

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. 32:33

"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. 41 August 2011 No. 8



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?"

Spring 2011 Camp Meeting Report

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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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CONTENTS

Two Distinct Days.	3
Oregon Camp Meeting Information. 8	
The Home—Our Immediate	
Mission Field.....	9
Especially for Young People.	14
Four Things God Does Not Know. 16	
Discernment.	20
Spring 2011 Camp Meeting	
Recordings.	27

Vol. 41 August 2011 No. 8

Once again, many dear saints gathered together at the old campground in Newark, Ohio, for camp meeting. For approximately fifty-seven years, saints have come from far and near to be blessed by the preaching of God's unadulterated Word. Some of the greatest ministers have heralded the Truth from this pulpit. These wonderful grounds have been dedicated to the propagation of God's cause and His kingdom. Since the first camp meeting opened in 1955, many precious souls have been added to the Lamb's Book of Life. It is yet the desire and the purpose of the leadership to uphold the sacred Truths laid out in the Word of God. Amidst all the confusion, the strife, and the unbelief in the religious world, God still has a standard of holiness by which He requires men to live.

Beginning with the first Sunday morning of the camp meeting at 8:30 and each morning thereafter during the meeting, the saints gathered in the prayer room to seek God's direction for that day's services. Earnest prayer was surely a major factor in the success of this glorious camp meeting. The prayer room was nearly full each morning as brothers and sisters sought the Lord's help and guidance. At ten o'clock, June 19, 2011, Pastor Roger Decker opened the meeting by welcoming everyone to God's Acres.

It was surely good to see the large number of saints who attended this camp meeting. We were privileged to see saints again whom we had not seen for some time, for which we are grateful. The table was set for eight days of feasting on the good things that God had in store for us. We were able to come away from the worldly hustle and bustle to enjoy this heavenly

atmosphere. In Brother Decker's opening prayer, he thanked God for the opportunity and the privilege of meeting with God's people again. He then earnestly entreated the Lord to be the honored Guest throughout the week's meetings. For the opening song, we sang that old hymn "The Old Campground."

We find it difficult to describe all that took place in the camp meeting and all that our eyes witnessed and our hearts felt. All we can say is that it was absolutely wonderful! Only the Lord could have orchestrated such a beautiful atmosphere for us to enjoy. Repeatedly, the saints were in the aisles shouting and praising God as the singing and the preaching went forth. During one service, the song "The Love of God" was sung, and the presence of God just overwhelmed the saints. The ministry and the laity alike were expressing love and appreciation for one another. Certainly a sweet spirit of unity flowed from heart to heart. Dear one, when the Lord is satisfied with our worship, He knows how to demonstrate His approval.

Brother Decker delivered the first message of the meeting on Father's Day entitled "Characteristics of a Good Father." There were two main services each day, in the morning and in the evening, with a teaching service each afternoon. Brother Larry Dishman was the evangelist for the evening services. His anointed messages dug deeply around the saints, challenging them to have a closer walk with Christ, as well as pleading with lost souls to surrender to Jesus. Each minister who preached brought a stirring sermon for us to give serious heed. The messages dealt with unity among the brethren, salvation for the soul, peace of heart

[continued on page 13]

Luke 17:26 And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.

27 They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered

into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all.

28 Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded;

29 But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.

30 Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.

Two Distinct Days



Brother Roger L. Decker

No Time for God

Jesus mentioned two distinct days that stand out in history as well as in the Word of God. First, He mentioned Noah's day, and then He reminded us of Lot's day. We find that both days had much in common. Life was going on from day to day as normal, the sun rose and set, and the people were buying and selling, planting crops, and building houses and other buildings. Marriages were being planned and preparations were being made. The people were busy, busy, busy. They had no time for God.

Today some people feel they can

only take care of their souls or have some sort of religious activity on Sunday. They think: "After all, what does God expect? We have things to do. We have all that we can do to fit Him in on Sunday. God ought to be happy that we can even make it to church at all. Even then we should be resting. We have worked hard all week, and we were out late Saturday night. We need a day of rest, yet we have gotten up and made it to the house of God. God ought to be glad that we even made it."

