

# The Gospel Trumpeter

JUSTIFICATION

SANCTIFICATION

UNITY & TRUTH

"So will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day." Eze. 34:12 Jer. 32:38

"But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished." Rev. 10:7 Matt. 24:31

---

SOUNDING FORTH THE SEVENTH AND LAST TRUMPET

---

Vol. 37 April 2007 No. 4



Church of God Tabernacle in Newark, Ohio

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

*Psalm 122:1*

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

# Guest Editorial

## 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.

PRAYER: If you need prayer, please phone or write:

Roger Decker, Pastor  
83 Decrow Ave.  
Newark, OH 43055

Email: [pastor@church-of-god-online.com](mailto:pastor@church-of-god-online.com)  
Phone: 740-344-2543 or 1-888-730-0461  
Fax: 740-344-4737  
Print Shop Phone: 740-345-1312

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)

.....  
We reserve the right to edit and/or decline any material for any reason. Not responsible for unsolicited articles or items.

## CONTENTS

Holiness, A Forgotten Command.....	3
The High Cost of Sin.....	9
Especially for Young People.....	14
Backsliding.....	16
Preparing to Meet God.....	20
Kenya Trip Report.....	25
Announcements.....	27

**Vol. 37 April 2007 No. 4**

*"But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning."*

*John 15:26-27*

*"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."*

Jesus came into this world to save men and women from sin and bondage. When He saves a man, He saves him for service and to be a witness for Him and His cause. Christ does not simply save souls and then abandon them or leave them to try to make their way through life as best they can on their own. Jesus Christ came and lived an example for us to follow. He suffered the reproach of sinful men. He was mocked and tortured by His persecutors, and then He willingly laid down His life to die on the Cross to free mankind from sin's control.

Before He died, He promised to send His Holy Spirit to comfort, guide, and direct all His believers. His Holy Spirit dwells in our hearts and gives us the power to be the people He desires us to be. Romans 12:1 instructs, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." When we surrender and dedicate our bodies to Him, He grants to us the power to live holy lives and to be faithful witnesses of His goodness.

Being faithful witnesses for Christ, His way, and His Truth is so vitally necessary today. As you can easily see, we live in a world steeped in sin with ungodliness

abounding on every side. Our society is saturated with much false religion that believes and teaches that you must sin a little more or less every day. The great masses of people feel that it is impossible to live free from sin and corruption. However, 1 John 3:9 tells us, "Who-soever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." Being born again from above and possessing the Holy Spirit gives men and women power to live holy, sinless lives! This is when true Christianity shines the brightest. Unbelievers can argue about the doctrine all they want, but it is extremely difficult to refute a life that is lived in holiness and righteousness.

The world needs to see the true light of Christ shining in every place. A beautiful old song says, "What the world needs is Jesus, Just a glimpse of Him. He will give joy and gladness, Take away sin and sadness. What the world needs is Jesus, Just a glimpse of Him." One way the world can see Jesus is through the life that the Christian lives before them. A holy life being lived in a world full of darkness and sin is like lighting a candle in a room that has no light; it brings illumination. Jesus worded it like this in Matthew 5:14-16: "Ye are the

*[continued on page 26]*

1 Peter 1:13 Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

14 As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance:

15 But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;

16 Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

17 And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear:

18 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;

19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

20 Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,

21 Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.

22 Seeing ye have purified your

souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:

23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

24 For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away:

25 But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

# Holiness, A Forgotten Command



*Brother Roger L. Decker*

## **The Law of the House**

Peter began this epistle by reminding the brethren that holiness is necessary. He let us know in this chapter that holiness is a command. Peter said in verse 16 of our Scripture text that "it is written." When you read those words in the Scripture, it relates to the Old Testament. You can read in Leviticus 20:7-8: "Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy: for I am the LORD your God. And ye shall keep my statutes, and do them: I am the

LORD which sanctify you."

Holiness is a command that ministers have watered down today. People have scoffed at it, ridiculed it, and joked about it; nevertheless, holiness is still a command. Ezekiel 43:10-12 reads: "Thou son of man, show the house to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities: and let them measure the pattern.

"And if they be ashamed of all that they have done, show them the form of the house, and the fashion thereof, and the going out thereof,

and the comings in thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the laws thereof: and write it in their sight, that they may keep the whole form thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and do them. This is the law of the house; Upon the top of the mountain the whole limit thereof round about shall be most holy. Behold, this is the law of the house."

The Lord told the Prophet Ezekiel in these verses of Scripture to show the house to the house of

Israel. Why? So they would be ashamed of their iniquities and could measure to the pattern. Had they taken a good look at the house and the law of the house, as God instructed through the Prophet, it would have led them to repentance. God wanted Israel to be ashamed of their iniquities and of doing things contrary to the law of the house. What brings repentance? It takes knowing what God requires.

Again, the Prophet Ezekiel said in verse 11, "And if they be ashamed of all that they have done, show them the form of the house, and the fashion thereof, and the goings out thereof, and the comings in thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the laws thereof: and write it in their sight. . . ." Why did the Lord say to "write it in their sight"? So they could keep the whole form thereof and all the ordinances and do them. He said if they were ashamed of what they had done, then show them the form of the house. In verse 12 the Prophet said, "Upon the top of the mountain the whole limit thereof round about shall be most holy."

### **God's Holy Mountain**

What is in the top of the mountain? Isaiah 2:1-5 tells us: "The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall come to pass in the last days, [the last days started on the Day of Pentecost, when Peter stood up and said in Acts 2:17, 'And it shall come to pass in the last days. . . .'] The last days refer to this last dispensation of time.] that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.

"And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion

shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the LORD."

The Prophet Isaiah said they would not learn war any more. When do the wars cease? The wars cease when the people go up to the mountain of the Lord's house, or the church. Wars are not going to cease in the world, but they cease in the church. Wars ceased on the Day of Pentecost. The wars ceased when God sent His Holy Spirit and made twain one new man. When Jesus comes into a person's heart, the wars cease. The hatred, the bitterness, the envy, and the strife end.

Isaiah 11:6-9 reads: "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp [or the viper], and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea."

### **A Divine Transformation**

As we look at these verses of Scripture, we find that "They shall not hurt nor destroy" in all God's holy mountain. Let us go to the New Testament to see what the mountain is and to get the antitype in Hebrews 12:22-23: "But ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are

written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect." The Hebrew writer said "ye are come," and that simply means you have arrived. You have looked for that city, and you are there.

Notice that Isaiah said, "They shall not hurt nor destroy, in all my holy mountain." Just before this you read about animal natures being changed. We know that the nature of some animals is to devour others. There is no doubt about it. The leopard would devour the kid, the lion would devour the calf, and so on. Isaiah was not talking about literal animals. Literal animals do not need to be converted. They do not commit sin. He was talking about animal attributes that are in people before they get saved.

Jesus called Herod a fox. John the Baptist called the Pharisees a generation of vipers, or snakes. When people get their natures changed, then they no longer exhibit the attributes of vipers, wolves, lions, and leopards, and they can dwell together. They will not hurt or destroy in the church. The Prophet Isaiah was not talking about changes that would take place in a millennial age.

God does not need to change the nature of animals. They have not done anything wrong. They are just doing what the Lord created them to do. A dog barks because that is the way the Lord created it. A cat meows because that is the way the Lord created it. They did not go out and commit sin that caused them to bark or meow and act as they do. He was speaking of human beings who act the way wolves or lions act. What do wolves do? They hunt in packs. People who have a wolf-like nature do not have enough intestinal fortitude to do something themselves. They always have others with them to help them. Isaiah also mentioned the leopard and the viper. All these animal natures represent characteristics of unregenerate human beings. Before salvation, we each fit into one of those categories. When salvation

came and God placed us in the Church of God, we no longer hurt or destroyed in all His holy mountain.

May God help you to see that He still wants each of us to measure to the pattern. The Prophet Ezekiel said in Ezekiel 43:12 that "the top of the mountain the whole limit thereof round about shall be most holy." Holiness is still a command in God's Word. There is still a pattern to which we are to measure.

### **Becoming a Living Sacrifice**

The Lord wants His people transformed and not conformed to this world. The Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 12:1-2: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." Paul started this chapter by appealing to the brethren to present their bodies holy and acceptable to God, and he said this is "your reasonable service." In other words, it is a service within reason.

Notice that he said to "present your bodies a living sacrifice," which is in opposition to the dead sacrifices that were offered under the Law. God wants you to present your body a living sacrifice, and the offering of yourself should be voluntary. No other offering could be a true offering, and no other offering would be acceptable. God wants you to come to Him and consecrate your life voluntarily. You must offer yourself entirely to God and present to Him all you have and all you are. No other offering is acceptable to Him.

This offering should be done without delay. God is worthy of such service now, and He always will be. He has every possible claim on your affections and your heart. God is saying, "Give Me your spirit, your mind, your soul, and your body. Commit them as a living sacri-

fice for service to Me." The body is an instrument of the soul. In Romans 8:13 Paul wrote, "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." When do the instruments of your soul get out of line and out of the will of God? This occurs when you become lean spiritually, because it is only through the Spirit of God that you can mortify the deeds of the body.

When you came to Jesus Christ, your looks did not change. You might have wished they had, but they did not. After you got up from the altar of prayer, you looked like the same individual who went to the altar, except for the inside being changed. The same body that walks away from the altar of prayer becomes a member of the body of Christ under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

The individual who was serving the devil goes to an altar of prayer and repents. As far as the outward appearance that person looks the same, but now his members are members of righteousness. The same hands, feet, mind, and eyes serve God and are under the control of the Holy Spirit. His members are presented to God in reasonable service. That is what happens in salvation.

As a Christian, when you go away from an altar of prayer, you do not say, "Serving God is unreasonable." No, you are ready to go to work for Him. You are just waiting for His command. You are ready to give Him wholehearted service, and you feel that it is reasonable, coming from the mind of the spiritual intelligence of a new creature. Your sacrifice is not unwilling, but you desire to give your all to the Lord.

### **Lifting Up Holy Hands**

One earmark of the church at Ephesus was that they tried men who said they were apostles but were not and found them liars. They knew enough Truth that when false

brethren came in, they tried them with the Word of God. Although they put out judgment, they themselves were in a condition of having left their first love. That is something to think about.

People can be blessed with the Truth, but it is possible to drift away from it. You can read about all the good works the church had at Ephesus, yet Jesus had somewhat against them because they had left their first love.

The Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 2:8-10: "I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works."

Notice that Paul said, "I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands. . . ." We know that God wants people praying everywhere, throughout the world. Wherever there is a child of God, He wants that person to lift up holy hands. Some say that the early church copied some Jewish attitudes of praying, such as believing that they had to stand with their hands outstretched and have their palms upward. The Scriptures substantiate their praying that way. In Psalm 68:31 we read, "Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God." Isaiah 1:15 states, "And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood."

