cause of Christ. The Christian home is the most important institution in the world, and it was first ordained of God. It is the foundation of our society.

How is your home today? Is it a place of security, a school where your children learn the fundamentals of the Christian faith? It should be. Has your home become a place of tension, frustration, hatred, and division? I read an article about a young man who told of his memories at home. He told of his father coming home one night. The door was locked, so his father broke out a window. When he got the door open, his father confronted his mother with a very sad confrontation. Those were the scenes he remembered of his childhood. That is very sad.

What kind of home do you have today? I want to encourage you to strengthen your home, strengthen your hands in God, and strengthen your hands with the saints of God. Joshua said in Joshua 24:15, "As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." In your home your children should be shaping their personalities and their character after God. Proverbs 22:6 says, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

The prodigal son sought for freedom away from home, but after he was out for a while, he realized that he should have stayed home, and he wanted to return. In 1 Timothy 4:12, speaking of the power of a godly influence, Paul wrote of Timothy, "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in

charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity."

Paul stated in 2 Timothy 1:3-5: "I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day; Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy; When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also." I repeat, there is power in a godly influence.

### **Be Not Weary in Well Doing**

I can remember when my mother was saved and came to the Church of God, but my father was not happy. For many years my mother stood strong, and she was faithful. After twenty years, my father was saved at God's Acres. I was in the military, and I had been stationed at Fort Leonardwood, Missouri, for about four or five months in basic training. At graduation I asked my father and mother to come. I said, "Dad, why don't you and Mom come down? I want to spend some time with you."

He said, "And what else?"

I said, "Let's go to the camp meeting at God's Acres."

He finally decided he would, so we traveled to God's Acres in the spring of 1967. I worked at the lunch stand, and my father was having quite a time. One night my wife came to the lunch stand and said my father was getting saved. I said, "I don't think so. My dad really knows his Bible because his father was a minister. No, he is just debating and contending. He is not getting saved. I have seen this for twenty some years, all my life practically. Dad loves to give the Church of God ministers a difficult time."

My wife said, "No, he *is* getting saved."

I said, "I don't think so. I'm just going to stay here and flip these hamburgers."

She went down to the barn



(where the camp meeting services were held then) and came back and said, "No, Dave, he *is* getting saved, he *is*!"

So I went down and found that my dad really did get saved. It was an awesome thing! After it was over, my father and mother and I went to Washington to visit my younger sister, and on the way, my mother was very quiet. She did not say a word, so I asked her what was wrong.

She said, "It's just so hard for me to comprehend that your father really got saved. What a change!"

For many years afterward, my

father was in the congregation where I pastor. He was such a wonderful help in my ministry in his last few years. He was a real encouragement to me. There is power in a godly example. Mothers, never give up! Paul said in Galatians 6:9, "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

My mother's father and grandparents were very godly people. We did not live near them, but I can remember going to see them when I was just a child. They did not know the Truth as we know it, but they made this statement when we

started attending the Church of God where Brother and Sister Mullen pastored: "The Church of God people have something we don't have." What do we have? We have the Truth. I am not speaking arrogantly or egotistically, but with great appreciation. We have the Truth, but without a godly example it will not have a good effect. The world will blaspheme the name of God and the Church of God if we do not rightfully represent it. If you have a need, won't you come to the Lord?

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*[Guest Editorial—continued from page 2]*

"not forsake the assembling of ourselves together" (Hebrews 10:25). It is through hearing, believing, and obeying the Word of God that brings victory to the soul. James gave good admonition when he instructed us to "be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only" (James 1:22). This is not a time for us to relax our efforts or become slack in our living, but rather it is a time, as Paul said in 1 Timothy 6:12, to "Fight the good fight of faith, [and] lay hold on eternal life." The wise man said to "Buy the truth, and sell it not" in Proverbs 23:23. In other words, you need to obtain all you can, and then do not let it slip away from you. Truth brings freedom and spiritual stability.

These camp meetings are designed with your spiritual welfare in mind. Here at God's Acres our desire is to do all that God wants in providing a place for you to come. Let me encourage you to do all you can to be here so that you, also, can have your soul fed and be encouraged. We write these things to stir up your pure minds and to "provoke [you] unto love" (Hebrews 10:24). Remember, dear one, living for God takes great effort on your part. To make Heaven will require a deeper determination and a greater

consecration than ever before. Regardless of the cost required to make it through, it will be worth it all. Just one glimpse of His dear face will amply repay any suffering that you have had to endure.

Friend, you owe it to yourself, your family, the church, and the world to be in as many of these services as possible. It will help you to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. The sound, solid preaching of His Word will uncover the many tricks and snares that Satan uses to deceive and overthrow the Christian. Knowing and understanding the Scriptures will be of little value unless you put it into practice and allow it to become a part of your daily walk. Living and walking in the light of God's Word is what convinces a lost world that Christianity is truly real. The radiant light that shines forth from the child of God will create a hungering in a dry and thirsting soul.

In addition to hearing the Word proclaimed by various men of God, there are other advantages in attending camp meeting, such as sharing burdens and problems with other saints of God. Hearing their testimonies of praise for victories won through God's grace is always uplifting. You may well know that one trick Satan uses is to try to con-

vince an individual that his situation is unique. He will endeavor to persuade a person that he is the only one who ever had a circumstance as bad as that. However, when you are privileged to learn of others' trials and how they have overcome, you will find that this is a common salvation. You are not alone, and your station in life is not unique. Having fellowship together with other saints is a time for gaining strength, renewing hope, and increasing one's faith. God will supply grace to all so they can press the battle on.

Brother Decker extends to you a special invitation to join us at camp meeting this year. If you have not been here for a while, we will be eager to see you. Last, but not least, if you have not begun to pray for the camp meeting, we earnestly ask you to do so. God's direction and presence is most certainly needed in every service. Please pray for God to send the messages we need to hear. Having Him in our midst as the Honored Guest is of utmost importance. He is the only hope of redemption for those who are lost.

**The person who is always finding fault seldom finds anything else.**



*Coming*  
**SOON**

Spring Camp Meeting  
June 18 - 25

We encourage you to make plans to attend our old-fashioned Spring Camp Meeting here at God's Acres.

Two services daily: 10:00 a.m. & 7:00 p.m.

*We have special services for children, youth services, morning prayer services, inspirational Gospel singing, Holy Ghost preaching, divine healing, and fellowship with the saints.*

On the grounds we have a large air-conditioned dining hall that serves delicious, home-style cooked meals and fresh baked desserts, snack stand, dormitories, campsites with full hook-up, laundry facilities, and so much more. Most important of all, you will hear anointed men of God preach the Truth.

*We welcome everyone!*

To make reservations, please contact:  
Brother or Sister David Bush  
1-740-345-1213