In the days of Noah, he was building the ark and preaching, yet the clouds were gathering. Men were entirely given up to their pur-

suits, their pleasures, and their sins. No doubt, they argued that the sun rose yesterday and on many yesterdays; so they thought, "Of course it will rise again tomorrow." Today a sense of perfect security has taken possession of the whole race, just as in the days of Noah when the floods came and in the days of Lot when the fire and brimstone fell on the plains. So it will be on the Day of the Second Coming of Jesus. Even many religious people are caught up with everyday living, not truly being serious about their salvation.

Many people have all they can do to make it to the house of God on a special occasion or with a special

invitation. Some people only attend the house of God once a week, and they think people should applaud them because they even made it at all. They never would have made it in the morning-time church when they continued daily.

Some people look back at Noah's day and Lot's day and think they did not have anything to do, but they did. The Scripture says they built, they sold, they planted, and they married. They had lots of things going on back then, just as people do today. Even with all the modern conveniences with which God has blessed us, most people still do not have time for God. Often inventions that could be used in the right way become hindrances to people in serving God.

Holiness in the Midst of a Wicked World

In the days of Noah and Lot, when men were secure in the things of this world and filled with unbelief, they were overthrown with vengeance and wrath. It was a time when mercy stopped and the door of opportunity was shut. As the flood waters rose, the people who were next to the ark knocking on the door were just as lost as those who were afar off. Those who almost believed and those who became a little stirred in their souls when they heard Noah's preaching were just as lost as those who were not stirred at all.

Those who sit in service after service and reject God are hardening their hearts and getting further away from God instead of getting closer to Him. In the midst of a wicked world, Noah stood out, and he walked with God. He stayed true to God right in the midst of a world that was not worth saving, right in the midst of a world where holiness, godliness, and righteousness were far from the hearts of the people. God loved Noah and gave him grace. Noah pleased God. He was a man who would not give in to the pressures of sin. Oh, how that

pleases God to have somebody who will not give in to the pressures of sin.

Christian young people in the schools who refuse to give in to the pressures of sin are pleasing to God. God is pleased when He sees an individual who walks with Him even though sin is abounding all around in the workplaces, in the shopping malls, at the carnivals, and at the fairs. Noah was such a man; he walked with God, just as Adam and Eve did in the beginning, until sin abounded.

There were some things about Noah that I want you to consider. We read in Genesis 6:8-9: "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD. These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God." Noah was obedient to God. In verse 14 God said, "Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch." Verse 22 says, "Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he."

Genesis 7:5 reads, "And Noah did according unto all that the LORD commanded him." Noah did everything that God said to do; therefore, he was remembered by the Lord. Genesis 8:1 tells us, "And God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that was with him in the ark: and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters asswaged." God remembered Noah, and God will remember you, saint of God. If you will live right, be obedient, and refuse to touch sin, God will remember you right in the heat of the trial and the adversity. God will not forget you. Young person, when others laugh at you and try to mock you because of your stand for God, if you will stand true to God, He will remember you.

By faith, Noah worked out his salvation. He was a preacher of righteousness, and God honored Him with an everlasting covenant. God was very pleased with Noah. Genesis 8:20 says, "And Noah builded an

altar unto the LORD; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar."

Being Fully Obedient to God

We read in Genesis 6:1-2: "And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose."

Dear one, it is very important to marry right. You need to get direction from God. You should not follow your eyesight. Beauty is vain, and after a while beauty begins to fade. You need to get direction from God. You should not marry somebody you choose. You need to get the mind of God. As a Christian, you should marry someone who is interested in the things of God, just as you are. You should not marry out of the will of God. If you marry out of the will of God, you will have things in your home that you should not have. You may even start doing things that you should not do, going places where you should not go, and dressing in a way that you should not dress.

Again, I want to stress that it is important to marry in the Lord. You need to marry someone who has the same interests that you have. Also, you need to marry someone with whom you feel freedom to pray. You should not marry someone with whom you do not feel free to serve God. Do not marry someone who would feel ashamed to bow his or her head in prayer sitting in a restaurant.

In our Scripture text, sin multiplied to the place where God said the world was not fit to exist any longer. The people were not fit to exist. The very thoughts of their hearts were evil continually. Their imaginations and their thoughts were as one continual cesspool. Sin was very great in that day.

The Bible says Noah moved

with fear, and he did *all* that God commanded him to do. He blazed the Gospel for at least one hundred twenty years and had no new converts. That is something, is it not? No one except his family went into the ark. In the midst of all that unbelief, he stayed true to God. The Bible tells us in Hebrews 11:7, "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." How did Noah condemn the world? He moved by faith and obeyed God.