Going back to 1 Timothy 2:8 we read, "I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting." Paul was speaking of hands that have not touched that which is forbidden of God. Holy hands are hands that are not defiled by sin. Isaiah called hands defiled by sin "hands full of blood." God does not want anyone praying with hands spread forth

before a holy God when that person is guilty of sin.

The Psalmist said in Psalm 66:18, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." What was he saying? We know that God will hear a sinner's prayer if it is a prayer of repentance and change, but the Psalmist said, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." In other words, he was saying, "If I esteem sin and will not let it go, then I am wasting my time praying." If that is your condition, that could be the reason you have no strength to overcome temptations. It could be that the reason you do the same things repeatedly is that you esteem iniquity. Oh, at the time you are caught, you do not esteem it, but just as soon as the initial shock and the repentance is over, you esteem it again. Paul said that men should pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting. You must not have anger or wrath in your heart when you pray. If you pray for vengeance, or to get even, the Lord will not hear you. Also, if you have a wrong attitude when you pray, He will not hear you.

### **Putting Off the Old Man With His Deeds**

In Ephesians 4:31-32 the Apostle Paul wrote: "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." He stated in Colossians 3:8-10: "But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him."

Luke 4:28-30 reads: "And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, And rose up, and thrust him

out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong. But he passing through the midst of them went his way." Where did this take place? It took place in the synagogue.

Verse 16 tells us, "And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read." This did not take place in the world. It did not take place in the slums or in a barroom, but in the synagogue. Jesus read a prophecy concerning Himself in the synagogue, and the people wanted to throw Him over a hill. According to verse 29, they "rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong." That was a terrible spirit those people had in that synagogue.

You may say of some people, "They have such a sweet spirit." Well, all a man of God has to do is use the Word of God, and it will uncover their true spirit. All Jesus did was speak the Word of God, and those people manifested an awful spirit. People in Babylon might seem to have a sweet spirit, but when the Word of God is preached, many times that will uncover ungodly spirits. That happened in a synagogue when Jesus spoke, not in the world. Jesus went in the synagogue, as was His custom, and stood up and read a prophecy that day, and they were ready to cast Him down a mountain head first and kill Him.

### **The Condition of One's Heart**

Again, what did the Apostle Paul say in 1 Timothy 2:8? "I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting." Today individuals come right into the house of God with things in their hearts that ought not to be and try to pray.

The Apostle Paul let Timothy

know that prayer should be made without doubting. Dear one, you must believe when you pray. You should not pray just to say words, but you must believe what you are praying about. Hebrews 11:6 says, "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." When you pray, if you feel that it is of no use to pray, then you are right: there is no use for you to pray when you do not believe that God will answer your prayers. You must pray without doubting that He will grant your petition. If you pray with doubting, no wonder you do not get an answer to your prayer. You must believe when you pray. You may say, "I am weak in faith, and I have trouble believing." Then you can ask God to help you to believe. You must believe that God will answer your prayer.

In Job, Chapter 1, you can read that Job's sons had gotten together to celebrate their birthdays by eating and drinking, and they had invited their sisters to join them. When the days of their feasting had come to an end, Job called them in and offered burnt offerings for the number of them all. Job was concerned that they had sinned and cursed God in their hearts. Job 1:5b says, "Thus did Job continually." Saint, you must not give up praying for your children. Job is an example of a perfect and an upright man.

Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 2:9-10: "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works."

In the previous verses God, through the Apostle Paul, commanded the men to lift up holy hands in their devotions. In verses 9-10 he instructed the sisters to adorn themselves as women professing godliness. To make it really simple, let me paraphrase it by saying, "The sisters should adorn

themselves as those who are saved."

Paul said they should adorn themselves in modest apparel, which means that Christian women should dress in apparel that becomes them as Christians. What should Christian women wear? They should wear modest apparel, or that which is decent, with shamefacedness (or still able to be ashamed) and sobriety. *Sobriety* simply means seriousness, and abstaining from excess. May God help you to realize that He still cares how His people dress.

When someone is impressed by one's appearance as a Christian, it is not because that person can see the Christian's heart. That person can only see how the Christian dresses, which is an indication of the condition of someone's heart. You were not won to the Lord because you saw the condition of one's heart. You might have seen what came out of that person's heart, and you might have been impressed with how that individual manifested himself or herself, but God sees the heart.

Before I was converted, I was impressed when I saw how some Christian men conducted themselves. I observed their godly actions and their godly talk. Then when I came to the house of God, I saw how modestly the sisters dressed. Now, that does not mean that everyone who dresses as a saint should dress *is* a saint. Some people may be caught up in hypocrisy, but that is no sign that Christians should quit dressing right. May God help people to realize that.

### **Be an Example of the Believers**

God cares how you look and how you dress. Isaiah 4:1 lets us know the attitude of many today: "We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name [Church of God], to take away our reproach."

In 1 Timothy 4:12 you can read that Paul wrote to Timothy, "Let no man despise thy youth [anyone who

has studied the Bible knows that Timothy was a very young man]; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." I want you to read that same verse from the *Amplified Version*. It does not change the meaning of this verse, but it does clarify it. It reads, "Let no one despise or think less of you because of your youth, but be an example (pattern) for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, and in purity." Paul was instructing Timothy to be an example for the believers. As God looks upon you, what does He think of your speech? Are you an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, and in purity?

Young person, how is your speech? Is your speech an example to other believers? Is your conversation an example to others or is it geared toward sex? We live in a sex-crazed world, and sooner or later, that is where the topic goes with some people. Is your conversation smutty? Do you say things that you would not want certain people to hear? You need to remember that the greatest listener of all hears all you say, and that is God.

Does it bother you to be in conversations discussing things you should not be talking about, topics you have no business discussing in a mixed crowd? Is your speech geared toward filth? Some people can make a smutty joke out of almost everything, and everything is a joke to them. That is a shame! In the Book of Genesis you can read that Lot's soul was vexed in Sodom. Does your soul get vexed hearing such conversations?

How is your conduct? Is your conduct an example for the believers? Is it so difficult to simply behave as a Christian should? Do you feel that you have to drag in the world's conduct and worldly speech to be accepted? Do you drag in sexually oriented talk to get attention or to be popular? Today in the minds of many young people it is almost taboo when others find out

that a young lady is a virgin. That used to be exalted, but not today.

### **Called to Holiness**

Holiness is a must, young person. It would be better for you not to marry at all than to marry the wrong one. At least you could have your purity, and in God's eyes that means much. Do you engage in off-color conversations so that you will not be considered a square or do you speak up and say, "Let's stop it right now"? Do you rebuke them or do you just go with the flow? Paul told Timothy to be an example in charity. How is your love for the Truth, for purity, and for holiness?

Some saints fight and fuss, hold grudges against others, talk about one another, and condemn others concerning how they are raising their children. Can you honestly say that you have done *everything* right in raising your child? None of us has done everything exactly right. We strive to do it right, but sometimes we make mistakes. We can get off track once in a while, though we do not mean to do so. We do our best to do what is right.

Some may think that others are too strict. Well, people may not know the whole story. If you only hear it from a child, you only hear one side of the story. Usually parents protect their children, but children do not always protect their parents. Some may think that other parents are too lenient. Well, you just need to make sure that you are not too lenient, and then you should stay out of other people's business and pray for them.

There is too much making fun of others. This hinders the flow of love from heart to heart. God wants that love to flow. He does not want relationships to be as clogged arteries. He wants love to flow out of pure hearts fervently.

Today holiness is a forgotten command to many. Sometimes young couples have the attitude, "If we mess up, we don't have to tell our parents. God will forgive us." I

do not know who sold you that bill of goods, but God gave you parents to give you counsel and instruction. Had you listened to your parents in the first place, you would not have gotten into trouble, so you sinned against your parents' counsel.

God requires holiness, and that is the only way you are going to see the inside of God's Heaven. Most worldly people are against living right. You are going to be confronted along the line of holiness,

but do not let down living right. God will be with you; He will not leave you or forsake you. You must stand for what is right, and when you do, you can rest assured that God is standing with you.

Our Scripture text says in 1 Peter 1:15-16: "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy." Saint, holiness is your calling. First Thessalonians 4:7

states, "For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness." God is holy, and He requires His bride, the church, to be holy. Holiness is a command that has almost been forgotten today. You may not attain many worldly possessions in your life, and you may not understand many Scriptures, but you *can* live holy.

(Cassette C-5208E)

## Drawing a Comparison

When I was in California I went into a Sunday school and asked: "Have you got someone who can write a plain hand?"

"Yes."

We got out the blackboard, and the lesson upon it proved to be the text, "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven."

I said, "Suppose we write upon that board some of the earthy treasures? We will begin with gold."

The teacher readily put down "gold," and they all comprehended it, for all had run to that country in hope of finding it.

"Well, we will put down houses next, and then land. Next, we will put down fast horses."

They all understood what fast horses were—they knew a good deal more about fast horses than they knew about the Kingdom of God. Some of them, I think, actually made fast horses serve as gods.

"Next, we will put down tobacco." The teacher seemed to shrink at this. "Put it down," I said. "Many a man thinks more of tobacco than he does of God. Well, then we will put down rum."

He objected to this—he didn't like to put it down at all.

"Down with it! Many a man will sell his reputation, his home, his wife, his children, everything he has, for rum. It is the god of some men. Many here are ready to sell their present and their eternal welfare for it. Put it down." And down it went.

"Now," I said, "suppose we put down some of the heavenly treasures. Put down Jesus to head the list, then Heaven, then the River of Life, then Crown of Glory," and went on until the column was filled, and then just drew a line and showed the heavenly and the earthly things in contrast.

My friends, they could not stand comparison. If a man does that, he cannot but see the superiority of the heavenly over the earthly treasures.

It turned out that this teacher was not a Christian. He had gone to California on the usual hunt—gold; and when he saw the two columns placed side by side, the excellence of the one over the other was irresistible, and he was the first soul God gave me on that Pacific coast. He accepted Christ, and that man came to the station when I was going away and blessed me for coming to that place.

D. L. Moody

*Proverbs 13:9 The light of the righteous rejoiceth: but the lamp of the wicked shall be put out.*

*10 Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom.*

*11 Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished: but he that gathereth by labour shall increase.*

*12 Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life.*

*13 Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed: but he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded.*

*14 The law of the wise is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.*

*15 Good understanding giveth favour: but the way of transgressors is hard.*

*16 Every prudent man dealeth with knowledge: but a fool layeth open his folly.*



# The High Cost of Sin

*Brother Esau Brooks*

## Following the Ways of Sin

What admonition and counsel are expounded in the verses of our Scripture reading! Today most people in the world pay little attention to what God has to say. How can people pay attention to what God is saying and yet live without Him? You hear much about the high cost of living, but you hear very little about the high cost of living in sin. God wants you to realize that the devil has attached a price tag to every act of sin. Sin is the cruellest malady in this life. Look at the many people who are following the ways of sin. You may be inclined to think you can attain some profit by living in sin, but that is not so. The reason people continue to live in sin is that they do not consider the cost they are paying now and will continue to pay until their last day on the face of

this earth.

