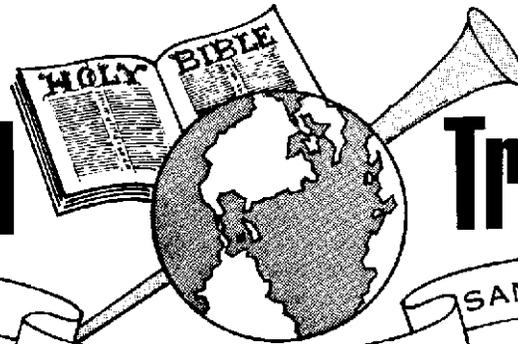


The Gospel



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. 32:39

"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 Mal. 2:13

SOUNDING FORTH THE SEVENTH AND LAST TRUMPET

Vol. 39 December 2009 No. 12



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.

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

Brother Roger L. Decker Editor
Workers Too Numerous to Mention

THE CHURCH OF GOD BELIEVES IN:

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

SOME SPIRITUAL FACTS

PERTAINING TO THE CHURCH

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

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for any reason. We are not responsible for unsolicited
articles or items.

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Vol. 39 December 2009 No. 12

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some
men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not
willing that any should perish, but that all should come to
repentance."

2 Peter 3:9

DON'T BE LOST!

The loving heart of our Savior
beats in pity as He looks upon the
multitudes of lost humanity. God
sent His Son to be the ultimate
sacrifice, desiring that each and
every individual would turn to
Him in repentance. He has no
pleasure in seeing men and
women go through life being sepa-
rated from Him and then dying
lost. He has made all the neces-
sary preparation for all men to be
redeemed. What, then, would
cause a soul to go on living in sin
and refuse the pardoning love He
offers? The only conclusion is
simply that the individual is not
willing to seek the Lord. It is such
a terrible mistake for a man or a
woman to make, for there is no
need for anyone to be lost and to
spend eternity in hell.

God's power is the same today
as it has always been. He is able
and willing to save the vilest of
sinners and strong enough to
break every chain that binds the
souls of men. Regardless of the
depth you might have gone in sin,
God's arm is not too short that it
cannot reach down and lift you
out. There is a song that tells us
that He reached farther down
than we could reach up. Dear
reader, don't be lost! There is
hope for you, but you must turn
to Him in true repentance. Can
you not see His outstretched hand
beckoning you to come to Him?
You must forsake your way and
your thoughts and accept His
way. Jesus, speaking in John
6:37, tells us, ". . . him that

cometh to me I will in no wise
cast out." You need not be lost!

Every Scripture in the Word of
God that pertains to salvation is
in your favor and lets you know
that God is able, willing, and
ready to grant you full pardon for
your sins. There is no slackness
on God's part, and there is no
weakness that could prevent Him
from delivering you from sin's
awful destruction. He is able to
perform all that He has promised.
In Ephesians 3:20 we find that
God "is able to do exceeding
abundantly above all that we ask
or think, according to the power
that worketh in us." With all His
promises being "yea" and "amen,"
please note that failure to find
forgiveness is on the part of the
individual. There is no reason for
anyone to be lost!

The long-suffering, mercy, and
patience of God wait in
anticipation for each man,
woman, and child to make the
decision to surrender and serve
Him. Beware, dear one, there is
danger in procrastination! There
will be great calamity to those
who put off their soul's salvation.
Why? One never knows when
death will come and cut off all
possibility of being able to get
right with God. Remember that
every day you remain under sin's
dominion, eternal doom awaits
you. Once death overtakes you, it
will be too late then to repent.
Today is the accepted time. "Be-
hold, now is the day of salvation"

[continued on page 13]

Job 4:1 Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said,

2 If we assay to commune with thee, wilt thou be grieved? but who can withhold himself from speaking?

3 Behold, thou hast instructed

many, and thou hast strengthened the weak hands.

4 Thy words have upholden him that was falling, and thou hast strengthened the feeble knees.

5 But now it is come upon thee, and

thou faintest; it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled.

Romans 15:1 We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.



Brother Roger L. Decker

An Earmark of a Child of God

In John 13:34 Jesus said, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." We know that God's people have always been taught to love one another. Love was always commanded even under the old Law. We read in Leviticus 19:18, "Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD."

It was not a new commandment to love one another, but it was a new commandment to love as Jesus loved. John said it was a mark that

the whole world would know that you are a follower of Jesus Christ. The greatest earmark the disciples of Jesus Christ can have is having love for one another. It is a mark that even lets the Christian know that he is a child of God. This is one of the best proofs that you are His child. First John 3:14 says, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death."

Now we want to look at Paul's admonition to the elders of the church in Acts, Chapter 20. The Word of God is full of Scriptures admonishing the strong to support and uphold the weak. The weak will

always be among us. Acts 20:35 says, "I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."

The Prophet Isaiah said in Isaiah 35:3, "Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees." First Thessalonians 5:14 states, "Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men." Then, our Scripture text says in Romans 15:1, "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves."

All of us, at one time or another, have had to have help in weak areas until we were strong enough to keep the victory through Jesus Christ. No matter how strong you may feel you are now, undoubtedly there have been times in your experience when you did not think you could take another step forward, but perhaps someone said a word of encouragement to you in that hour, and you went on. Now you have victory in that area of your life. This is where love for one another has its greatest impact.

David's Covenant With Jonathan

In the Word of God you can read of some who, without the assistance of another, might not have made it. In the Old Testament you can read of Jonathan's son Mephibosheth who was destined for death if David, who was a type of Jesus Christ, had not taken him under his personal care. Have you ever read about Mephibosheth in the Bible? He was crippled as a child and considered to be helpless unless someone took care of him. We read in 2 Samuel 4:4, "And Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son that was lame of his feet. He was five years old when the tidings came of Saul and Jonathan out of Jezreel, and his nurse took him up, and fled: and it came to pass, as she made haste to flee, that he fell, and became lame. And his name was Mephibosheth."

In 2 Samuel, Chapter 9, we can read of David inquiring about this young man. Verse 1 states, "And David said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?" Jonathan and David had made a covenant between themselves, because they had a strong love for each other. Jonathan had asked David to show mercy to his house while he was alive and even after he was dead.

Jonathan recognized David as the true king of Israel, and Jonathan knew it would not be long, because of the way God had prospered

David, until David would take over the kingdom. First Samuel 20:14-17 reads: "And thou shalt not only while yet I live show me the kindness of the LORD, that I die not: But also thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house for ever: no, not when the LORD hath cut off the enemies of David every one from the face of the earth. So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, Let the LORD even require it at the hand of David's enemies. And Jonathan caused David to swear again, because he loved him: for he loved him as he loved his own soul."

Had David not shown kindness and mercy to Mephibosheth, surely Mephibosheth would not have survived, because he was weak and unable to support himself. He could not work for a living. In 2 Samuel, Chapter 9, you can read of the kindness that David extended to Jonathan's crippled son. Verses 1-7 read: "And David said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake [Saul and Jonathan had been killed, so David was inquiring about Jonathan's household]? And there was of the house of Saul a servant whose name was Ziba. And when they had called him unto David, the king said unto him, Art thou Ziba? And he said, Thy servant is he. And the king said, Is there not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may show the kindness of God unto him? And Ziba said unto the king, Jonathan hath yet a son, which is lame on his feet.

"And the king said unto him, Where is he? And Ziba said unto the king, Behold, he is in the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, in Lodebar. Then king David sent, and fetched him out of the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, from Lodebar. Now when Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, was come unto David, he fell on his face, and did reverence. And David said, Mephibosheth. And he answered, Behold thy servant! And David said unto him, Fear not: for I will surely show thee kindness for

Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father; and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually."

Sitting at the King's Table

What do we see in this? As I mentioned previously, David was a type of Jesus Christ, and this is exactly how Jesus Christ appeared to you and me. He sent the Holy Spirit and fetched us out of a life of sin, brought us to the King's house, sat us at His table, and fed us the Living Bread. Oh, what a perfect picture of how God worked with you and me! The kindness that David showed to Mephibosheth was of the highest degree; it was extraordinary kindness. Mephibosheth was the lame grandson of a dethroned king, and that king was dead.

Whenever a king was dethroned, he, his family, his in-laws, and his grandchildren were killed. Saint, you should be thankful that God reached down and lifted you out of the life of sin and brought you back to the King's house. The lame grandson was without physical strength, just as you were without strength, spiritually speaking. Romans 5:6 says, "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." God cares for the weak, the unstable, and the downtrodden. He cares for those who have many faults. God wants to make them strong and stable. He wants to cleanse them of their faults, or their human imperfections.

David had Mephibosheth fetched back to the king's house. Second Samuel 9:9-10 reads: "Then the king called to Ziba, Saul's servant, and said unto him, I have given unto thy master's son all that pertained to Saul and to all his house [in other words, he received full inheritance]. Thou therefore, and thy sons, and thy servants, shall till the land for him, and thou shalt bring in the fruits, that thy master's son may have food to eat: but Mephibosheth thy master's son shall

eat bread alway at my table. Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants." Every one of those servants were put to work to supply the needs of Mephibosheth. Likewise, God has many gifts of the Spirit to take care of you and me in the Kingdom of God.

Verses 11-13 continue: "Then said Ziba unto the king, According to all that my lord the king hath commanded his servant, so shall thy servant do. As for Mephibosheth, said the king, he shall eat at my table, as one of the king's sons. And Mephibosheth had a young son, whose name was Micha. And all that dwelt in the house of Ziba were servants unto Mephibosheth. So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem [a type of the church]: for he did eat continually at the king's table; and was lame on both his feet."

Oh, how King David took care of this poor grandson of Saul's, a young man who had been dropped by his nurse after they had heard the news about the battle. He became lame at five years of age. No doubt, he received meager fragments of what others had to offer him. His life was hopeless, but King David had made a covenant with Jonathan, just as we have a covenant with Jesus Christ. David told Ziba to fetch Mephibosheth and bring him in. What did Mephibosheth do? He fell down at David's feet. Why? He was expecting to be killed. When we came to Jesus Christ, we fell down at His feet, not deserving to live. God cares for the weak.

Christ Worked With Peter

In the New Testament do you remember one of the chief apostles by the name of Peter? Matthew 16:13-17 tells us: "When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And

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

It is interesting to note that each of the three Gospels that record this has its own version of what Peter said. Matthew recorded that Peter said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Mark wrote in Mark 8:29, "Thou art the Christ." Luke was the clearest of all. He stated in Luke 9:20 that He is "The Christ of God." With all the revelation that Peter received, a divine revelation of Jesus Christ, he still had some human faults, even after the Day of Pentecost. If those faults had not been worked on, Peter could have easily made shipwreck.