Let me assure you beyond any doubt that sin is cruel, and what the writer said is true: "The way of transgressors is hard." Sometimes people talk about how hard it is to serve God. Friend, nothing is wrong with serving God; serving Him is always right. What is hard is the way of transgressing God's law. Misery, sorrow, and discontentment do not come by serving God but by walking in the way of sin.

The wise man presented very sound counsel in our Scripture text for your consideration. God is calling upon you to consider this message of warning. You need to be careful that you do not disregard it. In writing the Hebrew letter, the writer said in Hebrews 2:1, "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we

should let them slip."

The writer went on to say that every transgression and every disobedience will receive a just recompense of reward. If you are under the false delusion of having a good time in sin, you need to wake up. You are going to pay for every ounce of pleasure in sin. It will bring sorrow, if it has not already done so.

In too many cases, people are regarding sin too lightly. Few people seem to realize the price they must pay for committing sin, and not one can escape. If you think you are getting by living in sin, you are making a very serious mistake. It is not all loveliness and pleasantness. When it comes to paying the cost of sin, many people do not want to pay. Unlike the suffering of sickness years ago, the medical profession has gained such power and control that you may not see as much of the

misery that sin causes.

At one time when people came down to the time of dying, they endured much agony. Now the medical profession gives people injections that keep them so sedated that others looking on speak of how peacefully they died, but that is not so.

### **The Consequences of Living in Sin**

In the Gospel according to Luke Jesus told of the account concerning the rich man and a beggar named Lazarus. The rich man lived in luxury all his days, but the beggar had nothing to enjoy. The time came, just as it will for each of us, for the rich man and the beggar to die. The rich man died, and he opened his eyes in hell. However, the beggar was carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom. We read of no complaints from him at all.

Jesus said in Luke 16:23-24 concerning the rich man, "And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame." That is the end of a sinner's life. Psalm 9:17 reads, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God."

While this rich man was living, he had everything he wanted. The beggar had nothing. He wanted only the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table. When the beggar died, he had a good place to go, but the rich man went to an awful place. You know, it will pay you well to look ahead to see where the road you are traveling will take you. No matter how much joy and pleasure you think you are having in sin, you need to look ahead and see where that road leads. Attending worship services and hearing the Gospel is not a waste of time because it gives

you an opportunity to get right with God.

The day will come when you will close your eyes in death. Death can come so suddenly. You ought to consider the privilege that you have of looking ahead to see what the consequences of living in sin are for you. When it comes down to that time of life, many people do not want to pay the full price. Others may present a false picture of the future to them, but what God says will stand. God said, "The way of transgressors is hard." If you are not finding that way hard yet, you will at the end of life. No matter what your station in life consists of now, you will have a hard time further down the road.

Has it ever occurred to you that all the misery, the sorrows, and the grief you endure are the result of sin? Sometimes you might have to go through dark places, but in reality, you are being tried. People cannot just walk into God's Heaven as they like, regardless of what false prophets try to tell them. God is a God of love, but do not forget that He was the same God of love when He destroyed the antediluvian world with the Flood. God has not changed, and He will not change.

Have you ever thought about what a miserable experience it was for those antediluvians, seeing babies and children drown? You may ask, "Why was that? They were too little to commit sin." You need to understand the danger of living wrong; it will affect others.

The same was true of Sodom and Gomorrah. All those people might not have been outright wicked. The Bible does not say that no morally good people were there, but from God's point of view, He could not find even ten righteous people. God said if He could find ten righteous, He would pardon the city, but He could not.

### **The Payback for Sin**

In our day and time you cannot convince people that they are doing

wrong. One reason the Church of God is so unpopular is that men of God tell people the right from the wrong. Once I heard the story of a little fellow who was asked what he wanted to be when he grew up. His acknowledgment was, "I don't want to be a preacher." When his mother asked him why, he replied, "Because preachers have to say some of the hardest things that a person can say." Truly a really honest man of God will always tell people the truth. God's ministers will tell you the truth no matter how unpleasant or how disagreeable it might be to you. If you die lost, you will have to deliberately reject the good and go on presumptuously and choose the bad.

Many steadfastly refuse to surrender to God, but it will not be God's fault if they end up in a lost eternity. In every instance of life, when the payback for sin comes, people do not want to pay the price. In the end the final cost of living in sin is having to spend eternity in hell, but it also costs people their health, their happiness, and above everything else, their future in Heaven. Friend, if you want to go to Heaven, you must break away from sin and wrongdoing. Sin has cost people many heartaches, deep sorrows, and much misery. It is the most cruel thing in the world.

Think about all the hard places men and women are going through in this life because of sin. Years ago we sang a song that said, "See yonder man in prison he dwells; sin is to blame." It is due to sin that people become drug pushers, criminals, and murderers. Many people say, "Everyone cannot become a Christian." They proclaim that everyone is a sinner. If everyone can be a sinner, then everyone can be righteous.

God has not held you back from becoming a Christian. You are a sinner because you have deliberately refused to do what God has commanded you to do. The day is coming when you are going to regret your choice. Sin is the cause of the many broken homes and broken

lives.

My friend, you ought to live for God, but because of friends or because of what people might say, you have steadfastly resisted the Gospel and resisted the moving of God's Spirit on your heart, and by so doing, you are choosing the way of the lost. Although legislators are working day and night to legislate laws to hold sin in check, they are not doing too well, because it takes God to release a person from sin. If you are a sinner, it will take much more than joining a church and shaking a preacher's hand to free you from the bondage of sin. You must be born again. People are not serious about sin anymore. They do not fear sin as they used to. Look at the many lives ruined by sin. Friend, it is time to quit the sin business.

### **"Except Ye Repent"**

Young person, if you want to grow up to be an honorable person, you must turn your back on sin. You may wonder, "If I get out of sin, what else is there to do?" You can live for God. I am glad for the day that God touched me. Every day you must face this monster called sin, but thank God for the grace to stand and refuse to yield to sin. I am glad that I can live right, and you can too. That is what God is striving to do for you.

You might believe that living right, being right, and doing right is the most disgusting life that you could live, but that is not so. The time will come when you are going to think back and say, "That preacher was telling me the truth." Friend, getting saved is not going to get any easier.

As I look around today, I see things that I never dreamed that I would have ever seen, and it is becoming darker in this world all the time. All you have to do is open your eyes and look around, and you will see the destruction that sin is bringing to the lives of many people. People need help from God, and the only help they can find to

overcome sin is to turn to God. Despite all the laws that are being enforced today, there is still an increase of brokenhearted mothers, broken-minded children, and homes ruined beyond repair. Sin has cost more than any war has ever cost. In fact, the very thing that causes war is sin. Many people cannot even sleep because of the threat that is hanging over their heads, and sin is to blame for all of it.

You may ask, "What would happen if I should give my heart to God?" You will have protection, a refuge, and a safeguard. The reason things are not any worse for you now is due to the mercy of God. Many people cannot tell the difference between the mercy of God and the wrath of God. The mercy of God has brought you this message for the express purpose of helping you to get saved and to protect you from further destruction.

Sin causes war, and it brings sickness. Today we hear about new sicknesses all the time. People are succumbing to more diseases than ever before. As a Christian, when you suffer illness, you have One to stand by you as you go through it.

I want to emphasize to you that sin has cost the world more than any natural disaster has ever cost. If you continue to sin, it will cost you your eternity-bound soul. Sin will bring you eternal damnation. The destruction that sin brings is far-reaching; it is beyond description. That is the reason the Bible says in Luke 13:3, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

### **The Danger of Refusing Salvation**

Sin is not a fancy, a thought, or an idea, but it is a way of living. People become sinners by adopting the ways of sin, and the only way that you can get out of it is to go to God and plead for His mercy, His power, and His grace to deliver you. You see, a spirit comes along with sin. Once that spirit gets hold of you, you have little chance of escape.

I want you to read carefully

what the writer had to say about those who refuse salvation. Romans 1:21 states, "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, [There is a danger in your refusing salvation and in your refusing to glorify Him as God. You may speak well of Him, and you may even sing beautiful songs about Him; but He wants you to glorify Him as God. How can you do that? You must recognize Him as God. He demands and deserves your life, and you must forsake all to follow Him.] neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened."

You may not see the damage that you are doing by repeatedly rejecting salvation, but much damage is being done. The Scripture says your heart becomes darkened. In the world you cannot truly see how awful sin is. Many people reject salvation, not because they want to do so, but because they cannot help themselves. Sin has darkened their foolish hearts.

Verses 22-24 continue: "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up [You do not want to keep rejecting salvation until you reach a point where God gives you up. Every time you reject salvation, you are making your case worse, and the outlook for your future becomes darker.] to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves."

So much is going on out in the world today, and many are making light of it, dealing with it as if it were a political issue. Homosexuality is not a political issue; it is an issue of right and wrong. Sometimes we hear people say, "A person cannot help it if he was born a homosexual." *No one* has ever been born homosexual. He turns to that lifestyle after he gets here, just as a

thief becomes a thief after he gets here. God does not make thieves. God created man from the dust of the ground. To create infers that there was a time when there was no man. Can you not see that man is a different creature from all other creatures in the world? He was made that way with the intention of his advancing and progressing and becoming better.

The Bible says that righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people. After God made Adam, He caused a deep sleep to fall upon him and removed a rib from his side. With it He made a woman, thereby signifying that the woman belongs by the man's side.

This business of a man marrying a man and a woman marrying a woman is wickedness. As we see this beginning to take place, we know that we are getting back to where the people of Sodom and Gomorrah were. Not long after those people reached that stage, God sent destruction down upon them, and we might as well get ready for it. We are beginning to see dark times such as there never have been since the beginning of the world, and its going to get progressively worse if people do not turn to God.

If God wanted a man to marry a man, He would have made a man for man. Contrariwise, God made Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve. That is the way God intends it to be. It is not a matter to be settled by the voting of legislators or politicians. It is God's order, and if people forsake it, they are going to pay the penalty for it. It is time to seek the Lord, for the way of transgressors is hard, and it is bound to get harder.

### **The Ways of Death**

Romans 1:24-26 reads: "Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator,

who is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature."

It has been only recently that we have begun to hear so much about these things. A few years back people looked down on lesbianism and homosexuality. No decent person wanted to be called a lesbian or a homosexual, but now those people are boasting about being homosexuals and lesbians. This is the result of sin, and only God knows where this thing is going to end. You may treat it lightly and disregard it, but the day will come when you must pay for your wickedness, and it will not be a joyful time.

I repeat, sin is a way of life, not just a fancy, a thought, or an idea. To be a sinner is to adopt the way of sinning against God. Proverbs 14:12 tells us, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." It is becoming more popular to be a sinner and a transgressor of God's laws, but it will bring death. Because of the popularity of sin and the general acceptance of it by the masses today, many are being drawn into it and do not even realize what is happening.

Today the church is suffering because of these things. In the past people were more inclined to pray than they are today. Also, they were more inclined to go to an altar of prayer, but that is not a common practice anymore. People forget that sin comes with a spirit that binds them.

Proverbs 5:21-22 reads: "For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and he pondereth all his goings. His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins." You may find it hard to go forward to an altar of prayer and get saved, because something has gotten hold of you, and that something is the spirit of sin.

Recently, I said to one of my

sons, "Son, I am getting old, and I am sorry that I am going to have to leave you all to face what is coming on this earth. On the other hand, I would rather be going out than coming in." As I look at my grandchildren, I pity them because of the things they will have to face.

My mind goes back to when I got saved more than fifty years ago. The world was not steeped in sin as it is today. As a parent, you need to raise your children for God now. They are going to need the Lord in a great way, and you will not always be there for them. Some dark clouds are gathering now over the horizon, and that is frightening; yet many are holding back from surrendering to God, holding back from giving their hearts to Him.

### **Seek the Lord While He May Be Found**

The best thing you can do with your life is to turn it over to the Lord. Sin's ways may appear to be very attractive, but the cost is going up. Being a Christian today is much more expensive than when I got saved. Why? People can get involved in so many more things.

Young person, I want to exhort you to give your heart to God. If you could see what is awaiting you down the road if you persist in going the way of sin, you would be shocked. It is costing more today to be a Christian than it used to, but serving the Lord is not as costly as living in sin. Many people are failing to get saved because they cannot find the power to say no to the devil. They cannot find the will to turn their backs on worldly attractions.

Though sin costs much, people are still going deeper and deeper into it. God calls them transgressors. A sinner is one who transgresses God's law, and that way is going to bring nothing but sorrow and hardships. Anyone who chooses the way of sin will end up in destruction. You are going to have to pay a price, and getting saved now would be far better than to postpone it until later,

because only God knows if you would be willing to pay to get out of sin later. Right now you can, thank God, because the grace of God has appeared to all men and brings salvation.

Everything is becoming so socialized. Religion is becoming so normalized that getting saved is almost impossible for people. It is not that God cannot do it. God can do it, but so few people want to be saved anymore. The dealings of God with man are not as profound and intense as they used to be. In times past people would cry out in their search for salvation and wring their hands in an effort to find God. Nowadays they give more consideration to the affairs of this life than to the thought of preparing for eternity.

May God help people to awaken. Sin does not end with the deed committed. After the deed comes the payday, and you will pay for sin. The sooner you repent and get rid of sin, the better it will be for you. Saint of God, if there was ever a need for you to get deeper in the things of God, it is today. It looks as if people are getting a little too tired to exert the effort needed to move God on His throne. I think often of the prayer that Daniel prayed for his people in Babylon as the time was approaching for their deliverance from Babylon. I would to God that we could find such praying going on today. You can read a part of that prayer in Daniel, Chapter 9. If there was ever a time when that kind of praying needed to be done, it is

today.

The Prophet Isaiah wrote in Isaiah 55:6, "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near." Friend, you need to consider the seriousness of the condition that is coming over people and how it is affecting their lives. So many people are closing their eyes to their need of God, and few people are finding Him. Won't you come to the Lord today? Eternity is drawing nigh, and destruction is knocking at your door. If you will turn your life over to the Lord, I can guarantee that you will never regret it. May God bless you.

*(Cassette C-5236E)*

## **Carelessness Can Result in Tragedy**

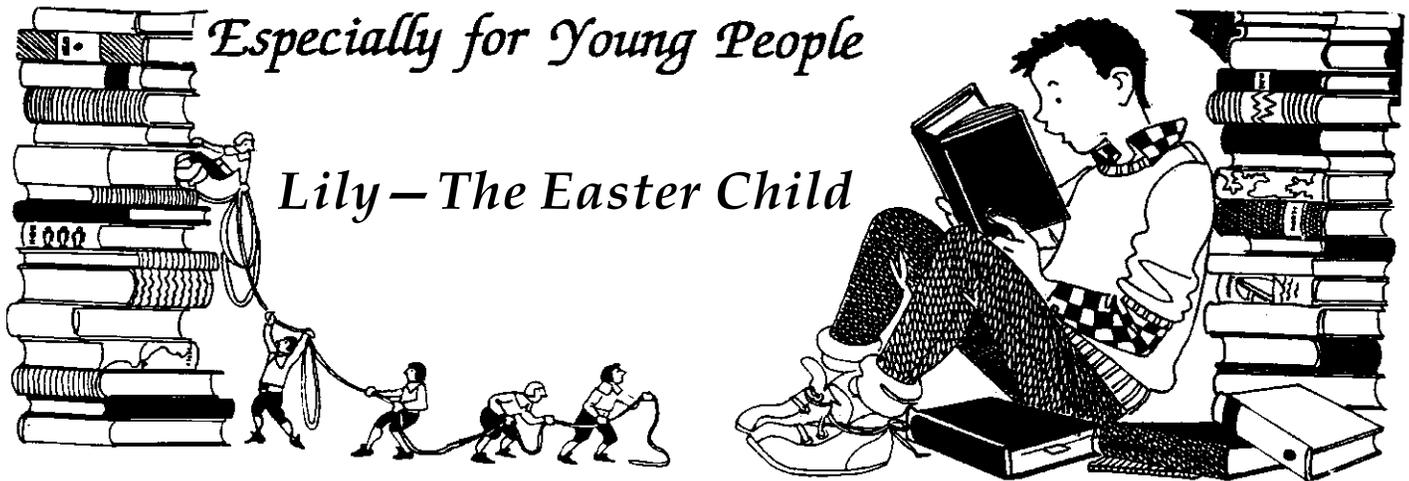
**A great general in the Civil War, Stonewall Jackson, lost his life through carelessness. He gave strict orders for his own soldiers to fire on anyone approaching from a certain direction. After issuing the orders, he decided to personally investigate the Federal lines, then returned from the same direction he had ordered under guard. He was shot by his own soldiers in obedience to his instruction, they supposing him to be an enemy. Thus, Stonewall Jackson fell mortally wounded on the field of battle, solely because of his own carelessness.**

**There are spiritual tragedies that occur as a direct result of negligence. Many people have fallen, some to never rise again. They were once useful, possessed leadership ability, and filled places of responsibility in the Lord's work.**

**To become careless about holy living, prayer, church attendance, and other important phases of the Christian life is to live in a critical danger zone. Good intentions are not enough. Our security lies in traveling the right direction, going to the right places, and doing the right things.**

**The Christian needs to be alert, watchful, and always mindful of how he lives. Carelessness can result in tragedy.**

**Ivan P. Alls**



*Especially for Young People*

*Lily – The Easter Child*

There were ten children in the Miller family. The father, a poor laboring man, toiled ceaselessly year in and year out to rear his family, and if possible, he wanted to give them the advantages of an education.

Each child had been prayed for before it had even made its advent into this world. It was the desire of the parents' hearts to bring up their children in the love of God.

Each Sunday regularly the entire family made their way to the little white church at the crossroads. How the nine boys hated church going! Sunday school, they felt, was only for sissies. Yet Mr. Miller was firm. While they ate and slept under his roof, they would attend the place of worship. Nine stalwart boys knew their father's word was law.

Mrs. Miller was a quiet little woman, always with a tired look on her face. She had left the discipline of her boys almost entirely to the father. Yes, she was loved by her sons and respected too, but they knew she could not manage them.

The youngest was so different, and perhaps my story would never have been written had it not been for Lily, the youngest, and the only girl of the large family.

Lily was an Easter child, and like the Easter lily from which she was named, she was a delicate, fragile child. The two slender crutches that she had always used were never out of her reach. She used

them wherever she went, except the times when one of the boys was trusted to carry her up high on his shoulders. How she adored her big brothers!

Lily lived very close to Heaven all the time. She loved to talk with people about heavenly things, and her knowledge of God left me wondering. One could tell by looking into the little face that she suffered greatly, although I never heard her murmur or complain.

She planned some day to be a great missionary and go to Africa to tell the heathen about Christ. She often pictured to herself what she would do and say when she became a missionary, and it never entered her mind that she might not be strong enough to go on her crutches. Yes, she would tell the story of a resurrected Christ. Perhaps it was because I was a missionary that she told me so many secrets of her heart, secrets that I do not think ever reached the ears of her mother.

I had been on sick leave for several months and expected to continue in the little cottage on the lake for another year at least. I bought my milk, butter, and eggs at the Miller farm. That is how I came to see her through the window late that first afternoon.

How she loved to listen to me tell stories of real adventures I had encountered in foreign lands! Yet there was so much I needed that Lily had to give. A beautiful faith, a trust that withstood all doubts, and

patience that passed all understanding were hers.

John was the oldest of the family and the most wayward. Lily never knew of the hours he spent with evil companions, for he loved his little sister with a beautiful love. His was the first name on her prayer list. How she prayed that he might become like the beloved disciple and learn to lean on Jesus' breast!

I had grave doubts of this, especially after I saw him late one night driving a car with a group of wild young people. I knew he had been drinking from the reckless look on his face as I caught a glimpse of him as they dashed by me at a terrific rate of speed. Then came the day when he announced to the family that he was leaving the farm for the city. He said he would have enough saved by fall to go to college, where he would study to be an electrical engineer. Perhaps it was well that he did not see the pained look on his little sister's face. Although I knew that Lily would continue to pray that God would make him a great and mighty minister of the Gospel, it seemed to me there was so little promise of this.

John was really going to the city. He seemed to want no help from his father, though I knew Mr. Miller would have given much to keep John with him for another year at least, when he would have been twenty years of age. Everyone felt bad the day he left. Dear, quiet Mrs. Miller went about her homely tasks

as usual, trying to be brave but hurriedly wiping the tears from her eyes with a corner of her apron when she thought no one was looking. John was the first one of her brood to leave her, and he was going from the quiet farm to the evil and hurry of a large city. Oh, she must commit him to the Lord. Where was her faith? If only he would be contented at home for another year!

Lily had taken her pennies that she was saving for the missionaries to buy John a New Testament Bible. She had carefully marked in red ink the more blessed parts. She had coaxed and pleaded with John for a really true promise that he would read in it every night before going to bed. The promise was hard to obtain until John saw the little lips quiver and the big blue eyes fill up with tears and then brim over. He promised, and because Lily was so precious, he told himself he would keep his promise too.

John had been gone a month. He did not write as often as they would have liked, and when he did write, there was never a word about what he was doing.

Lily, it seemed to me, was more quiet than usual and spent a great deal of time sitting in her window looking off at distant things she could not fathom.

It was necessary for me to go to the city for several days, and I had promised Lily faithfully that I would visit John and take him the cookies she had so carefully packed for him. It was while I was in the city that the near accident happened. Mrs. Miller related the facts to me when I returned to the farm. Little Lily was still in bed unable to be up.