Often Peter boasted before he thought. Have you ever done that? Sometimes people put the mouth in gear before the brain is engaged. Well, Peter was a "pro" at it, so to speak. At times, he spoke before he thought, and he boasted of his own loyalty and his own commitment. He nearly lost his own life by association. Let us look at how Jesus handled him. Peter was a brother who received a divine revelation of the Christ, yet he had some human imperfections. He had some faults that Jesus had to work with continually.

Luke 22:31-34 reads: "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee [that meant more than anything else when Jesus prayed for that weak brother], that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. [What did Peter say?] And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death. [Jesus, who knows the truth and who knows all men, said] I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me."

Where would Peter have ended up had Jesus not prayed for him?

Jesus worked with Peter. He did not cast him off because he boasted in his own strength. He did not cast him off because many times he spoke before he thought. Peter had a lot of human faults that God worked with because his heart was always in the right place; he was loyal to Jesus Christ.

The Prejudice of the Jews

Now, something else was wrong with Peter: He was very prejudiced. He felt that no one but the Jew had access to God, so God prepared him for a trip to a Gentile's home. Acts 10:9-17 reads: "On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour: And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance, And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.

"And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven. Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius had made inquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate."

Before Cornelius would be welcomed into the church, Peter had to first learn a lesson. The gate was not yet opened to Cornelius. There was still much prejudice with the Jews. The strict Jews believed that God had no use for the Gentiles. Sometimes they even went as far as to say that help should not be given

to a Gentile woman in childbirth because that would bring another Gentile into the world.

Peter had to be cleansed of that prejudice before Cornelius could get in. Peter was already on the way to getting rid of some of the rigidity in which he had been brought up. Acts 9:43 tells us that he was staying with a man called "Simon a tanner." Acts 10:5 says, "And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter." A tanner worked with the dead bodies of animals; therefore, he was considered to be permanently unclean, yet Peter was staying at his house. God was already breaking down the wall of partition between them. No rigid Jew would have accepted hospitality from a tanner. No doubt, this tanner was a Christian, so Peter began to see that Christianity abolished those petty laws and taboos.

Peter said in Acts 10:34, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons." What did Peter mean? He did not have that truth before, so he learned something. This was after the Day of Pentecost. A transition period was going on, and not everyone fell in line with Christianity; therefore, much work had to be done. Many taboos and ordinances had to be brought down. Peter actually thought that God was a respecter of persons. Pentecost was to the Jew. Peter still had some humanity that he had not gotten rid of. God is so patient as He works with each of us. I am so glad that God does not give up on us. Where would we be today if He had?

Dissimulation Working Among the Jews

In Galatians 2:7-10 we read of a situation that took place: "But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:) And when

James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision. Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do."

Here was a brother who was full of the Holy Spirit. The Day of Pentecost had happened, and Peter had gone to Cornelius' house. Galatians 2:11-15 states: "But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews? We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles."

Peter went to Antioch, and at first he disregarded the old taboos and shared the common meal with the Jews and the Gentiles, not thinking anything of it. However, when certain pillars arrived of the Jewish party from Jerusalem, they used James' name and worked on Peter so much so that he got up from the common meal. The other Jews withdrew themselves also, and even Barnabas was moved. The Scripture calls it "dissimulation." What does the word *dissimulation* mean? It means "a stage player, a hypocrite, pretending to act from one's motive whereas another motive really inspires the act." This was the Apostle Peter who was involved in this.

When Peter made this move and Barnabas was carried away with it, Paul spoke with all the intensity of

which his passion and nature were capable. He saw certain things quite clearly. In both of those instances, with Paul and Jesus, the rebuke was not done to destroy Peter but to destroy the works of Satan. Both times, Peter was salvaged and the devil was put to flight. Where would the Apostle Peter have been had it not been for Jesus Christ and the Apostle Paul?

Where would we be had it not been for someone giving us good, godly counsel? Where would we be had it not been for godly pastors and spiritual people whose only concern was that we do well?

The Contention Between Paul and Barnabas

Then there was a man who turned from the heat of the battle and was the center of controversy between Paul and Barnabas. His name was John Mark. He was a kinsman to Barnabas. It caused a real problem between Paul and Barnabas. John Mark was very young, and his mother's house seemed to have been the center of the church at Jerusalem. He was the writer of the Gospel of Mark. Acts 12:12 says, "And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying."

Paul and Barnabas took John Mark with them as their helper, but he turned and went back home. The battle was raging hot. We read in Acts 13:2 that the Holy Ghost had sent them on their journey. They preached the Word of God in the synagogues, they dealt with sorcerers, and they sent judgment in the form of blindness, so that one had to be led by the hand. Acts 13:13 lets us know that John Mark left Paul and Barnabas in the heat of the battle and went back to Jerusalem.

The Scripture does not tell us the reason that John Mark left. It could have been because of the danger that he felt he was in with the two Apostles or it could have

been that he missed his mother. He was a young man. Whatever the reason, he returned home. This caused great dissension between Paul and Barnabas. Let us read about this in the Book of Acts, Chapter 15. You are going to see different gifts that these brethren had. Paul was wanting to go around and visit the different congregations where they had already been and check to see how they were doing. Verses 36-41 read: "And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do. And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark. But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work. And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus; And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God. And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches."

What do we read of between Paul and Barnabas? We read of contention, but something else also stands out. The Apostle Paul had very little patience with a quitter. His fuse was just a little short when someone departed from the missionary journey, even though John Mark was just a young man. Paul was a born adventurer and could not stay long in one place. He decided to take to the road again, but the preparations for the journey ended in a tragic breach between Paul and Barnabas.

Barnabas wanted to take John Mark, but Paul wanted nothing to do with the man who had played the deserter at Pamphylia. The Scripture tells us the contention between them was so sharp that they parted company, never to work with each other again. Now, that did not mean they left the Church of

God. They had differences of opinion, and they never again traveled together on a missionary journey. However, they both accomplished a great work for God.

It is impossible to say whether Barnabas or Paul was right, but this much is very certain: John Mark was very fortunate to have a friend like Barnabas. As far as Paul was concerned, John Mark was a deserter; he was one who did not stand. Paul considered him to be a babe in Christ, and he was a young man.

In the end Mark became a man who redeemed himself. It seems that it was the friendship of Barnabas that gave John Mark back his self-respect and made him determined to make good. It is a great thing for a man to have someone who believes in him. Barnabas believed in John Mark, and in the end John Mark justified that belief. Read what the Apostle Paul had to say about John Mark in 2 Timothy 4:11: "Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry." This was a young man who had been a deserter, but Barnabas worked with him and helped him to get established and strengthened and built up in the faith.

You Are Your Brother's Keeper

God wants to work with us. He wants to help every child of God to become established and settled. Some people have a hard time getting established and getting settled, but God will work with them. Dear one, God will work with you, and His people will work with you. A godly pastor will work with you. If you are determined to live right, God will make a way so that you can live right.

Genesis 4:5-9 reads: "But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth [or angry], and his countenance fell [it is always a telltale sign of trouble when a person's countenance falls]. And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy

countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him. And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him. And the LORD said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?" This question was sent straight to the conscience of a murderer: "Where is Abel thy brother?" Cain responded by speaking a half truth. We cannot be around a brother all the time, but we are to protect him when we are. We are not to harm him or to knowingly let harm come to him so that he would fall. We want to do all that we can to help him when we are around him. We want to do all we can to help him not to fall back into sin or into harm's way. Maybe a brother is not dying physically as Abel was, but there are those who are weak spiritually to whom we need to reach out.

In our Scripture text Paul said we ought to bear the infirmities of the weak. It takes patience, long-suffering, and much mercy; but God has an ample supply for all. Whenever you think of reaching out to a brother who sometimes really tries your patience, let your mind go to how you tried the patience of God. Had it not been for the long-suffering of Jesus Christ, where would you be today? Sometimes it might mean giving someone money. Sometimes the weak one does not know how to handle his money, and sometimes he gets in trouble.

What would Jesus do in situations? Now, I know some people were constantly tempting Him and thought they were righteous. Instead of receiving mercy or help, they received a woe from Jesus Christ. With whom does God have the most problems? He has the most problems with religious hypocrites. May God help us to know the difference.

Romans 15:1 states, "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves." Some individuals in congregations may not measure to the Bible standard as quickly as others. May God help us to be long-suffering and patient with those individuals. Sometimes when individuals get saved, it takes a while before they understand the doctrine of modest apparel. May God help us to be there to help them to become established.

The whole family gathers around to help the newborn baby. The infant cannot walk, feed himself, change his diapers, or dress himself. The whole family stands in awe around the little baby, wanting to help. As the church, we need to reach out to others and help them. Think of Mephibosheth. He might have perished had David not reached out to him. Think of Peter and John Mark in the Word of God. They might have come tumbling down and crashed in their Christian

experiences had someone not been there to reach out to them. As much as we exalt Peter, and he needs to be exalted as an Apostle, where would he have been had Jesus not prayed for him? We ought to bear the infirmities of the weak. May God help us to reach out and do all that we can to strengthen others and help them to become established and settled in their Christian experiences.

(Compact Disc TR-456M)



You're Invited
to . . .

Winter Bible School

Date: December 28 - 30, 2009

games

Time: 2:30 - 4:00 p.m.

singing

story

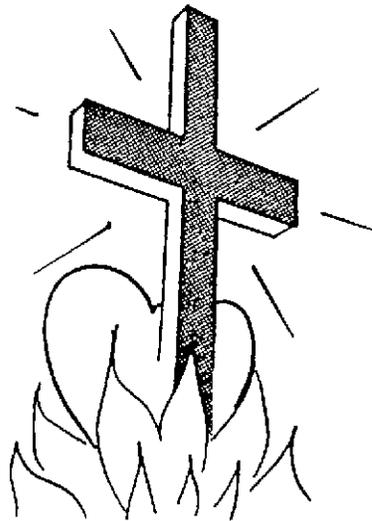
Ages: 5 - 12

crafts

Church of God, 675 N. Cedar Street, Newark, OH 43055
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Matthew 5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

A Pure Heart



Brother Aurelius Raines

Called to Be Saints

God wants to change people. He made man upright, but man sought out many inventions. God wants to straighten out what man has messed up. All we need to do is give Him a chance. Jesus came into the world to save sinners. If you ever allow your heart to be changed, you must let God know that you are a sinner. The only people whom Jesus is saving are sinners. Romans 3:23 tells us, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

At some point in our lives, each of us could testify that we were sinners, but that is not the worst kind of person to be. The worst kind of person is a sinner who will not do anything about the sin after God has made a way for him to do so. God did not force anyone to go astray, but we each went astray. He is say-

ing, "Come back, and I will pretend that you never left Me in the first place." Jesus Christ can take any sinner, even a murderer, and change him and make him a saint. No matter what you might have done, when Jesus comes into your heart, you will no longer be the same person. I am not a sinner saved by grace. I *was* a sinner, but now I am a saint because I was saved by grace. Paul wrote in Romans 1:7 that we are "called to be saints." You can be a saint, even in the midst of this evil, perverse generation.