It was on a Monday when the other children were all in school. Keith, who was thirteen, had not been feeling well for several days. Mother Miller was anxious but not alarmed. However, he seemed to grow worse so quickly on Monday. There was no one to send for help except Lily, and Mrs. Miller's heart

beat fast when she thought of Lily going by herself the mile to the nearest neighbors. There was no telephone at the Miller farm. There were too many mouths to feed to have very many conveniences, and a doctor was needed at once, for Keith was a very sick boy indeed.

Lily was not afraid to go. She was not even afraid of crossing the creek whose waters were swollen and angry. Jesus would help her, she knew, even if the bridge was washed out and you had to cross on a large plank, like daddy was telling about only last night. The men probably would not be there fixing it so soon either. She could hardly wait for her mother to help her on with her coat and, with a prayer in her heart for strength to get to the neighbors, Lily started on her slender crutches. Oh! If she could only hurry faster, if only she were not lame — but please Jesus, forgive her, she did not mean to complain; it was only that she was in a terrible hurry. By the time she had reached the creek, she was wet with perspiration and her breath seemed to catch in her throat. There was a terrible pain near her heart because she had hurried so, and yet she was not going fast, not like anyone who could run.

The bridge was washed out with the spring flood, just as Daddy had said. The plank was too narrow for her to walk across on her crutches. It did not take Lily long to decide. Putting her arms through the crutches, she began to creep on her hands and knees, dragging them with her. She could not shut her eyes because she must watch where she was going, but oh, it was frightening to such a little frail girl. Logs and debris were coming down the stream, and the water was so black and deep. Her head was so dizzy. It seemed at any moment she would fall from the plank. She could not go on. She was trembling so. Then in the midst of her despair it seemed as though a voice very sweet and gentle was saying, "I am with thee, whithersoever thou

goest." It was enough. Christ had spoken and the little child's heart took courage. The end of the plank was reached at last. Getting up on her crutches again, she hurried on. What if, when she got to the neighbors, they were away? Would she have strength to go on? She finally arrived at the neighbor's house. Oh, that she would be in time, but where was her breath? Why couldn't she tell Mrs. Brooks they must have a doctor at once?

Mrs. Brooks knew as she looked into the twisted face of her little visitor that something was terribly wrong at the Miller home. How had Lily come so far by herself, and across the flooded creek too? "Is it a doctor you need at home, child?" Lily could only nod with the tears falling down her cheeks. She got it out at last. "It's Keith, Mrs. Brooks." Mrs. Brooks hurried to make the telephone call from the next room. Later she returned to find Lily unconscious on the floor. They carried her home, but Lily was too weary to sit up again that day.

John was having a gay life in the city, all thought of college forgotten. Yes, and his promise to his little lame sister was forgotten too. The little Testament that she had given him lay hidden away among some of his belongings. Every penny he was earning was spent in riotous living. Would he some day come to his senses, as did the prodigal son, and return to his father's house?

"I will arise and go to my father." These words kept ringing in John's ears one evening. He tried to get rid of them by entering into the gaiety around him, but his heart was like lead in his breast. He was not in the right mood for a party, he told himself, and his lady companion was finding him very dull company indeed. He wondered what could be the matter. Was he getting homesick?

His friends were ridiculing him for being so serious. "Getting old before your time, old fellow," but he did not seem to care what they said.

*[continued on page 24]*

*Psalm 103:1 Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.*

*2 Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits:*

*3 Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;*

*4 Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies;*

*5 Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.*

*6 The LORD executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed.*

*7 He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel.*

*8 The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.*

*9 He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever.*

*10 He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to*

*our iniquities.*

*11 For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him.*

*12 As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.*

*13 Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him.*

*14 For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.*

# Backsliding



*Brother Calvin Foster*

## **Living in Perilous Times**

I thank the Lord for this Psalm, for salvation, and for how good He has been. He has allowed His people to have a little part of Heaven in this life. Knowing Jesus Christ as a personal Savior and being born again is wonderful! I thank the Lord for His loving-kindness and for His mercy.

Isaiah 53:6 says, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him [speaking of Christ] the iniquity of

us all." I often wonder where I would be today if it were not for the Lord's mercy and goodness. We all were like sheep that went astray.

I am reminded of the story of Cain and Abel in Genesis, Chapter 4. Cain rose up against his brother Abel and slew him, and the Lord said to Cain in verse 9, "Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?" The answer is yes, we are our brother's keeper. We are living in a world that lacks love and unity in many cases; but I thank God that

God still has men of God who love the souls of men. Yes, we are our brother's keeper, and we ought to look out for one another and encourage one another to continue with the Lord. It is also our responsibility to keep ourselves and to do what we are supposed to do in the Lord's service.

Matthew 18:12-14 reads: "How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which

is gone astray? And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray. Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish." Friend, God loves every soul and He is so good that He gives us men of God to look out for our souls. Galatians 6:10 reads, "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." You ought to thank God for men of God and saints of God who are concerned about your soul.

I believe God wants us to be stirred because we are living in perilous, or dangerous, times. We are in a spiritual battle called the Battle of Armageddon. It is a battle of right against wrong, and the battle is raging. As Christians, we need to cherish our salvation and hold onto it with all our might and be thankful for it.

### **Signs of Being in a Backslidden Condition**

Second Peter 2:21-22 declares: "For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." You need to think about this very seriously, because the devil is your adversary, and he is as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

I do not want to get too graphic, but have you ever seen a dog go back and lick up its own vomit? That is a terrible sight to see. The Lord wants you to know that if you go back to the old life, it is just like a dog going back and licking up its vomit. Why would you want to turn away from God? What is worth losing your soul for in sin?

As a Christian, you need to have

a strong determination and a fervent desire in your heart, keep your feet on solid ground, and set your face like a flint and say, "I'm not going to consider the thought of ever turning my back on God." That is a foolish thing even to think about doing. When the devil tries to get you to turn your back on Jesus, you need to say, "Get out of here, Satan! Do not come to me with that idea."

People have always had trouble with backsliding, and you will probably see some people backslide along the way of life. The state of a backslider is told in Proverbs 14:14, which states, "The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways; and a good man shall be satisfied from himself." The backslider is filled with his own ways. He wants to do things his way and to have his own way, but he cannot go to Heaven that way. He must go God's way. The first signs of being in a backslidden condition are becoming stubborn, not wanting to listen, and disobeying the Word of God. The backslider becomes filled with his own ideas and his own ways, because he has forsaken the Lord.

Second Timothy 2:12-13 tells us, "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us: If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself." If you deny the Lord, He will deny you. If you turn your back on God, He will turn His back on you.

Second Chronicles 24:20 states, "And the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, which stood above the people, and said unto them, Thus saith God, Why transgress ye the commandments of the LORD, that ye cannot prosper? because ye have forsaken the LORD, he hath also forsaken you."

Do not think you are going to prosper if you turn your back on God. You are not going to be blessed if you walk away from the Lord. Do not think you are going to be blessed if you walk away from the Truth. God's Truth is marching on. It will

always be here, and it will endure forever. No one can walk away from God's Truth and prosper. If you have fervent love for God in your heart, you will not backslide.

### **Taking Time for God**

Jesus said in John 14:15, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." You can prove to God that you love Him by obeying His Word and by keeping His commandments. Jesus warned of our day in Matthew 24:11 when He said that "many false prophets shall rise." Many false prophets are in the world. Church of God, I am so thankful that we have men of God who love us and who are concerned about us. Some preachers out there might have confused you, but God still has true men of God who love the souls of men and who are true to souls. True prophets are still walking the face of this earth.

Jesus said in Matthew 24:11-12: "And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." The problem today is that many people's love for God is waxing cold. If your love waxes cold, you will become filled with your own ways. I want to encourage you and warn you to keep your love for God hot. I appreciate times of fellowship and times of singing together, rejoicing together, and hearing the Word of God. We need such times in these wicked days in which we live. We need to push aside the cares of life and make time for God. Since many people's love is waxing cold, they are not hungering and thirsting after righteousness.

Jesus said in Matthew 5:6, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." The Psalmist said in Psalm 42:1, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God." That means more than just going to church, going home, and putting your Bible on the shelf to gather

dust until the next Sunday. Hungering and thirsting after righteousness takes away that kind of religion. A Christian will read the Bible, fast, and seek God. Psalm 84:10b reads, "I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness."

Hebrews 10:24-25 tells us: "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; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." You should not overlook this verse of Scripture or take it lightly. When it is time to be in the house of God, what are you doing some place else?

### **Take Heed, Lest You Fall**

Sometimes I think about what happened to King David. When it was time for kings to go to battle, he stayed home. As he was walking on his housetop, he saw a woman taking a bath, and he sent for her. He committed adultery and then had her husband murdered. As a result of his sin, sorrow never left his house. If you fail to attend the church services when you could be there, you are heading for trouble. You should have a fear in your heart of backsliding and losing the most precious thing you have, and that is your salvation. If you do not cultivate it, cherish it, and hold on to it, you will lose it. We each need to hear the Word of God over and over, otherwise we will let it slip. We need to pant after God as a hart pants after the water brook. God wants you to pant after Him with all your heart and to hunger and thirst after righteousness.

Consider the words of the Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 10:12 where he wrote, "For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: [Some people feel they have it made. You must be careful that you do not compare yourself with other people.] but they

measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise."

You had better line up with the Word of God. You should not look at your neighbors and say, "If they can be late for church, I can be late" or "If they can stay home from church, I can stay home too. They seem to be doing well, so I will do as they do." You must be careful of measuring yourself by others; that is unwise. You should obey what God has shown you to do and obey the convictions of your heart.

Whatever it takes to keep you saved, you ought to do it. You should not compare yourself with someone else. They may think they are getting away with something, but they are not. Unwise comparisons will get you in trouble.

Jesus is our example, and we are supposed to follow His steps. First Corinthians 10:12 reads, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." You need to be careful, lest you fall. The devil does not care how long you have been saved. He does not care anything about you. If he can get you, he will. Every day you wake up, the devil is saying to himself, "This is the day I'm going to get that person. I am going to set a trap."

The devil is not going to give up on you, child of God. One song says, "We've got the devil on the run now; we've got the devil on the run. He can't stay when we pray and thank the Lord for what He's done. There's healing for the body, saving for the soul, and joy for those who have none. Without a doubt we've got a right to shout; we've got the devil on the run."

### **Salvation Is Conditional**

A backslider never finds pleasure in sin the way he did before he was saved. Before that first experience, he was in darkness, but God's mercy was with him. He found pleasure in sin, but once he has tasted of salvation and felt the glory of God, going back into sin is

not the same. I have heard backsliders testify to that. Friend, God will keep you if you want to be kept. Therefore, do not boast in yourself. You need to boast in the Lord and say, "By the grace of God, I am going to stay saved." God will keep you. He will not fail you.