One of my earliest remembrances of reading the Bible was when I read Matthew, Chapter 5. This particular chapter has always held a special place in my heart. Down through the years as I have gone before God, He has opened the eyes of my understanding so that I might really see the beauty of this

message. When Jesus preached the Sermon on the Mount, He had just started His earthly ministry. Prior to this chapter, you can read of His being baptized by John the Baptist, of how He went into the wilderness and was tempted of the devil, and of how He came out of the wilderness and began to lay hands on people and heal them of their afflictions. Also, He brought them the message of the kingdom. He fulfilled that which was written by the prophets and "The people which sat in darkness saw great light" (Matthew 4:16).

What is so amazing about this is that the people to whom Jesus went to minister were not just every day, run-of-the-mill sinners. These were the people who were under the Law of Moses. These were the people who had been given the promises and who had the Scriptures laid out

for them. They had groups of men who were dedicated to explaining the Scriptures to them. The Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the scribes made God's Word plain to the people, yet the inspired writer made this observation: the people sat in darkness. For all the teaching of God's Word that was going forth, it did not bring light and understanding to the people until Jesus came.

The Pure in Heart Shall See God

As Jesus began to heal people and they followed Him, they went up into a mountain; then He opened His mouth and taught them. When theologians get into God's Word, they make such a big mess of it. They have all kinds of explanations of what was going on there, but I am going to tell it to you like I read it.

Matthew 5:1 says, ". . . when he was set, his disciples came unto him." The people who were in darkness saw this marvelous light and followed Him; they were the ones whom He taught. When He opened His mouth to teach them, He began with the word "Blessed." Some call this The Beatitudes, and others call it the Sermon on the Mount. I like to pay close attention to just one statement, because Jesus was letting those religious people know how to be happy in life and how to have God's favor upon them.

Matthew 5:8 says, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." If you do not have a pure heart, you will not see God. I want to enlighten you to the fact that if you cannot see God, the problem lies in your own heart.

When the Bible speaks of the heart, it is not talking about that organ in your chest that beats and pumps blood through your body. The heart that the Bible speaks of is your innermost being, the seat of your intellect. The Bible says if your heart is pure, you shall see God. So many people in the time in which we are living cannot accept and

receive the Gospel because they cannot see God. They hear the message being preached and see the message being lived, but their hearts are preventing them from seeing God.

I would also like to point out that every individual has some control over whether or not his heart is pure. Each of us makes a decision at some point in life concerning having a pure heart. When the Bible speaks of a pure heart, it is talking about a clean heart, a heart that has a single purpose, not split loyalties. A person with a pure heart is in tune with God because he wants to be, and he is willing to purge himself from everything that God reveals to him that would cause him to sin.

The True God

Today people have so many definitions of God that I feel I should take time to talk about God. When the Genesis writer said in Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," he did not have to go into a long dissertation and say, "This is what God is all about." To the writer and to the reader in those days, there was no doubt about who God is. He is the One who created everything, the One who is responsible for our being here, the One who causes the sun to rise each morning and set each evening, the One who set in order the forces of nature and keeps everything running as it should.

Folks have all kinds of gods. Paul had to acknowledge that in the Book of 1 Corinthians. I want to make it clear to you that I am not talking about Allah, Buddha, or a god of any other religion. I am speaking of the Creator of Heaven and earth. He is the true God, the God who made us what we are today in the sense of our form and our image. Some people have taken what God created and changed it a little, but God did not make us to be the way some are acting. God gave each of us a choice con-

cerning what we do with the heart that He gave us.

I am talking about seeing the God that Isaiah saw. Isaiah said in Isaiah 6:1, "In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the LORD . . . high and lifted up." The Lord was not in the gutter; He was not gambling, lying, cheating, or acting ugly. He was high and lifted up! Isaiah saw the seraphims flying around, and they said "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD." He is not as these wicked folks describe Him today. They view God in their own fashion. Isaiah saw that God is holy. The Bible says when you get a pure heart, you will see God. You will see His holiness. You will see Him exalted and lifted up. You will see Him as a God who cares and as a God who can provide for your every need.

Moses had to see the real God too. He said, in so many words, "Okay, God, You want me to go down to Egypt and tell Pharaoh to let Your people go, but he is going to want to know Your name. What is Your name?" God said, "You tell him I Am sent you. Tell him that I Am that I Am. What do you need Me to do, Moses? Do you need Me to put Pharaoh in his place? I am the One who will do that. Do you need Me to make Pharaoh bow down? I am the One to do that. My name is I Am." Saint, you need to learn how to give your burdens to "I Am" instead of walking around with them.

Keep Your Heart With All Diligence

Matthew 5:8 says, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." I am convinced that it is possible for each individual to have the say over the type of heart he or she has. In Jeremiah 17:9 Jeremiah cried out on one occasion that "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" Jeremiah was talking about the unregenerated heart.

The Proverb writer instructed in Proverbs 4:23, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the

issues of life." The fact that he tells you to keep your heart lets you know that *you* have the ability to keep it. You must keep it from anything that is unlike God. You must keep your heart from anything that does not portray the holiness of God. He said to keep your heart "with all diligence," meaning that you should make that your top priority and not allow anything in your heart that might defile you and cause you to change your mind or cause you not to see the Holy God. The Proverb writer went on to say that out of the heart are the issues of life. Therefore, if you keep your heart and pay attention to what comes out of your heart, you can know that you have a clean heart, or a pure heart.

You have the ability to watch what you are going to accept. I put out this warning to you: You cannot do anything about some things that are going on in the world. You cannot stay in your house all the time. Sometimes you have to go out. Around spring and early summer, the weather changes. One brother called it "see more" weather because of the way some women start undressing themselves. If you go outside, you cannot help seeing the immodesty, but you still need to keep your heart with all diligence. You do not have to purposely set certain things before you that might change your mind. You have control over that.

The world is doing everything it can to get folks to change their hearts. Most movies have a good guy and a bad guy. They create conflict between the two, and if you are not careful, you will want the good guy to kill the bad guy. That is not keeping your heart. You do not have to submit yourself to that kind of thinking. If you are going to keep from sin, you need to stay away from Sin Avenue.

Proverbs, Chapter 1, lets you know that you do not want to go where sin is. I am trying to show you how serious keeping your heart really is. If you are not careful, you

could let what happens on your job, in your home, or with the people with whom you interact plant something in your heart that will prevent you from seeing the Holy God. Therefore, since you have some say about what comes into your heart, you need to diligently make sure that your heart stays clean.

Discerning Between Right and Wrong

When speaking of a pastor or an evangelist, some people say, "He is too judgmental." Friend, that is a trick of the devil. The devil wants to close the mouth of the man of God. He does not want the man of God to cry out against sin because he controls people through sin. The devil even knows a few Scriptures. He has taught people that Jesus said not to judge. If you were to read the Scriptures out of context, you would say, "Well, Jesus did say that." Upon studying the Word a little more, you will find that is really a perversion of what Jesus said. He did not say that to everyone; He said it to the hypocrites. He told the hypocrites in Matthew 7:5, "Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye." In other words, "Hypocrite, if you will straighten up, you can tell others how to get right; then you can judge."

The devil will not show people the Scripture in 1 Corinthians 6:2-3 where Paul said: "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?" The saints are going to judge angels. Peter said in 1 Peter 4:17, "Judgment must begin at the house of God." All judging is discerning between what is right and what is wrong. It is not based on how I feel; it is based on what God says. If I tell someone who is a liar, "If you do not repent, you are going to hell," I am not

judging that person; I am just reporting what God said. Even if I do not report it, all liars are still going to the lake that burns with fire and brimstone. I did not say that, God did. A person knows whether or not he has told a lie.

In Mark 7:18-23 you can learn something about the heart. Some folks may say, "You don't know what is in a person's heart." I might not know when I first meet that person, but if I keep company with him long enough, I will know. My wife and I have been together for more than thirty years, so we know each other well. She knows what I dislike, and I know what she dislikes, because we have been around each other. Now, I have never met you, and I may do something that offends you, not because I am mean, but because I did not know it was offensive to you. If I were to get to know you, then I could say, "Oh, I can't do that because it is offensive to him." Jesus taught that if you get to know someone, you can know what is in that person's heart. Jesus said in verse 20, "That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man."

Walking in the Flesh

Galatians 5:19 says, "Now the works of the flesh are manifest. . . ." I can know who is walking in the flesh and who is walking in the Spirit by being around them for a while. If they are walking after the flesh, I know those works came out of their hearts.

In 1 Samuel, Chapter 16, God said, in so many words, "I do not judge the way you judge. You look on the outward appearance, but I look on the heart." Some people say, "You cannot look at the heart." Nevertheless, I can know what is in your heart by the things you say and do.

Jesus said in Mark 7:21, "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts. . . ." If you speak an evil thought, it comes out of your heart. If you were to keep company with me with an evil

thought in your heart and not say anything, I may not know about it, so I could not make any judgment. However, the moment you let that evil thought come out of your mouth and I hear it, then I would know exactly where it came from.

Adultery comes from the heart. You may say, "I am a good person, but I am a man and I slip up now and then." It comes out of your heart. Fornication comes out of the heart. The devil is trying to trick young people today. Young folks talk about different types of virgins. First Corinthians 7:2 reads, "Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband." It does not say anything about a boyfriend or a girlfriend.

If you are not married, you have no right to undress before your boyfriend or girlfriend. Many are afraid to talk about these things, but the devil is not, and young people are getting confused. A few years ago, our former president did something in the White House and tried to say that it was not sex, but it was. I do not mean to be disrespectful, but someone needs to cry out against these evil things. That stuff is coming out of the heart. As long as it is coming out of the heart, you will not see God.

Mark 7:21-23 continues, ". . . adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man." If I see any of these evil things coming out of you, I know the problem comes from your heart. I am not lying about you when I say the evil is in your heart, because that is where it comes from. God's Word states in Matthew 5:8, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." The reason many folks cannot see God is that these things are in their hearts.

A New Heart and a New Spirit

What happens if you become

tired of letting these things in your heart control you and you want to see God? This is not talking about dying and going to Heaven before you can see God. This is speaking of seeing God right now. What if you want to see God right now? Ezekiel said in Ezekiel 36:25, pointing to the Gospel Day, "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, [Do you mop a dirty kitchen floor with dirty water? No, you have to get clean water to get a dirty floor clean. The clean water spoken of here is God's Word.] and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you." You can make up your mind that you do not want evil things in your heart anymore, and then turn to God and say: "Lord, cleanse me. I want a clean heart. I want to see You." God will sprinkle clean water on everyone who wants a clean heart.

The wise man said he went to a place where there should have been righteousness, but he found wickedness. Hypocrites do not want to straighten up and repent. I am concerned about the folks who want to get right and who want to see God just before they die. If you should die and your heart is not clean, you really will not want to see Him. God set this thing up so that you can see Him now.

My mother had six boys. There is just something about boys; they find trouble to get into. Before my mom would leave the house to go somewhere, she would give us a list of things to do before she returned. She would say, "These things had better be done when I get back." Boys will be boys, so we figured that our parents were going to such and such a place, and it would take them so long to drive there, so long to do what they were going to do, and so long to return. We would plan to take care of the list in the last thirty minutes of the time we thought we had.

Sometimes my parents did not follow the plan. If Mom came back and we had everything done, it did not matter that we had spent most of

the time playing outside. She did not have an argument against us. She was just smarter the next time and gave us more to do. On the other hand, when Mom showed up and we had not finished what she said to do, then we were in trouble. Likewise, when you go into eternity, if you have done what God told you to do, He will say, "Well done. I'm glad to see you." On the other hand, if you have not done what God told you to do, you will not be happy.

Ezekiel 36:26-27 reads: "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: [This is foolproof. After the Lord cleaned me up, He gave me a new heart and a new spirit. That old hateful, mean spirit was gone. He gave me a spirit like His Spirit. Then, once I had a clean spirit, my spirit could connect with the Holy Spirit, and I was able to see God. With my new heart I could do what He wanted me to do.] and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh [He will take away the hard heart and give you a soft heart that can be impressed]. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them."

Do You Want a Clean Heart?

God will give you a new heart and a new spirit, and it will cause you to do what God wants you to do. God will give you what you need to enable you to walk in all His statutes and ordinances. Jesus said in Matthew 11:29-30: "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Jesus let us know that His yoke is not a heavy yoke. The devil will say: "If you get saved, how are you going to live that way? How are you going to have victory?" Jesus said He will give you what you need; just trust Him.

Jesus said in our Scripture text, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for

they shall see God." Do you want to see God? If so, you do not want to wait until you die and go into eternity. You want to get saved right now. The hardest part of being saved is making the decision to die out to self. There is something about each of us that wants to live as we please. In school they taught me that self-preservation is the first law of nature. If you can override that law and say, "I'm going to let the old man die so that the new man can live," God will bless you.

Do you know why there is so much dissatisfaction in the world today? People have not learned that bliss and happiness come from being what God would have them to be. The devil knows that if a person lives the way God made him, he

will find peace with God; therefore, the devil does everything he can to keep that one from having a pure heart, or a single heart—a heart that is not divided between loyalties, a heart that is all out for God. You can make the choice today that you will not spend another day in sin with a filthy heart.

King David cried out on one occasion because his sin was ever before him. He said in Psalm 51:10, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." Dear one, today you can cry out to God and ask Him to create a new heart within you. I ask you just to believe God. One brother has a bumper sticker on his car that reads, "Try Jesus—if you don't like Him, the devil will take you back." If you

feel a need, take it to Jesus in prayer. Do you want to be saved? I am not talking about joining a church; I am talking about joining Jesus. When you join Jesus, He will put you in the church.

As much as I love my wife, when she goes before God in eternity, she will have to answer for herself, and I will have to answer for myself. Therefore, there is no need to worry about what people will think or say. If you need to get right with God, get right with God. Would you like to have a pure heart? Would you like to see God in all His holiness? You can. May God bless you.

(Compact Disc TR-322E)

[Guest Editorial—contin. from page 2]
(2 Corinthians 6:2). "To day if ye will hear His voice, Harden not your hearts" (Hebrews 3:7-8).

The decision rests with you, dear friend. You have the God-given right to choose how you prefer to live in this life. The choice you make and the direction you take will determine where you spend eternity. To choose to continue living your own sinful, selfish, and rebellious way against God is to make a great mistake. The choice to walk contrary to God's plan and refuse His pardoning love will render you to spend eternity in the regions of the lost. This sad, deplorable end need not be. Your choice is the determining factor. Don't be lost!

One must understand that he or she cannot become a Christian or depart from sin just anytime one feels like it. If salvation is ever gained, it will be when God is ready or when He gives the invitation. John 6:44 tells us, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." The time to be saved from sin is when God calls, or when He is speaking to your heart. God speaks

through His Spirit, or through the preaching of the Gospel, and brings conviction to your heart and mind. Conviction makes you aware of your lost condition and brings the knowledge that your way of living is grieving the heart of God. Just as the prodigal son, when he realized his despicable condition and arose and went back to his father, every lost soul must do likewise. One must forsake his way and return to the Lord. There is mercy and pardon waiting for all who will come to Him.

A mistake that too many people make is trying to get saved on their own terms. Men and women seem to have the idea that they can bargain with God. They think they can dictate the terms and the conditions that must be met before they get saved: "I'll get right if You will do this or that or if You will allow me to do this or that." Friend, this will never work! Isaiah 55:7-8 informs us: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not

your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways." Your surrender to God must be unconditional.

Dear one, it is to your advantage to seek God while He may be found and while you have the opportunity. God loves you, but He is angry with sin and rebellion. In Deuteronomy 30:19 these words are penned: "I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live." It is your choice. Don't be lost!

Selected

**Life with Christ is
an endless hope;
life without Christ
is a hopeless end.**

IN MEMORIAM



Charles R. Green, Sr.

MAY 4, 1929 – AUGUST 2, 2009

On Sunday, August 2, 2009, at 9:30 a.m. (just before camp meeting service began at God's Acres), Brother Charlie Green departed from this life to enter the portals of glory. His soul began its joyful flight from his tabernacle of clay and ascended upward through the clouds to safely land in paradise. Brother Green's death was the consummation of his prolonged and declining physical health. Poor quality of life resulted in his being placed in a local health care facility, as also was his dear companion, for many months.

Brother Charles R. Green, Sr. was born May 5, 1929, into the family of the late Carl F. and Ida (Shaw) Green of Highwater, Ohio. He met his loving bride-to-be, Lois Nicholson, and they were happily joined together in holy matrimony on July 15, 1949. God blessed the home of Brother and Sister Green with sons: Charles, Lee, Steve, and William; and daughters: Christina, Melissa, Beth, Carla, and Janet, an adopted daughter.

During the early years of Brother Green's life, he devoted his time and efforts toward those things in which the natural man indulges. Pondering on spiritual things, considering godliness, and giving thought to preparation for life after death seldom crossed his mind. Seeking the temporal pleasures of life, involvement in sports, and making money was his priority. After retiring from a local manufacturing company, Brother Charlie became

deeply involved with several business ventures. Enthusiastically, he worked at such things as grocery, trucking, owning and operating a doughnut shop and a pizza shop, then finally, a farmer's market.

One day while traveling down life's busy highway, Brother Green began to feel some heavenly tugs that urged him to ponder and give heed to spiritual things. Old-time conviction began to work upon his heart and mind in a heavy way. Brother Charlie attended a revival at Carrollton, Ohio, in 1981. During this meeting, the Lord truly got hold of his tender heart. A brother explained the things of God to him, helping him to see the need in his soul. Brother Green fully surrendered his heart to God, repented of his sins, and was gloriously saved. God placed him in the body and prepared Brother Charlie for service. What a difference salvation made in this man who at one time was bound in sin and bound with the cares of life! Brother Green became a new creature in Christ; old sinful things passed away and all things became new, just as the Apostle told us in 2 Corinthians 5:17.

As Brother Green began to grow and mature in the things of God, he was not content to sit back and do nothing. Being the industrious man that he was, God impressed him to become involved with visitation when under the late Brother E. A. Wilson's ministry. Brother Green soon became very effective in his duties of visiting the sick, the shut-ins, and people who were lost or backslidden. He showed a real love and concern for those who were needy in soul or body.

As he successfully performed the duties in this active visitation program, He felt an urging to commit his life and efforts more deeply to the ministry. However, Brother Green felt that at his age, he would be unable to do the work that God was leading him to do. His son Lee told him that if the Lord was calling him into the ministry, God would help him to accomplish the task. In 1983, the Lord called Brother and Sister Green to pastor a Church of God congregation in Ashland, Kentucky, and later in Huntsville, Alabama. As they faithfully labored for the Lord, many souls were won to Christ and to the Truth.

When Brother and Sister Green finished their work of pastoring on the field, they returned to Newark to resume laboring in the local congregation. Working closely with Pastor Roger Decker, he was called on various occasions to preach a message. Being one of the main helpers, he was often left in charge of the services while Brother Decker was away or holding a revival. The pastor was comfortable with Brother Green and was confident that all would be well while he was away. Brother Green always kept in close contact with anyone who was missing from the services, bringing it to Brother Decker's attention. He was also quick to follow up with new converts, checking to see how they were getting along and always ready to encourage and help as much as possible. Brother Green was like a right arm to the pastor, which Brother Decker greatly appreciated.

Brother Green has now completed his course; his life's race is finished. The labor and toil of the day, the burdens and trials of life, the sorrows, the heartaches, and the disappointments are all past for him. He has passed on into the final phase of God's great plan called eternity. Brother Green can say with the Apostle Paul, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day . . ." (2 Timothy 4:7-8).

A memorial service for Brother Charles R. Green was held during the August camp meeting in the tabernacle of the Church of God at God's Acres. Pastor Roger Decker officiated the service, using the words found in 2 Samuel 3:38 as a text. It reads, "Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel?" Brother Decker considered Brother Green to be a true brother and a loyal friend, whom he cherished very dearly. Our dear brother will surely be missed by many who knew and loved him.

We trust that the Lord will comfort and be especially near and dear to his wife, Sister Lois Green. Also, we pray that God will be a help and strength to his children and grandchildren in the days to come.

Exodus 19:19 *And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice.*

20 *And the LORD came down upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount: and the LORD called Moses up to the top of the mount; and Moses went up.*

21 *And the LORD said unto Moses, Go down, charge the people, lest they break through unto the LORD to gaze, and many of them perish.*

22 *And let the priests also, which come near to the LORD, sanctify themselves, lest the LORD break forth upon them.*

23 *And Moses said unto the LORD,*

The people cannot come up to mount Sinai: for thou chargedst us, saying, Set bounds about the mount, and sanctify it.