Some people believe that they can go back into sin and not lose their salvation, but that is not true. Many Scriptures in the Bible let you know that salvation is conditional. John 8:31-32 reads: "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

You are His disciple only if you continue in His Word. You do not have a license to go out and sin again. You must continue to obey God every day. If you do not, you will backslide. You will lose the most precious thing you have—your salvation. Young person, you need to hold on to your salvation. If you do, you will never regret it. God will give you the most beautiful life. That is a blessing!

Romans 11:21-22 reads: "For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off." That Scripture dispels the false doctrine of eternal security that many preachers in the land promote. They say that you cannot help but sin and that we all sin every day, but that is not true.

Proverbs 13:15 says, "Good understanding giveth favour: but the way of transgressors is hard." Ecclesiastes 9:11 states, "... but time and chance happeneth to them all." We all are going to have problems and troubles in this world. God sends rain on the just and the unjust. Our Father sends sunshine on the just and the unjust. No man will ever have an excuse before God to

say, "God, You blessed his crop, but You didn't bless mine."

### **"The Way of Transgressors Is Hard"**

People living in sin may look happy, but their lives are much harder than the lives of Christians. You may not see it on the surface, but they have many inward troubles. Then when they die, they will go to hell.

In Numbers, Chapter 11, you can read the story of when the children of Israel were in Egypt, and Pharaoh made them labor hard and mistreated them; so they cried out to God, and He heard their cry. In the process of time, He sent Moses to lead them out of Egypt. However, after they were in the wilderness and a hard place came, they began to murmur and complain. Numbers 11:4-6 tells us: "And the mixed multitude that was among them fell a lusting: and the children of Israel

also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic: But now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes."

Saint of God, you should not be as the Israelites were. If you ever harbor the thought of backsliding and think that going back in sin would be better than serving God, you are deceived by the devil. It is far better to stay with God. The Israelites forgot about how bad Pharaoh had treated them, and they started to remember the fish, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic, and wanted to go back. They forgot how they prayed for God to help them.

You should not forget what God has brought you from and how He saved your soul. I like to sing the song titled "Remind Me, Dear Lord." The chorus says, "Roll back the

curtain of memory now and then; Show me where you brought me from, and where I could have been. Remember, I'm human, and humans forget; So remind me, remind me, dear Lord." You need to be a strong pillar for God.

Dear one, won't you believe the Gospel and accept Christ into your heart and live for Him for the rest of your life? The reason many people do not want to get saved is that they cannot get past giving their lives to God. You are going to die one day, and you cannot take anything with you. You might as well get saved so that you can go to Heaven. You need to determine in your mind and in your heart that you will be a Christian until the end of your life. You need to be determined to live for Jesus and follow Him.

*(Cassette C-5305E)*

---

---

---

## It Takes Time

Suppose I should send my little boy, five years old, to school tomorrow morning, and when he came home in the afternoon, say to him, "Willie, can you read? Can you write? Can you spell? Do you understand all about algebra, geometry, Hebrew, Latin, and Greek?"

"Why, Papa," the little fellow would say, "how funny you talk. I have been all day trying to learn the A, B, C's!"

Suppose I should reply: "If you have not finished your education, you need not go any more." What would you say? Why, you would say that I had gone mad!

There would be just as much reason in that as in the way that people talk about the Bible. The men who have studied the Bible for fifty years have never gotten down to the depths of it yet. There are truths in God's Word that the Church of God has been searching out for the last two thousand years, but no man has yet fathomed the depths of the everlasting stream.

Selected

*Amos 4:11 I have overthrown some of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and ye were as a firebrand plucked out of the burning: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD.*

*12 Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel: and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.*

*13 For, lo, he that formeth the mountains, and createth the wind, and declareth unto man what is his thought, that maketh the morning darkness, and treadeth upon the high places of the earth, The LORD, The God of hosts, is his name.*

# Preparing to Meet God



*Brother Allen Polston*

## **The Most Important Matter in Life**

Many things in life require preparation. For example, making biscuits requires measuring the ingredients, blending them together, rolling out the dough, cutting them out, and baking them. This is just one example of food preparation. We all are accustomed to making various preparations in our lives. I would like to speak to you about preparing to meet God. I trust that God will speak to your heart, because being ready to meet Him is very important for you. Of the many events that we must prepare for in life, those things pale in comparison to the importance of being prepared to meet God.

We prepare for some things in life that we hope and expect to happen only once, although that may not always be the case. We prepare for a career, we prepare to marry a companion, we prepare to buy a home or to find a place to live. Though all these things in life are important, they are as nothing compared to the seriousness of getting ready to meet God. Dear one, we all are going to stand before the judgment seat of Christ. There will be no exceptions. We all are on our way to eternity. Each of us must stand before God and give an account for the way that we have lived our lives. This ought to bring quite a seriousness to think of how important it is to heed the Gospel and to be ready to meet Him.

We all have to prepare for many things during this life. Some preparations are repetitious, and others are not. As we face each new day, we prepare to eat a meal. On certain days we prepare to go to church. What success would life be without some preparations? The devil knows how important it is for everyone to prepare to meet God, yet he tries to convince people that they have plenty of time. He tells them that it is really not so urgent.

The devil will try to get people never to seek God seriously. He will attempt to get you to put off tending to things that God has spoken to you about. I am thankful for the faithfulness of God and for the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Most people realize that pre-

paring their income tax returns or filing for an extension in the spring of the year is necessary, but the most important matter in life is preparing to meet God. The devil tries to get your mind occupied with other things continually. He tries to offer you reasons to let your mind wander in other areas, but it is so important that you prepare to meet God.

### **Transgressing and Straying From God**

In Amos, Chapter 4, we can find that some things led up to God declaring, through the Prophet, that it was time for the people to prepare to meet Him. I want you to understand that God is not just waiting to get at you. He is very merciful, very loving, and very kind. He is not looking for an opportunity to come against you. If that were the case, most of us would no longer be here. God works with people, and He is long-suffering. The fruit of the Spirit that we read of in God's Word and value is characteristic of God. He is very patient with people, and He gives them opportunity after opportunity to repent and serve Him.

The children of Israel in our Scripture lesson had transgressed and strayed from God. Amos 4:1 reads, "Hear this word, ye kine of Bashan, that are in the mountain of Samaria, which oppress the poor, which crush the needy, which say to their masters, Bring and let us drink." This verse gives us quite a picture of conditions then. Sad to say, it is not much different from things that are going on today. Today we can see this same behavior pattern in the lives of many people in the world.

This lesson in Amos was directed to the kine of Bashan. *Kine* is a word that we do not use too frequently, but it refers to cattle. If you study it, you will learn that it refers to heifers, or female cattle. We find that God referred to them in that manner, not because He was trying to degrade them, but because it was very appropriate and fitting.

I studied in the Old Testament concerning Bashan because I was not familiar with that area. It was a place that was good for cattle. Bashan was a region on the east side of the Jordan River, and it was a place where cattle could flourish. The people who owned cattle enjoyed a prosperous life. When the children of Israel left Egypt and were traveling toward the Promised Land, they came upon the region of Bashan and noticed that it was well fruited and had much to offer. Some tribes of the children of Israel claimed it as their inheritance. That land looked so good that some of the people told the others to go on into the Promised Land and they would stay there. However, that was unacceptable with God, and they were chastised for that. They were supposed to stay together.

### **"United We Stand, Divided We Fall"**

Church, we are in this battle together, and we are to work together for the common cause of seeing souls saved. We must fight the enemy together and pray for one another in our battles and trials. The Bible says to carry one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ. It is easy when everything is going fine to jump the ship, so to speak, and say, "Well, it has been good, but we are not going to travel any further."

Bashan seemed to be the kind of place where they could just take it easy. They were willing to let the others cross the Jordan River and fight the battles that were ahead against all the enemies they had to overcome. However, it was not God's plan for them to separate. God wants His people to stick together, labor together, fight the enemy together, and overcome the devil together.

We can help one another in many ways. If you begin to think that you are it and that you do not need anyone else, you are in big trouble. Then you will begin to find

fault with others. Church, we are on a journey together, and we need to stick together. Sometimes a little something happens, and then people think they have to go their separate ways. We need to stick together in the work of God and labor together.

The people in our Scripture lesson got what they wanted, and they were ready to stay there. However, the man of God came to them, and in essence, said, "It is your duty to stand with the rest of the tribes until the enemies have been conquered; then you can return and enjoy this country." You know, sometimes when you are facing a battle, it may be hard for your faith to overcome it. Someone else who has already faced that battle can pray for you and help you through that situation. Then when you see another going through a hard trial, you can help that person by going to God in faith believing. You see, we do need one another.

The motto on the Kentucky state flag reads, "United we stand, divided we fall." This motto is true even in the animal kingdom. When lions and other meat-eating animals search for prey, they do not attack in the middle of a herd or take on the whole herd. They watch for one animal that has wandered away from the rest of the herd, and then they take that one down. We need to stand together and labor together in the Church of God for the Kingdom of God.

### **The Dangers of Prosperity**

Bashan was a fruited place where cattle could multiply and the people could prosper, but they did not stay there. In verse 1 God said, "Hear this word, ye kine of Bashan, that are in the mountain of Samaria." They were not in Bashan, the location of their origin. They were in the mountain of Samaria. It was a little different from Bashan. It was a high mountain plain, and it was very difficult for an enemy to get up there. It was not as readily accessible as other places, so it was a secure

location.

The Lord referred to those people as the kine of Bashan because they were once dwelling in a very prosperous region, but some things had happened, and circumstances had brought them to the mountain of Samaria. There is a message in that. Consider where people end up when they walk away from God's blessings. Devastating results occur when people walk away from Truth.

You cannot leave a healthy, wholesome Church of God congregation and prosper in your soul. I have seen this happen. People end up in Babylon or back in deep sin, and then they become bitter. We need the preaching of the Gospel to address those seeds that the devil tries to sow. The enemy is constantly trying to sow seeds of sin and evil in people's lives. He is constantly trying to get seeds of wickedness to sprout. We need the Truth to be able to weed out and destroy evil. If you walk away from Truth, you are walking on very dangerous ground. You need to be where you can get your soul fed and where you can hear the Truth preached. You need a steady diet of the Word of God, and you need the Spirit of God. Both witnesses need to be present to stir your heart, to challenge you, to correct you, to encourage you, and to instruct you.

In this case of the Israelites, it was not so much that they chose to walk away from the blessings as it was that God began to withhold the blessings. You see, there is a danger when the physical man begins to prosper. I am not saying it is a sin to prosper or to have wealth. If God has allowed you to prosper in this way, that is wonderful. However, you need to be careful when things begin to go well for you that you do not forget God.

Salvation is a miracle. It is a miracle that you should not get over, lest you forget where you were one day. I never want to forget that I was once lost and undone without God and on my way to hell to be tormented forever. I want to remem-

ber always what God has done for me.

Forgetting what God has done for you is possible, and the temptation to slack off in your prayer life comes when things go well. When you are not going through a severe battle, it is a real temptation to lay aside the Book and only pick it up when it is time to go to church again. People face many kinds of pressures today just as the people of God in this Scripture lesson faced, but the Israelites got out of order. Those who had been in a region with many blessings soon discovered that God began to withhold those blessings.