24 *And the LORD said unto him, Away, get thee down, and thou shalt come up, thou, and Aaron with thee: but let not the priests and the people break through to come up unto the LORD, lest he break forth upon them.*

25 *So Moses went down unto the people, and spake unto them.*

Exodus 20:1 *And God spake all these words, saying,*

2 *I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.*

3 *Thou shalt have no other gods before me.*

4 *Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth:*

5 *Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;*

6 *And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.*



First Place Belongs to God

Brother Esau Brooks

A Work of Preparation

The world may modernize and conveniences may improve, but when it comes to God, He does not change. He remains the same, and the best thing about it is that the salvation that worked in the apostolic days is the salvation that will work today in the lives of individuals.

No matter how much wickedness is widespread in the land today and no matter how much illegal

drugs are being sold on the streets of our cities, God's salvation will still work today. The secret is to keep our hands in the hands of the Lord.

Oh, that we as a generation could discover what all there is in serving God! Serving God encompasses more than just going to church. It is more than belonging to a church and merely having a profession of religion. Serving God takes in discovering the joy and the happiness that really exist in the things of God. I had the privilege of

being saved when I was a youth. I had the privilege of having the Lord with me all through the changeable years of my life. It really pays to serve God.

There is reality in salvation. It does not just exist in the head. It is not an imaginary affair. It is affective and effective: it affects and it will effect. Oh, that people would see the need of making more room for God in their lives.

The reason that people are growing so skeptical and so cynical

when it comes to the things of God is that they have come to regard it as an emotional affair. Men have yet to see in our times what great things God can do for man. May the Lord constrain us not to be satisfied, but to persist until we know what serving God is all about.

Our Scripture text is very instructive. These precious words of truth are sobering and very inspiring. What we are being faced with is a work of preparation, to personally direct us by His divine requirements, just as God planned to meet those people of that time.

The thought of first place belonging to God is gathered from verse 3 of our Scripture text, which reads, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." This is an explicit command and a divine requirement. It is as much a requirement in our modern age as it was back then, regardless of how many people are ignoring and disregarding it and believing that anything goes. The requirement in this verse still stands.

I want you to notice the work of preparation that God required before the people were introduced to Him. First, the mountain had to be set apart. God mentioned to them in Exodus 19:13, "There shall not an hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether it be beast or man, it shall not live: when the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount."

In verse 22 of our Scripture lesson God said, "And let the priests also, which come near to the LORD, sanctify themselves, lest the LORD break forth upon them." The mountain was so set apart that God kept reminding Moses not to let the people come too close. Whether it was by curiosity or for speculative purposes, they were not to come too close.

Verses 23-24 of the Scripture text read: "And Moses said unto the LORD, The people cannot come up to mount Sinai: for thou chargedst us, saying, Set bounds about the mount, and sanctify it. And the LORD said

unto him, Away, get thee down, and thou shalt come up, thou, and Aaron, with thee: but let not the priests and the people break through to come up unto the LORD, lest he break forth upon them." This teaches us how particular God actually is. God is still the same. He wanted those people to understand His position.

God knew what He was about to do and what He was about to say. He wanted it brought forth to them by divine precepts and by example as well. They were to keep clear of that mountain. There is no doubt that it would have meant very little had this been the only mention in the Scriptures of this occurrence.

"The Mountain of the LORD'S House"

I want you to look at the writings of the great Apostle Paul to the Hebrews, for I believe he wrote it. He brought out the happenings in those verses again and updated them. Hebrews 12:18-21 reads: "For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake.)"

You do not come to that mountain in a literal sense, but you come to Mount Zion. When the Prophet Isaiah prophesied of this Gospel dispensation, he penned in Isaiah 2:1-4: "The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall come to pass in the last days, 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."

The Prophet Isaiah prophesied to the people of his time concerning the very thing that we, as a people of God, are enjoying. Whoever is not enjoying this has not yet reached it. It is time for people to wake up and make moves in that direction.

God's church stands above and beyond ordinary so-called churches. The Church of God is not just one among the many. The Church of God occupies the very place that Isaiah prophesied about when he spoke of the top of the mountain being exalted above all the hills (of sectarianism).

It hurts me as I look around and see how many are compromising their stand with God to the extent that they are making the Church of God as another church among churches when she is not. I am not talking about any denomination. I am talking about God's church. What is so outstanding about it is that when she is exalted above the hills of sectarianism, all nations will flow into her, and many people will say, "Come ye, and let us go up."

Abandoning Your Way for God's Way

Jesus characterized the church as a city set on a hill that cannot be hid. This is the church that we are to represent as the people of the Lord. If there was ever a time when a generation needed a sense of spiritual direction, it is today. In spite of the many so-called churches, denomina-

tions, and churchgoers, mankind is at as much of a loss as he has ever been and needs some sense of direction. Why? In too many cases these supposed religious organizations are failing in the purpose for which they were supposed to exist.

Time is running out. Everything from the standpoint of the Word of God is pointing toward something happening very soon. I wonder if people are able to discern what all of this means to this generation. The Apostle Paul forewarned in 1 Thessalonians 5:3 that when they say peace and safety, sudden destruction will come upon them as travail upon a woman with child, and they will not escape. Things are happening across the country today in the lives of people and in nations that should awaken every well-thinking person to the fact that we are in the very last times of the last days.

Church, we have a work to do, but so many are dragging their feet. It appears that the majority of people are satisfied to go so far and no further. They serve God to a certain extent, and then they trail off.

The Prophet Isaiah said in Isaiah 2:3 the people would come 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. . . ." Of course, with the teaching of His ways must come the abandonment of our own ways. There have never been so many different ways to serve God and worship Him that are opposed to the Word as there are today. On many street corners there are two to four different denominations, and every one of them advocate a different way to serve God. It is almost like the many brands of cereal on the supermarket shelves. You can get whatever suits you best. Many people mistakenly think that God loves variety, so He has given us the option to choose. The only bad thing about this idea is that it does not collaborate with what has been in the past.

There were religions around when Jesus was here on this earth to redeem man. There were so-called denominations and religious professors around. However, in Matthew 16:13, right in the midst of it all, Jesus stopped and asked His disciples, "Whom do men say that I . . . am?" The disciples said, in essence: "Well, the people are divided in their ideas and opinions about You. Some say that You are one of the prophets, some say that You are Elias, and others say You are Jeremias or one of the other prophets."

Then in verse 15 Jesus asked them, "But whom say ye that I am?" In verse 16 Peter spoke out and said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Jesus said in verse 17, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, But my Father which is in heaven." Peter did not come by that in one of the learning institutions of the land or at the schools of the prophets. God revealed that to him.

Complying With God's Divine Requirements

In Matthew 16:18 Jesus went on to say, "Upon this rock I will build my church." What rock was He speaking of? He was talking about the Rock whom Peter declared to be "the Son of the living God." This statement gives an understanding that the church is to stand in sharp contrast to the others. The birds have nests, the foxes have holes, but as yet the Son of man had nowhere to lay His head; then He built His church and put His head there.

Christ is the Head of the church. No amount of protesting on the part of individuals and no amount of blasting against this fact can change it. Christ is still the Head of His church. The government is still upon His shoulders. He is still in charge of setting the members in the body as it pleases Him.

No wonder the Prophet said the people would go up in the mountain

of old, to the house of the God of Jacob, and He would teach them His ways. As a generation, we are as much in need of the teachings of God along these lines as any generation that preceded us.

God's way of making a child of God is not by the practice of church joining or of signing a decision card. It is still by the way of being born again. If you are planning to make Heaven your home when this life is over, you must make sure that you are complying with God's divine requirements. Again, Isaiah 2:3 says, "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 [not a suggestion, not advice, not counsel], and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem."

The effect of this faithful laying down of God's law is found in verse 4. He said they would beat their swords into plowshares. Friend, what people are dreaming of taking place in a millennial age can be yours today! This is not a millennial prophesy. This is a prophesy of the Gospel dispensation, denoting a divine work and a divine grace wrought in the souls of individuals. He said the swords used to cut off and to cut down would be converted into plowshares, or instruments of cultivation. What he was saying is just the reverse of what people are doing today. This Word of the Lord will cultivate a desire in people's hearts and lives to glorify and please God.

The Apostle Paul stated in 1 Corinthians 1:7-9: "So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord."

Today people are making the cause of fellowship everything else

but this. Paul did not say you are going to be called to the fellowship by anything else but by Jesus Christ. Divine fellowship begins with the Lord. It does not begin with how I feel and how you feel or by how I see this and how you see it; it begins with God. When you get God, that is where it starts. That is the reason Paul said to the Ephesian brethren in Ephesians 4:3, "Endeavoring to keep [they already had it] the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." The unity of the Spirit is not something left for people to work out, fabricate, or manufacture. It is there when you get in touch with God.

Isaiah 2:4 continues, ". . . 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." Paul did not say you are come to Mount Sinai today, but you are to come to Mount Zion. That is what the church is all about. Paul characterized it as the city of the Living God.

In Matthew 16:18 Jesus said, "I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." The church is not drying up and becoming so fragile that it can be blown away into oblivion. She is very much strong and well today. God will always have a church; He will always have a people.

"Refuse Not Him That Speaketh"

In John 14:6 Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." Hebrews 12:22-25 says: ". . . unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels [Paul was not referring to Heaven here; he was still referring to the church in its earthly stage], 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, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that

of Abel. See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven."

In the Old Testament dispensation, as God began to lead His people from Egypt to Canaan, He spoke to them concerning that which He would require of them. As we stand at the beginning of our march toward Heaven, God is making known to us the same thing that He was requiring of them.

Going back to our Scripture text in Exodus, Chapter 20, God introduced Himself to those people. One point in particular is worth noticing. Although those people had seen much of the mighty works of God, they had not been formally introduced to Him. They were brought out of the land of Egypt and delivered from the Red Sea. They had seen the miracles of the water coming from the rock, they had been fed with manna from heaven, they had been sent the quails, and they had seen the pillar of fire by night and the cloud by day; yet they had not been formally introduced to God.

Could it be that the trouble with many in our world today is that they have gone through religious activities and practices, but they have not been introduced to God? I am persuaded to believe that one of the handicaps of our present generation, speaking religiously, is that too many people are going by what they have read or by what they have heard about God. You need not go very far before you will discover that. You cannot even begin to talk with some people before they tell you that they have read this or that.

The trouble with many people is that they have never really met God. Had you met the Israelites prior to this introduction, they would have said: "We know God because Moses told us about Him. Moses has given us a lot of directions from Him. We saw Moses go up on the mountain and talk with Him, and we saw the pillar of fire and the cloud." Had

they met Him? No.

In our Scripture lesson we read that God decided to make Himself known to the people. After being formally introduced, God let them know the place He was to occupy in their lives. In Exodus 20:2 of our Scripture text we read, "I am the LORD thy God." In essence, God was saying: "You have heard about Me and have seen My works, but we have never met. I am the Lord thy God, [Many people need that same kind of introduction. They talk about God, sing about Him, and profess to know Him; but have they really met Him? God did not stop there.] which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."

Verse 3 of the Scripture text states, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." In other words, God made Himself known to those people, even though, like today, people were following their own reasoning and their own beliefs. The Lord let us know that to know Him is to know His authority. God said, in essence: "I am the Lord thy God, and I am the One who brought you out of bondage. I am laying down this demand: thou shalt not have any other gods before Me. I am not going to stand for your having other gods before Me."

God brought us out of bondage. He made known not only His authority and His claim but also His demand. Verses 4-5 state: "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image . . . that is in heaven above or that is in the earth beneath. . . . Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them."

Sin and God Cannot Coexist

No one can know the Lord, who brought them out of sin and bondage, and yet remain selfish or self-centered. God must have first place or no place at all. Why is this so important? Look at what the words mean. You were never literally in the land of Egypt, but that is typical of the condition of sin. While you

were never in the house of bondage, or slavery, this term is used symbolically to represent the slavery that goes along with the life of sin.

Jesus made it plain in John 8:34 when He said, "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant [or slave] of sin." You cannot commit sin without sin reigning in your mortal body. You cannot indulge in sin without sin having dominion over you.

Paul wrote in Romans 6:1-2: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" In verse 14 Paul stated, "For sin shall not have dominion over you." This is not a new age when it comes to the things of God. Sin and God cannot coexist in one's life. This remains the same as it was.

Before God established a claim on those people, He said, in so many words, "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt and out of the house of bondage. I want no other gods in your life before Me." He established His claim based on what He had done for them, and then He made His demand.

Though this was back then, it comes with force to us from the spiritual point of view. We, too, as the people of God, were once in the land of Egypt, or in the land of sin. We, too, as a people of God, were once slaves to Satan and sin. God said that He brought us out; therefore, He made a demand. I want you to note the revelation that God gave of Himself to those people. Notice the positiveness of the statement, "I am the LORD thy God." He did not say, "I am asking to be the Lord your God." He said, "I am the LORD thy God." He left no room for misunderstanding. He is the Lord, and there remains no place for any other.

There is a tendency for this generation to disregard all of this. However, it is very needful to understand that today it is the same as it was back then. To substitute anyone or anything in God's place will prove as fatal now as it did back

then.

In verse 5 of our Scripture text God described Himself as a jealous God. That is equivalent to saying, "I am not going to put up with any nonsense. I am so jealous that I am going to visit the iniquity of the fathers, even to the third generation of those who hate Me. I will visit them with mercy, and I will show mercy on thousands of those who love Me." It is the Lord's mercy that we are not consumed.

God's Right to Rule Our Lives

We need to understand that for us to substitute anyone or anything for God or to put something in God's place is fatal. Before God made this demand, He based it on three principles. The first was the principle of creation: "I brought thee out." It was not with the help of Moses. Of course, He used Moses, but He had no help from him. He had no help from any of them, and no cooperation from any of them. The second principle was from the standpoint of redemption: He took them out of the house of bondage. The third was the principle of providence: He showed mercy to thousands of those who loved Him.

When God based His claim of those people on the principle of creation, He was letting them know they were His property. He brought them out of the land of Egypt and delivered them from bondage. We are God's property, so He owes us nothing. We owe Him everything; therefore, He has the right to rule our lives. This is based on the principle that He brought us out of sin and bondage. He has brought us out both physically and spiritually. Therefore, any loyalty that conflicts with loyalty to Him cannot be legitimate. We owe it all to Him.

God made His claim on Israel from the standpoint of redemption. It was God who delivered them from Egyptian slavery. Likewise, He freed us from the bondage of sin. The same principle that God had back then in the case of the Israelites

is the same principle that exists today when it comes to God's church. It is providence. He said that He shows mercy. It was not that the Israelites were seeking mercy; they called upon God because of their burdens, but not for mercy. However, God showed mercy to them.

No one can do for us what God has done. Our loyalty to Him should be absolute, unmixed, and unshared. To ignore this is to choose to be lost. First place belongs to God. He said, "I have brought you out of the land of Egypt, therefore, thou shalt have [here is the supreme demand] no other gods before Me." Doing so would have been asking for trouble.

Everywhere we look in these days, voices are calling for us to come. They say, "Come on over to my side." God was making an ultimate demand, and He was revealing the most fundamental truth of the universe: all false gods will disappoint, because God brought you out of the land of Egypt, or sin. He brought you from the house of bondage. No other god can do that for you. To choose other gods to put before Him can only end in disaster.

Permitting any false god to have first place in your experience will prove disappointing at the end of life's day. In order for life to be really worthwhile, you must live according to the instruction of your Creator. There is no other way for life to be worthwhile.

When you look in the commercial field, what do you see? Every convenience turned out by major corporations comes with its own manual. You have a manual for your refrigerator, for your range, for your washing machine, for your clothes dryer, for your radio, and so on. You would never buy a washing machine and get a manual for a radio; it would not be compatible. There is too much difference between the two.

You receive a manual for the washing machine to instruct you concerning how to operate it and

how to get the best service out of it. Similarly, when it comes to man, God has given us His Manual (the Bible), which teaches us how to get the best out of our lives. Going against the Word of God will prove destructive.

Refusing to Bow

Too many are imposing themselves upon themselves and disregarding God. In the end they are going to be bitterly disappointed. What did God mean when He said to put no other gods before Him? He went into detail about what He meant. He said not to bow down to them and not to serve them. This was the influence the three Hebrew boys were under. When they attended the ceremony that Nebuchadnezzar had when he set up his great image and demanded that everybody fall down and worship that image at the sound of the music, they were already there, and they decided to stand and see it through. They purposed in their hearts that they were not going to bow down to the golden image of Nebuchadnezzar, even though everyone else around them had bowed down.

When the sound of the music was made, no palm tree ever stood straighter and firmer than those three Hebrew boys stood. They refused to bend; they refused to bow. That grieved the king, so they were taken to the very mouth of the fiery furnace. They were allowed to look into that furnace. Perhaps someone told them, "This is where you are heading if you do not fall down and worship this image."

One of the Hebrew boys said, in so many words, "O king, the God that we serve is able to deliver us from that, but in case He does not see fit to deliver us, we still are not going to bow." Today there are things that people are bowing to, or giving themselves to, that they should not and need not do, because God is able to deliver. Regardless of what the circumstances or the condi-

tions might be, God is still able to deliver. I know it is easier to go with the flow and to follow the crowd, but in the end what will the reward be? God is still saying, "Thou shalt not bow."

What caused more than sixty million people to be martyred in the Dark Ages? They refused to bow. Do you know what caused Daniel to be thrown into the den of lions? He refused to bow to the king's decree. He knew when the writing was signed. He was accustomed to opening his window toward Jerusalem to pray. He could have walked into that room and closed the window and said, "Well, I don't have to open the window. God sees in secret, and He will reward me openly." Daniel threw open the window and prayed as he had done in the past.

Those people were made from different stuff than what many people today are made of. There is too much falling for everything and standing for nothing. There is too much giving in to whatever circumstance or condition comes around and pleading, "We are human." When is the grace of God going to be made manifest?

Time for a Spiritual Examination

Today many people are robbing God of His glory and praise and honor. When God said He would visit the iniquity, He was speaking of judgment, not only on us but also on our children, even to the third generation, showing how seriously He regards this crime. Many are ignorant of it and refuse to regard it, only to let their children suffer the consequences. Look at what we have on our hands today as far as young people are concerned. The rebellion, the revolting, the disregard, and the disrespect are the harvest of the seeds that were sown during the middle part of World War II when mothers left their children in the hands of babysitters and went outside the home to earn a living. So many mothers are still doing that today.

You may say, "Preacher, you don't understand. We have to do this in order to make ends meet." Many people are doing it and are not making the two ends meet. As a result, the children are brought up without an understanding of what life is all about. You could never expect a babysitter to perform the duties to your children that you should do as a mother. It is not a matter of my being against women working. I am against this idea of sowing rebellion in the minds and the hearts of children from their youth. Then when they grow up, we begin to complain about the kind of generation we have.

Once while I was in Chicago many years ago, as I listened to the radio, I was shocked and horrified to hear of some of the gang wars, fights, and killings. A mother called for prayer concerning her child. Her son had been approached about joining a gang. He refused to join them, so they just went up to him, put a revolver in his chest, and blew him away. That is commonplace today. People have gotten so used to these reports of violence that it is now as nothing, but it is going to get worse. That generation neglected their families, and now this generation is reaping the harvest. This generation is also neglecting its families. What will the harvest of this be in years to come?

When God said "no other gods," He meant that. What am I talking about? That includes the god of self-esteem, the god of popularity, and the god of indulgence in sinful pleasure. Man was created to be a worshiping creature, so when man dethrones the true God from his life, then he has to turn around and make a god of something else. As a worshiping creature, he is prone to give first place to his whims, to his wants, and to his desires. As a result, lust replaces love and greed supplants generosity in one's life. Time becomes all important, and eternity holds no significance at all.

When man dethrones God, he usually enthrones his own appetites.

Therefore, God is warning us. He is telling us in the language of His Scripture, "Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generations of them that hate me; And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments."

I want to emphasize that first place belongs to God in our lives, and He will have it no other way. He will not be satisfied with any substitution. It is time for a spiritual examination. It is time to review

matters and affairs of your standing relationship with God. You might have been doing fine up until now, but God is demanding more of this generation.

God still loves the world. He is still concerned about perishing man. He is still saying as He said to the Prophet Ezekiel in Ezekiel 33:11, "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?"

John said that if you confess your sins, He is faithful and just to forgive you. Isaiah said you must seek the Lord while He may be

found; you must call upon Him while He is near. He said in Isaiah 55:7, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

Will you make an effort to turn to the Lord if you are outside the fold of God? The Lord your God wants to bring you out of the land of Egypt and out of your house of bondage. We are praying for you. May God bless you.