### **How to Avoid Unnecessary Hardship**

If you read all of Amos, Chapter 4, you will find that God began to send things their way that interfered with their life of ease and security. He sent pestilence and drought to them. Verse 9 says, "I have smitten you with blasting and mildew: when your gardens and your vineyards and your fig trees and your olive trees increased, the palmerworm devoured them: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD." Had those people reacted in a positive way by repenting and returning to God, they would not have suffered greater hardship. Sometimes God sends a message and requires action in your life to start doing things differently at His bidding. Had the Israelites responded to God's dealing, they probably could have avoided much calamity. Likewise, across our land if people would respond to God when He speaks to them, they could avoid many unnecessary hardships because they failed or rejected Him.

What happened to the Israelites? The Lord gave them an option. When God started withholding the blessings, He gave them the option of getting right or suffering greater hardship. (They were no different from many people today. When God withholds blessings from people to

get their attention, they turn to something else for security.) When the land started to dry up in Bashan and the waters did not flow as freely as they once did, the cattle began to suffer. The Israelites did not return to God, but they continued to go their own way to the mountain of Samaria.

I know people who have that same mind-set. They refuse to give up their ungodly ways of living, and they will not repent of their sin and wickedness. They have found a false security by joining a denomination. Rather than yielding to God and allowing God to have His way in their hearts, they look to other things. Some people plunge into their careers as a means of security. They make a lot of money and acquire many possessions, yet they are not right with God. Some people get many new acquaintances and friends around them as a means of security. They find some group to fit in with, but unfortunately that takes them into areas they would have never dreamed of going. They end up in all kinds of ungodly lifestyles because they longed to find security. People who know better have picked up the cigarette habit and drank alcohol just to fit in. Instead of turning to God, they become stubborn and hardheaded, and then they get hard-hearted.

### **How Is Your Spiritual Growth?**

God, in His love and mercy, rather than destroying people, will withhold blessings. He will start to take away their joy and prosperity and will prick their hearts. Instead of saying, "Lord, I realize what is taking place, and I know there is a need in my life. I am going to settle it with You," they run to the mountain of Samaria or another means of security. That is what occurred with the Israelites. God pleaded with those people and reminded them of His mercies and pleas. It finally came to the place where God said, in so many words, "I have warned you and tried to get your attention. Now

the time has come for you to prepare to meet thy God."

Dear one, God wants you to move closer to Him. He is interested in seeing spiritual growth in His people. He did not save you so that you could sit back and do nothing. He saved you to labor in His kingdom. In comparison, every employer wants to see growth in his employees. He does not want to have to train them indefinitely. He is interested in seeing them begin to take hold of tasks and become leaders who can carry on the work. Likewise, God is interested in having people who can carry on His great work. If there was ever a time when there was a famine of Truth in our land, it is today. God needs faithful individuals to witness to this lost and dying world. If you are not willing to grow, then you will eventually have to go. God wants people who are on fire spiritually.

Lukewarmness causes people to be a reproach. As a saint of God, you ought to be on fire for the Lord. I do not mean for only a few minutes in a service or for only a week at a camp meeting. People ought to get fired up and stay on fire. God is looking for spiritual growth.

Our Scripture lesson states in verse 12, "Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel: and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel." The most important and the most serious thing you can do in life is to prepare to meet God. Some people have not been as fortunate as you are. Some have already fallen by the wayside or have passed into eternity. Many people no longer have an opportunity to get right with God.

Some time ago I attended the funeral of a young man who worked for me in the past. He was only in his twenties. He was very bright, very talented, and a very hard worker, but he made some very bad decisions and departed from this world unsaved. He chose to use drugs and died of an overdose. Many others have settled their fate and will never have another

opportunity to repent. The devil has always used tactics to cause people to delay seeking God until it is too late. It is very crucial that you prepare to meet God now. Do not wait for a future time to attend to this important matter in your life. You ought to take care of this business now, while you have an opportunity.

### **The Importance of Making Preparations Now**

The starting place for preparing to meet God is to confess and forsake all sin. You do not have to confess your sins to a man, but you must confess them to God, and then forsake them. Some people do not have any problem confessing, but they do not want to forsake their sins. Those things that you are doing that you know are wrong need to be confessed to God. You need to be honest with God and forsake those wrongdoings. You must abandon everything contrary to sound doctrine and godly principles. This is the first step in preparing to meet God. The Hebrew writer said in Hebrews 12:1 to "lay aside every weight." Some things are not expedient, or profitable, for your spiritual well being. If something is unprofitable for your spiritual growth, you need to lay it aside.

In preparing to meet God, you must forsake your ways and your thoughts. Too often people want to have their own way, and the minute they do not get their own way, they start causing problems. We each must do a certain amount of giving to function together and to get along. I am not talking about sinful compromise, but just as a couple must do in a good marriage, we all have to give in a little. If you think you must have your own way all the time in your marriage, your home will be on the rocks rather than on the Rock.

Those whom the Spirit of God leads are the children of God. What a serious preparation to prepare to meet God! The reason it is so serious

is that once death overtakes you, you will not have an opportunity to go back and change things. It is very important that you take care of making preparation now. Also, you must keep a watch on your life. God wants you to have a good testimony and to set a good example.

What would your neighbors say if someone were to call them and ask about you? What would your co-workers say if someone were to ask about you? You need to guard all areas of your life. In preparing to meet God, do not let anything be left undone. Do not leave behind an unfinished task. When you realize that you need to take care of something, God will help you, and He will provide an opportunity. The devil will tell you that people will laugh at you or mock you. You need to realize that the devil is a liar. No true child of God will laugh and make fun of you or mock you for tending to something in your life that needs attention.

In preparing to meet God, many areas need to be covered. Certainly, it starts with being born again and turning from your sins and letting God have control of your life, but it does not end there. As you walk with God, you must forgive those who have wronged you. That may be a little hard for you, but Jesus did it. He will give you the power to do it. Beyond forgiving others, you must make restitution for the wrongs you have done. Now, some people have done so many things that they could never remember all of them, but the Spirit of God will direct you.

The individuals in our Scripture lesson did not totally reject God. If you read down through the chapter, you will find that they engaged in some religious activities. They went to Bethel and were seen at Gilgal. They offered some sacrifices, and they did tithe. However, they did not do those things as God would have had them to. That is how many people are today. They are happy with merely a form of religion, and they allow the devil to hinder them

from going all the way with God.

Dear one, you need to make sure that you do what needs to be done in preparing to meet God. Should you discover through the Spirit of

God and His faithfulness that you have a need in your life, that things are not really as they should be, you need to take care of those things. You need to prepare to meet God; be

ready to meet Him. What peace and joy and what a relief to know that you are ready!

(Cassette 5456M)

*[Spec. for Young People—contin. from page 15]*

He wanted only to get away from them all, to return home and hear his father pray again.

He could stand his worldly friends no longer. Slipping out unnoticed by others, he made his way to his lonely room. He determined to hurriedly pack his clothing and start that night for home.

"But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him" (Luke 15:20). What rejoicing there was in the Miller home that beautiful Easter day! For it was Easter Sunday when John returned, and Lily's birthday.

The little church at the crossroads was decorated for the Easter services. Beautiful white Easter lilies bowed their waxen heads from the rostrum. Lily was there too. She had been carried in by big brother John.

The minister read his text: "He is not here, but is risen." As he told the story of the Resurrection of our

blessed Savior, John's heart ached with the glory of it. This glorious Gospel a thing for sissies? No, it was for real men, and with the help of the Father and His Son, John would fit himself for the humble service of the Man of Galilee.

As the invitation was given to sinners to come to Christ, a young man, tall, broad-shouldered, brown curly hair on a head that was uplifted, made his way to the altar and knelt and gave his life, his all to Christ. Buried with Christ, yes, but raised again in newness of life, John Miller was born again.

I cannot describe to you the joy that swept over frail little Lily. I can only tell you that she seemed to be carried away to another world.

John looked forward to the time when he would be out spreading the Gospel. What a power for God he would be!

One day in the late fall little Lily slipped away to be with her Lord. No, we did not grieve for her. We were lonely, it is true, but we knew

she was where there was no pain and suffering, and we were thankful. Her childish prayers of simple faith, I believe, led her brother to Christ. She would never have been able to go to the mission fields, but John could and would. Then I, too, was to return to my field of labor.

My health had improved wonderfully, and spiritually I was stronger. I was anxious to be in service again for Jesus.

There was one thing I was taking with me that some people thought I was foolish to bother with. This was a pair of little slender crutches—Lily's crutches, yet I could not give them up. I wanted them so much, for amid the trials and disappointments that would come to me I knew they would speak to me clearly of that brave little soldier that had fought so gallantly and so well.

Edna Lohr

**The Word is solemn—don't TRIFLE;  
The task is difficult—don't RELAX;  
The opportunity is brief—don't DELAY;  
The path is narrow—don't WANDER;  
The prize is glorious—don't FAINT.**

# 2006 Kenya Trip Report

We recently had the privilege of going to Kenya again to visit and encourage the saints and to attend the 2006 camp meeting. We left Newark, Ohio, November 30, 2006, and arrived in Nairobi, Kenya, December 1, 2006.

Before the camp meeting began, we visited and worshiped with the saints in the surrounding areas. We went to Kianyaga, Mwea, and Baricho. In each congregation we were blessed to see the work of God prospering. December 5, 2006, we traveled to the airport in Nairobi to pick up Brother David Stegmeier, Brother Jeremy Boyd, and Brother Roger Boyd (Brother Jeremy's father), who were arriving from Canby, Oregon, to help in the camp meeting.

The first service of the camp meeting began December 6, 2006, at 10:30 a.m. Brother Stegmeier preached each service except for the Thursday afternoon service, when Brother Jeremy Boyd spoke. Brother Stegmeier preached a series of messages on the seven church ages. The people were very attentive. Although Brother Stegmeier brought forth teaching messages, God's Spirit moved upon hearts, and many people went to the altar every service. People from all over Kenya attended this meeting.

Every afternoon we held a children's service outside the building with singing, a Bible lesson, and a craft. Seventy-five to eighty children attended daily. The children sang in the Saturday and Sunday morning services. We had song practice with the young people every day after the afternoon services. Brother Stegmeier, Brother Jeremy Boyd, and Sister Jill Romine taught the young people several songs in the English language. They also sang in the Saturday morning

service. On the last day, the whole congregation sang, "Praise Ye the Lord, Hallelujah!" They really enjoyed it. Brother Roger Boyd gave a very good testimony in one of the camp meeting services, and it truly blessed the people!

Friday, December 8, Brother Stegmeier spoke to the pastors and admonished them concerning how they should conduct themselves, setting an example, and working to help support their families. It was very good, and the pastors told Brother Stegmeier that they would like to have heard more.

During the camp meeting, we rented a tent for the children's services and also for the people to eat in. So many people attended that they ran out of water. We had to fix the water pump, owned and used by a nearby coffee factory, to pump water from the river to the church's holding tanks. Approximately 350 to 400 people attended each day, maybe more. The building was almost completely full every day! The last Sunday of the camp meeting, only a morning service was held because many of the people had to travel a long distance home before dark.

During our trip we had several flat tires. The Lord protected and helped us each time. We had a third flat tire in a very desolate area. It was almost dark, and we were stranded. We later learned that we were at an elephant crossing. Someone stopped and gave Brother Jeremy Boyd and Brother Joseph Mbui a ride to the nearest town to get the tire fixed while the rest of us stayed with the van. It was approximately three hours before they returned, and by then it was completely dark. While we were waiting for them, a drunken man came along and said that he would protect

us. (We were not sure what he was protecting us from.) He left and returned with his bow and arrows to protect us from the elephants.

In the days following the camp meeting, we traveled many miles and met with several pastors of congregations in the surrounding areas. December 17 we arrived in Kudho Kodit in western Kenya, where there was a congregation that Brother Mbui had not met yet, so it was important that we visited that work. Brother John Ouko Ayieko, an elderly man who had built the place, has been totally blind for three years. He had been searching for someone with whom they could fellowship.

Through a young man who moved to this location to work at a new power plant, Brother Mbui has been in contact with these dear people. They have been receiving *The Gospel Trumpeter*. The pastor's wife, son, and daughter attended the camp meeting in Embu, and they greatly desired that we come and visit their place. Their son Joseph met us in a small town nearby and led us to where they live. They have a nice church building and some supplies to build a dormitory and a kitchen.

Brother John Ouko Ayieko had a vision of providing a place to hold camp meetings. He donated some land for the work of God, in addition to the church building and parsonage, which have already been built. This brother had such a sweet spirit. He shook Brother Mbui's hand and said that he recognized his voice from talking on the telephone with him. He hugged Brother Mbui and said that he felt as Elizabeth must have felt when she met Mary before John the Baptist and Jesus were born and the babe leaped in Elizabeth's womb. His spirit was leaping! He had finally found what he was looking for—the Truth!

We were able to attend a church service there in western Kenya. Brother John Ouko Ayieko led most of the singing. Brother Mbui and Brother and Sister Jan Romine sang,

"I'm So Glad," and Sister Romine sang, "The Shepherd of My Valley." Other songs were sung and the children put on a skit. Brother Jan Romine preached a message on the church, and the pastor's son Joseph interpreted. Brother John Ouko Ayieko can speak and understand English very well. Whenever his son made a mistake while interpreting,

his father corrected him. They all listened very closely to the message. The people were so happy to hear the Truth. Upon returning home, we received an encouraging letter from Brother John Ouko Ayieko's grandson, telling us that the message on the church was a great revelation to him and that he wanted to learn more about the true church.

Brother Mbui currently oversees forty-eight congregations, and the work continues to grow. There is a great need for buildings to worship in. Truly the Lord is working in Kenya. There are wonderful saints there who love the Truth!

Brother Jan and Sister Jill Romine

---

[Guest Editorial—continued from page 2]

light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Without that glorious light shining forth from the saints, those who are lost can see neither the precious Savior nor the right way to live. Therefore, many dear souls stumble through life in darkness.

Standing firm for the Truth and showing a sweet spirit in the many difficult situations and circumstances of life has a great effect on sinners and unbelievers. The saint who dares to faithfully endure severe opposition as it is hurled against him or her proves that the Bible is really true. It shows the onlooker the grace of God in powerful demonstration. It illustrates God's ability to keep a trusting child secure through the tests and trials that often befall him. Honest hearts are watching to see if Christianity really works when the pressure is applied. Often a Christian's faithful witness has been the convincing element that has won many a precious soul to the Lord. In some homes where a spouse is unsaved or backslidden, the saved companion has sometimes been able to win the unsaved to the Lord by living a godly life. A faithful witness is a good influence on that one who is out of the ark of safety.

Living the life of a Christian and being a faithful witness is pleasing to the Lord. Your life and faithfulness to

Christ and His cause will never go unnoticed or unrewarded. You may not see the fruit of your witnessing as you would like, but the Lord is keeping the record and accomplishing that which He desires. You should never be discouraged at what you see with your physical eye, but rather continue to press forward in your efforts for the Lord.

Do you remember faithful Stephen? He was just an ordinary man whom the Lord chose to wait on tables and administer to the widows and the fatherless. The Lord used this humble servant to do great things for Him and the Kingdom of God. Stephen was called upon to witness for Jesus in the midst of a crowd of unbelieving Jews. These same men were responsible for crucifying Christ. Stephen proclaimed the Word of God boldly and pointed his finger at these religious professors. In Acts 7:51 he said, "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye." Stephen's faithful witness that day made an impression on a young man named

Saul of Tarsus. Saul was saved later and became the Apostle Paul, and he was used of God in a mighty way. Oftentimes one man's faithful witness and great service for the Lord will lead another man to salvation.

Have you ever thought, "What if Stephen had not been faithful and allowed the Lord to use him to be a witness? Maybe Saul never would have been won to God. He might not have had the chance to become the mighty instrument in God's hand to win many souls to the Lord. We might not have been given the opportunity to read the letters Paul wrote in the New Testament."

What if you should fail to be faithful to God and neglect to be the witness He wants you to be? Your failure could result in some lost soul never finding his or her way to the Lord and salvation. This is a sobering thought, is it not? God is counting on each of His children to be a faithful witness. Saint, a lost and dying world is waiting for you to share what you have.

Selected

**DOUBT sees the obstacles;  
FAITH sees the way.  
DOUBT sees the darkest night;  
FAITH sees the day.  
DOUBT dreads to take a step;  
FAITH soars on high.  
DOUBT questions, "Who believes?"  
FAITH answers, "I."**

# Announcements

## MEDINA, OH

April 9-15

**REVIVAL:** Church of God, 6745 Wooster Pike, Medina, OH 44256  
Evangelist: Brother Richard Talbot, Ovapa, West Virginia  
Service times: Monday-Saturday 7:00 p.m. & Sunday 10:30 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.  
For further information contact: Pastor Daniel Webster, 92 W. Main Street, Seville, OH 44273  
Telephone: (Home) 330-435-6490 or (Church) 330-725-5993

## SUMMERSVILLE, WV

April 11-18

**REVIVAL:** The Church of God, 74 Armstrong Road, Summersville, WV 26651  
Evangelist: Brother Roger L. Decker, Newark, Ohio  
Service times: Wednesday-Friday 7:00 p.m.; Saturday 6:00 p.m.; Sunday 10:30 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.;  
Monday-Wednesday 7:00 p.m. Visit website at: [ChurchofGodSummersvilleWV.com](http://ChurchofGodSummersvilleWV.com)  
For further information contact: Pastor Earl R. Borders. Telephone: 304-872-4047

## MECHANICSBURG, IN

April 18-22

**REVIVAL:** Church of God, 9297 West US 36 (just west of Mechanicsburg, Indiana)  
Evangelist: Brother Adam Wolf, New Florence, Pennsylvania  
Service times: Wednesday-Saturday 7:00 p.m.; Sunday School 9:45 a.m.; Sunday Worship 10:30 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.  
For further information contact: Pastor Allen Polston, 2020 Ralph St., New Castle, IN 47362  
Telephone: 765-521-8284

## KENSETT, AR

April 20-22

**REVIVAL:** Kensett Church of God, 409 Southeast 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, Kensett, AR 72082  
Evangelist: Brother Roger L. Decker, Newark, Ohio  
Service times: Friday 7:00 p.m.; Saturday 6:00 p.m.; Sunday 11:00 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.  
For further information contact: Pastor Calvin Foster, Kensett, Arkansas  
Telephone: (Church) 501-742-3006 or (Home) 501-742-3961

## MT. PLEASANT, PA

April 21

**FELLOWSHIP MEETING:** The Church of God, Mt. Pleasant, PA  
Service time: 10:30 a.m. Lunch served by the congregation. MOTELS: *Holiday Inn Express*, 724-547-2095  
(This is on the same road as the church. Please mention that you are there for the church meeting.);  
*Super 8 Motel* in New Stanton, 724-925-8915 (on I-70W, 10 miles north of the church); *Melody Motor Lodge*,  
724-628-9600 (on 119N in Connellsville). For further information contact: Pastor Paul W. Prinkey,  
109 Salvation Lane, Mt. Pleasant, PA 15666. Telephone: 724-547-2151

## NEWTON, KS

April 27-29

**REVIVAL:** The Church of God, Newton, KS  
Evangelist: Brother Roger L. Decker, Newark, Ohio  
Service times: Sunday School 9:30 a.m.; Sunday Worship 10:45 a.m. & 7:00 p.m.;  
Friday-Sunday 7:00 p.m. For further information contact: Pastor Sandy Killfoil, 315 Old Main St.,  
Newton, KS 67114. Telephone: 316-842-5127

## HONDURAS

May 7-13

**CONVENTION:** Church of God, Honduras. Evangelists: Brother David Stegmeier, Canby, Oregon &  
Brother Roger L. Decker, Newark, Ohio. For further information contact: Pastor Esau Brooks.  
Telephone: (Honduras) 011-504-451-514 or (Grand Cayman) 1-345-947-2114



## Church of God Radio Program

Join us each Sunday @ 5:05-5:20 p.m.

WOSM I03.1 FM, a 100,000 Watt Station, broadcasting from Ocean Springs, Mississippi

Tune in weekly to hear Brother Larry Dishman as he preaches  
an inspiring message from God's Word.

Postman send form 3579 to:

# *The Gospel Trumpeter*

675 N. Cedar Street  
Newark, Ohio 43055 U.S.A.

PERIODICAL POSTAGE  
PAID AT THE POST OFFICE  
IN NEWARK, OH 43055  
USPS # 871620

**REQUEST FOR NEW SUBSCRIPTION, CHANGE OF  
ADDRESS, OR CANCELLATION**

**NEW SUBSCRIPTION:** To receive *The Gospel Trumpeter*, we need your complete name and mailing address, including country.

**CHANGE OF ADDRESS:** If you have moved or if your name or address is incorrect, please notify us as soon as possible.

**NOTICE OF CANCELLATION:** If you no longer wish to receive *The Gospel Trumpeter*, please contact us using one of the methods below.

**YOU MAY CONTACT US BY ONE OF THE FOLLOWING METHODS:**

**Mail:** *The Gospel Trumpeter* 675 N. Cedar Street, Newark, OH 43055 USA

**E-mail:** [subscribe@gospeltrumpeter.com](mailto:subscribe@gospeltrumpeter.com)      **Telephone:** (740) 345-1312

*(Please Print or Type)*

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_

ZIP CODE: \_\_\_\_\_ COUNTRY: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please check the appropriate box below, and for changes or cancellations return this entire page with the old address.**

- Subscription     Incorrect spelling of name or address  
 Change of address     Cancellation