(Cassette C-2069E)

2009 Oregon Camp Meeting Recordings

Message Title

Minister

The Diffusion and Extinguishing of Spiritual Light in the Gospel Day
 Salvation
 The Majestic Love of God
 What Is Hindering Your Salvation?
 Mining for Gold
 From a Place of Victory to a Place of Defeat
 Figures by Which the New Testament Church Is Represented
 Obstacles God Uses to Prevent Us From Being Lost
 How Do You React During Fiery Circumstances?
 The Definition of the Church and Its Historical Progress
 What Kind of Church Did Jesus Build?
 Supporting the Weak
 Divine Healing
 Sinning Despite God's Offered Grace

Brother David Stegmeier
 Brother Roger L. Decker
 Sister Sandy Killfoil
 Brother Roger L. Decker
 Brother Patrick Brower
 Brother Roger L. Decker
 Brother Bill Ferguson
 Brother Roger L. Decker
 Brother Irwin Seshier
 Brother David Stegmeier
 Brother Roger L. Decker
 Brother Roger L. Decker
 Brother Joseph Mbui Kibushi
 Brother Reggie Stegmeier

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Half-heartedness consists of
 serving God in such a way as
 not to offend the devil.

Acts 26:9 I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

10 Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them.

11 And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities.

12 Whereupon as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests,

13 At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me.

14 And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

15 And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou

persecutest.

16 But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee;

17 Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee,

18 To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

19 Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision:

20 But showed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.

21 For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill me.

22 Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying

none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come:

23 That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.

24 And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad.

25 But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness.

26 For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner.

27 King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest.

28 Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.

29 And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.

Almost Persuaded



Brother Larry Dishman

Guilty and Lost

The word *almost* means "very nearly but not exactly or entirely." The purpose of this message is to

show that people can be very near to the threshold of salvation, and even near Heaven, yet miss it in the end. They seem to be so near, yet they are so far away. To be almost persuaded

certainly is a very serious and critical state. It is to be near the Kingdom of God, yet not necessarily certain of a place in the kingdom.

You may ask for prayer;

Pharaoh did, but he was lost. You may hear the preaching gladly; Herod did, but he was lost. You may be like Pilate and find no fault in Jesus, yet he was lost. You may even start to leave the City of Ruin but not go far enough. Do you remember Lot's wife? You could perish on the threshold of salvation; Abner did. You may tremble when you hear the Word preached; Felix did. You may weep bitter tears, as Esau did, and still be lost. You may be like King Agrippa, who was almost persuaded to be a Christian, and then be lost.

What does it mean to be *almost persuaded*? It means that the mind has been enlightened to spiritual realities. Agrippa's mind had been enlightened. He knew something about Christ and the redemption that Christ came to bring. He was a sinner, but he understood some truths. When Paul spoke before King Agrippa, he appealed to him as an expert in all questions and customs of the Jews. He asked Agrippa the question, "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets?" Then Paul said, "I know that thou believest." The king's mind had been enlightened. When the mind is enlightened by the Word through the Spirit of God, when a sinner is made to understand what he is, what he needs, and where he needs to go to get that need met, then the first step toward salvation has been taken. I believe that Agrippa took the first step toward salvation.

The second step toward conversion is when a sinner's conscience is aroused, self-condemned, and self-convicted. I can imagine King Agrippa sitting before Paul. In my mind's eye I can see Agrippa's face pale with condemnation. Surely the tables were turned. This prisoner preacher had become a judge, and the governor was the defendant, alarmed and stricken. He acknowledged to himself that he was guilty. I believe this second step was taken by Agrippa. I believe he realized that he was guilty and lost. No doubt, he thought, "I need this Sav-

ior about whom Paul is speaking, the One whom he met on the Damascus Road when the light shined around him and he heard the Voice from Heaven."

I like Paul's testimony, because every time he gave his testimony, it got better. The first record that we have of Paul giving his testimony is in Acts, Chapter 9. He said that he was on his way to Damascus, and a light shined about him. We read in Acts 22:6, "... about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me." As Paul gave his testimony, it went from "a light" to "a great light" to "a light above the brightness of the sun."

Longing, But Failing to Give Consent

In the third step toward conversion, the heart is moved and drawn. I believe that the heart of King Agrippa was touched. I believe that he saw and felt his own guilt and felt his own misery. Friend, he had some longings because of what Paul had to say. I believe that King Agrippa had a longing to be delivered from sin and a longing to have a better life. Had his heart not been touched and drawn, I believe that he would have dismissed the Apostle Paul in anger, but he did not. He simply wanted to hear what the man of God had to say. When the heart is thus reached and impressed, there goes up from the heart unuttered yearnings for deliverance in righteousness. Surely Jesus of Nazareth was passing by Agrippa that day. While the Apostle Paul gave his testimony of where he had been and what God had done in his life, God was speaking to Agrippa through the Word and Spirit of God.

I believe that Agrippa took three steps toward conversion, but what did he lack? Another faculty must be reached: the will *must* give consent. You may know a lot about what you need to do. You may know that you are a sinner and that you are lost and on your way to a devil's hell. You may even have a

longing to be delivered from the power and the bondage of sin, but your will must give consent. God will not save an individual against his or her will.

Friend, not all people who are almost persuaded become altogether persuaded. I really believe that at this point in time in Agrippa's life, he felt that one day he would get saved. He had a longing; he wanted to get saved. He said, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." Though many people reached that point, they decline to make that final surrender. The will refuses, resists, and rebels. As long as the will does not entirely surrender, no matter what knowledge, conviction, or feelings one might have, there is no genuine conversion until a person makes up his or her mind, "I am going to pay the price no matter what others do." Until an individual comes to that point and makes the decision, "By the grace of God, I am going to repent of my sins and get saved," that person will remain in sin.

Dear one, you can be almost persuaded but lost. I do not know the heart of Agrippa. I do not know what things were going through his mind, but at least one thing appeared before him in his mind that kept him from being altogether persuaded. The devil had to bring at least one thing to his mind that kept him in his sins. When people fail to surrender to God, something stands in their way; something keeps them from saying yes to God.

Hindrances to Answering God's Call

I would like for you to consider some things that could be standing in your way. Is something in your life hindering you from getting saved? Is something hindering you from answering the call of God to be born again and to be made a new creature in Christ Jesus?

Possibly Agrippa had some friends who would have frowned on his getting saved. Maybe it was his

wife. Perhaps some other people had an influence upon him, and he felt that if he got saved, he would lose their friendship. Maybe some godless person had a fatal influence over him.

Many times people come to church and hear the Gospel, and they are much like King Agrippa in that they would like to get saved and they consider surrendering to God, but suddenly the thought comes, "What would my friends say?" They may wonder what people at work might say. Others may wonder what the husband or the wife might say, or perhaps what their boyfriend or girlfriend might say. They dread their displeasure and think they would never be able to face them again if they were to get saved. No doubt, some individuals have thought, "I am almost persuaded to be a Christian, but I am not going to yield for the sake of that individual." Oh, they know that they ought to surrender to Christ, but for the sake of certain persons, they fail to yield to God. My friend, they are under the fatal charm of evil companions, and rather than break with that individual, they beat back the hands of the Redeemer and go on in their sins and end up lost eternally.

How many people have refused to yield to the striving of God's Spirit and God's Word because they were afraid of ridicule? Many have been laughed and sneered right out of the Kingdom of God. If this is your hang-up, you would be far better off to sacrifice your friends and your relationships than to sacrifice your soul's salvation. Friend, no relationship on this earth is more valuable than your relationship with God.

Sometimes even after people get saved, they get under the fatal influences of other individuals. They get in bondage to someone, somewhere. I am reminded of Galatians 5:7, which says, "Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?" You can allow people to hinder you so that you do not obey the truth. Galatians 5:9

states, "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." My friend, do not allow anyone to keep you from being altogether persuaded to be a Christian.

Sometimes when people go to the house of God and God's Spirit is dealing with hearts, they are almost persuaded, but the devil brings up a hypocrite. He causes them to get their minds off the service and off the need of their own souls. Friend, hypocrites cannot answer for you on the Day of Judgment. The Bible reads in Romans 14:12, "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." You need to get your eyes off other people. You are not going to give an account for them, and they are not going to give an account for you. Friend, you must get your mind on your own soul and where *you* are going to spend eternity.

Let me tell you what I did. I made up my mind thirty-two years ago that I would rather go to church with hypocrites, if need be, than to go to hell with them. I would rather sit beside them in the church services every Sunday and every Wednesday night, if need be, than to go to a lost eternity. I want to encourage you not to focus on hypocrites. You ought to get your eyes on those who live right. It is deplorable, but occasionally you will find people who profess Christianity and yet act in an unchristian manner. Should you see such inconsistencies in people who profess Christianity, do not allow them to disturb you unduly. You must get your mind off them and get your mind on Jesus. A counterfeit Christian proves that there are genuine Christians.

Someone may say, "If it were not for that person, I would not have any problem getting saved." Well, if you are hiding behind that person, he or she must be closer to God than you are or you could not hide behind that one. Sinner friend, if you stumble over hypocrites and go to hell, you will never be able to climb over them to get out.

Seek Him Wholeheartedly, and You Will Find Him

King Agrippa said, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." Many times people are almost persuaded, and then the devil comes along and says: "You can't be saved. God will not save you because of that." The Bible says in Acts 10:34, "Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons."

You may say, "I am afraid that if I ask God to save me, He will not save me." Jeremiah 29:13 reads, "And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." Friend, you do not have to despair. If you will seek Him with all your heart, you will find Him. You can have a real experience with Jesus Christ. You can know that you are saved and that you have passed from death to life. The later part of 1 Chronicles 28:9 states, "If thou seek him, he will be found of thee."

I have good news for you. If you are not saved, your sins are already paid for. When Jesus said, "It is finished," and then rose from the grave on the third day, the price was paid. Everything that it takes to save you was already accomplished two thousand years ago. All you have to do to receive the pardon is repent of your sins with godly sorrow and place your faith in the Son of God, and you can experience real salvation. You can experience pardon; your sins can be washed away because He accomplished that for you two thousand years ago.

The Bible says in Romans 10:13, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Also, 2 Peter 3:9 states, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

Do you wonder what caused King Agrippa to say, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian"? Possibly, as he was almost persuaded, he was thinking in his

mind, "Well, maybe I ought to get saved." Perhaps the devil brought the thought to his mind, "You cannot live it." That is what the devil tells many people. He convinces them that they cannot live right. Friend, no one can live it in his own strength. However, if you will let God come into your heart and life, thank God you can live it! You can have victory over sin. You can have victory over the devil. You can have victory over the flesh if you will let God come into your heart and life.

Power to Live a Victorious Life

You may say, "I don't understand how salvation works." First John 4:4 says, "Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world." If you are a sinner, you do not have God on the inside. If you do not have the Holy Spirit on the inside, you are not a Christian. Therefore, when temptations come, you do not have the power to resist all those temptations. After you get saved and receive the Holy Spirit, you will have power in your life, and you will be able to say no to the devil. In Jude, verse 24 we read, "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy." After you get saved, God can keep you from falling; that is what the Word of God says.

I like what the Apostle Paul said in Galatians 2:20, which states, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Paul said it was not he who was living this life, but Christ in him.

If King Agrippa had been altogether persuaded, he could have lived this life by the power of the Holy Spirit. The Apostle Paul said in Philippians 1:6, "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." It is not the devil that begins this

work; it is God. The One who begins this work is able to perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.

The night I got saved; I did not understand everything that had happened, but the longer I have been saved, I have been finding out more and more of what happened to me that night. God did a heart transplant on me that night.

Ezekiel 36:26-27 states: "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." This greater One on the inside will cause you to live differently than you have ever lived. You can live it when God comes in and takes over.

The Christian Life Is the Best Way to Live

I will tell you what my problem was before I was saved. I thought that living as an old-time Christian would be a burden. Many folks fear the burdens that are really no burden to the true child of God. The things that you *think* would be a burden are no longer burdens when God changes you and makes you a new creature. The Bible says His commandments are not grievous.

I am not in bondage. No one is making me live the way I am living; I am free. I love this way of living! I would not trade my salvation for anything else. I enjoy being saved. I think it is a pleasure to be a Christian. I have tried the road of sin and found that its prospects all deceive. This Christian life is the best way to live. If you are unsaved, you cannot make that judgment. I know what it is to be a sinner. I know what it is to be lost, and I know what it is to be bound by the habits of life; but thank God, I am not bound anymore. I am on the other side of this. I have tasted of the Lord, and I have found that He is good and gracious and kind and loving.

Maybe Agrippa was in the middle of some decisions or in the middle of some difficulties. Perhaps while he was considering getting saved, the old devil whispered in his ear: "What are you going to do about the legal situations? What are you going to do about those problems? Agrippa, don't you think it would be wise to wait until those difficulties are worked out?" That is the way the devil works. Sin never gets better, and the devil will see to that.

Jeremiah 10:23 says, "O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." Friend, it makes no difference how great a sinner you may feel that you are, you do not have to improve yourself for God to save you. You do not have to start doing better and start proving yourself. No, you can come to God and let Him do the saving; let Him do the changing in your heart and life. The longer you continue in sin, the harder it will be to break from sin. Christ does not need your reformation to save you. Only God can regenerate your heart. Friend, He does not ask you to change yourself. If you come to Him, He will change you.

Possibly the devil whispered in Agrippa's ear as he was almost persuaded to be saved: "You have been too great a sinner. God will not save you, Agrippa." Sometimes that is what the devil says to people when they hear the Gospel, but Jesus' blood reaches deeper than the stain of sin has gone. No matter how great a sinner you may be, there is hope for you. The truth of the matter is, the Lord will save the worst person in existence if such a person will meet the conditions for salvation.

In Mark 2:17 Jesus said, "They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." If you are a sinner, no matter how deep in sin you may be, you are the very one that He came to save. No wonder Isaiah said in Isaiah 1:18, "Come

now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

Cast Off the Works of Darkness

Many times when people go to church and hear the Gospel, they are convicted and know they ought to get saved. They know that if they were to die in that condition, they would be lost eternally, yet they will not yield. I have found that many sinners are bitter over something that has happened in their lives, and they feel that they cannot let that bitterness go.

Many years ago in a revival, a certain lady came to the altar. No one persuaded her; she came on her own. She wanted to be saved. She had been abused, and she said that she wanted her abuser to burn in hell. We tried to explain that if she would turn loose of the hatred and the bitterness, God would save her. Though she had been mistreated, God could have given her a love for that individual, and she would have been able to pray that he might get saved. She battled with that. Unfortunately, she went down the aisle a sinner, and she got up from the altar a sinner. She was almost persuaded, but bitterness kept her from entering into the Kingdom of God.

You have to give up every sin to get saved, not 90 percent of them; you must give up *every* known sin to become a Christian. If you will do that, God will give you the grace to do what you need to do; He will give you the power. God's grace is sufficient for whatever you need in your life. You need to watch out for bitterness. If you are bitter toward someone, God can deliver you from that if you will come to Him.

What about King Agrippa? Possibly he thought: "How can I work God into my busy schedule? I don't have time for God. I would like to be saved, and I know I ought to be saved, but how can I work God into my schedule?" Someone may

say: "I work hard six days a week, and Sunday is my only day to rest and get caught up around the house. If I were to get saved, I would not have time to go to church." My friend, you will have to take time to die one day. Time runs out for nearly eight thousand people every hour of the day.

Sinner friend, if the devil can cheat you out of your time, he will cheat you out of your soul. When time runs out for you, you will not be able to buy back one minute, even if you were to own all the gold in the world. My friend, think about it. Romans 13:12 says, "The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light."

An Unwillingness to Give Up Sin

Many people are *almost* persuaded, especially young people. They are convicted and stirred, and God is dealing with their hearts, but they will not move because the devil says: "You are young. Why get saved at a youthful age? Wait until you get a little older." When they get middle aged, the devil will say, "Wait until you retire." Then by the time they get older, many times their hearts have become hardened and their ears have become deafened to the tender call of God's Spirit.

Ecclesiastes 12:1 states, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them." Dear one, is your heart still tender? Does God still speak to you? Do you still have conviction when you hear the Word and when the Spirit of God is working? The time to plow ground is when it is soft. Once it is frozen by winter temperatures, plowing is impossible. The time to mold concrete into desirable shapes for future usefulness is before it sets. Likewise, the time to yield your heart to God is while your heart is still tender. I beg of

you, do not wait until your soul becomes deafened to the tender call of God's Spirit.

The devil will not come to you and say: "Sign this contract stating that you will never get saved. I want you to get this settled now. Promise me and promise God that you will never get saved." No, the devil does not work that way. He just tells you not to get saved today. He is deceptive. Then if God gives you another day, the devil will say, "Don't get saved today." Friend, this is how the devil has populated hell. He knows how to lead a soul, step by step, past opportunities until one day he turns down the last opportunity to get right with God.

I ask you to think seriously. Are you almost persuaded but lost? If we could ask King Agrippa: "What was it that kept you from saying yes to God? Why did you not yield to Christ when Paul so beautifully explained the way of salvation? You were almost persuaded, but why were you not altogether persuaded?" possibly Agrippa would say, "It was due to my unwillingness to give up sin." Very often people are brought to the door of the kingdom and they are almost converted, yet they are not saved. Finally, they will be kept out of Heaven because they held on to one sin.

They have one evil practice that they love and cherish. It has wound its frightful coils so tightly about their lives that they are ready to cry out, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" They rattle the chains of their slavery. They clutch and kiss them as though they were the cords drawing them to Heaven. Then it comes time for the invitation, and the question is forced upon them. They have this certain sin. Will they give it up or hold on to it? Angels' hands are reaching down to rescue them from the power and the bondage of sin, but they beat back those hands and say, "I am almost persuaded to be a Christian, but I am going to hold on to this one sin." Oh, the power of one cherished,

unforgiven sin! It has kept millions out of Heaven who were almost persuaded to become Christians.

Your Turning Point in Life

My friend, how is it with you? It is indeed an awful thing to trifle with conviction. It is serious to be almost persuaded and then to deliberately turn your back and go back into the world. In most cases, when people do that once they have been brought to the crossroads of life and are almost persuaded, it means they deliberately walk toward hell from that day forward. How sad the results of being almost, but not entirely, converted!

If you have been in the valley of decision, you need to take that decisive step and make that final surrender. Your final decision rests upon your will. As far as we can tell from the Bible, Agrippa passed forever the favorable time of golden moments when he might have secured salvation for his soul. When a sinner is awakened and sees his past sins, if he rejects the appeal of his conscience and defers it to a more convenient opportunity, he

has no reason to expect that attention will ever again be called with deep interest to the subject. He may live, but he may live without the strivings of the Holy Spirit. When a man has once deliberately rejected the offers of mercy and trifled with the influences of God's Spirit, he has no right or reason to expect that the Spirit of God will continually speak to his heart.

Sinner friend, it is dangerous to ignore the dictates of the conscience. No doubt, King Agrippa was never this near the Kingdom of God again. The day that Paul talked to Agrippa was probably the closest he ever was to the kingdom. He probably never had that experience again. This was the turning point in Agrippa's life concerning his eternal destiny. My friend, you could be at the turning point in your life.

One can be near the Kingdom of God and yet die and be lost. A songwriter wrote:

*"Almost persuaded" now to believe;
"Almost persuaded" Christ to receive,
Seems now some soul to say,
"Go, Spirit, go thy way;
Some more convenient day*

On Thee I'll call."

*"Almost persuaded," come, come today;
"Almost persuaded," turn not away;
Jesus invites you here,
Angels are lingering near,
Prayers rise from hearts so dear,
O wanderer come.*

*"Almost persuaded," harvest is past!
"Almost persuaded," doom comes at
last!
"Almost" cannot avail,
"Almost" is but to fail!
Sad, sad, that bitter wail,
"Almost," but lost!*

To be almost persuaded is to be altogether lost. To be almost persuaded to be a Christian is like a man who was almost pardoned but was hanged. It is like a man who was almost rescued, but he was burned in the house. It is like a man who was almost saved but was damned. In 2 Corinthians 5:11 the Apostle Paul said, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." Sinner friend, it is our prayer that you will be saved today.

(Compact Disc TR-356E)

Announcements

Summersville, WV
December 11-13

REVIVAL: The Church of God, 74 Armstrong Road, Summersville, WV 26651
Evangelist: Brother Daniel Webster, Medina, Ohio
Service times: Friday 7:00 p.m.; Saturday & Sunday 10:30 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.
For further information contact: Pastor Earl R. Borders. Telephone: 304-872-4047
Visit our website at: www.ChurchofGodSummersvilleWV.com

Newark, OH
December 27-30

WINTER CAMP MEETING: The Church of God, 675 N. Cedar Street, Newark, OH 43055
Service times: Sunday-Wednesday 10:00 a.m., 3:00 p.m., and 7:00 p.m.
The first service begins Sunday morning at 10:00 a.m.
Morning prayer services. Children's services Monday-Wednesday. Heated dormitories.
Three meals served daily in the dining hall. Also, the snack stand will be open in the dining hall after each evening service. Bedding is supplied; please bring your own towels.
For lodging reservations contact Brother Dave or Sister Ruby Bush, 725 N. Cedar Street, Newark, OH 43055, or call 740-345-1213. Please make reservations in advance, if possible.
For further information contact: Pastor Roger L. Decker, 87 Decrow Ave. Newark, Ohio
Telephone: 740-344-2543

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Winter Camp Meeting

December 27-30, 2009

*Make your reservations now to come and worship
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camp meeting at God's Acres, Newark, Ohio.*

(See page 27 inside for more information.)