If you live right, you will condemn the world. Also, if you live right, you will not look at filthy magazines or filthy movies. You will act right and do what is right. God is interested in how you live. Noah condemned the world by living right. He was a perfect man in his generation. That is what God is looking for in you. He is not looking for a Bible scholar who is not living right. He is not looking for someone who can take the Hebrew and the Greek and translate them into English. He is looking for those who will live right, act right, and stay true to God, even with unbelief all around. God is looking down among the millions of people to see if there is one man or one woman who will serve Him. Noah was a man who had fellowship with God. He talked to God and walked with God. He got his instructions from God, and he made his decisions according to the will of God. He was fully obedient to God.

Making Carnal-Minded Choices

I want you to consider another distinct day in the Bible and in history. The Word of God speaks of Lot's day. We find in Genesis, Chapter 13, the starting point of Lot's trip to Sodom. Dear one, if you are not truly sold out to God, you could very easily end up in "Sodom," the city of the lost, the city upon which

God is going to take vengeance.

Genesis 13:1-13 states: "And Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south. And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold. [According to the Word of God, you can be rich as long as you keep God first and use those blessings to serve God. Abram was rich. Many men throughout the Word of God were rich. God took care of their needs, and God gave them an abundance of wealth. King Solomon was very wealthy. He did not ask for wealth. He only asked for wisdom, so God blessed him with wisdom and wealth.] And he went on his journeys from the south even to Bethel, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Hai; Unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first: and there Abram called on the name of the LORD.

"And Lot also, which went with Abram [it does not say that Lot called on the name of the Lord; it says Lot went with Abram], had flocks, and herds, and tents. And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together. And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle: and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land [no doubt, the strife was over where the cattle were going to feed and some cattle mixing in with other cattle, so strife broke out].

"And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.

"And Lot lifted up his eyes [not his voice, but his eyes], and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before

the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar. Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other. Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom. But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly."

We find in this Scripture that Abraham, or Abram as it reads here, was a man of faith, and he kept up his devotions to God. Lot was his nephew, and he went along with Abraham. We do not read that Lot was a worshiper of the Lord, as was Abraham. Yet God blessed Lot as well as Abraham. Their flocks increased until the land was unable to bear them both. This caused strife to break out between the herdsmen of Abraham's cattle and the herdsmen of Lot's cattle. Therefore, Abraham said to Lot, "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee . . . for we be brethren" (verse 8). Abraham gave Lot a chance to choose which way he wanted to go first, and Abraham chose to go the opposite way.

There was something wrong here. Lot should have given his uncle the first choice, saying, "Abraham, you choose first, and I will take the opposite way." Verse 10 says, "Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan." The plain was well watered; therefore, it was a great place for raising livestock. It had all the things a herdsman would look for in land. In verses 11-12 we read that Lot chose "all the plain of Jordan," and he "dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom."

What dwelled in Sodom? What made it different from any other city? It was a city that was already under the wrath of God. There in Sodom dwelled Great wickedness Verse 13 reads, "But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly."

Committing sin was commonplace in Sodom.

What does that have to do with you today? You need to live close to God and keep up your devotions and be faithful in your worship or you are going to make a wrong choice that could affect the rest of your life. People are making wrong choices today. You need to be careful, husband and wife, of making a choice that could affect your children for the rest of their lives. You need to be careful of following a spouse who is carnal minded. You need to be careful of making decisions from a carnal perspective. If you are not living close to God, you cannot get divine direction from God.

Selfish Desires Lead to Wrong Decisions

Lot was weak in his devotions, selfish in his desires, and wrong in his decisions. If you get weak in your devotions, you will become weak in serving God, and you will make the wrong choices. Also, the flesh is going to get strong. The flesh is not going to take no for an answer.

Everybody needs a pastor. You are not smart enough to make it without a pastor where there is no church to attend that preaches Truth. The billboards of sin make sin look attractive. They flash, "Try this!" The devil is saying, "Try it!" Well, I happen to know some people who have tried Satan's allurements, and now they are bound with them. They would to God they had never seen the first one. If you tempt God, you are liable to get hooked on a habit that will destroy you.

When I first tried to smoke a cigarette as a young man, it made me sick. I coughed and hacked, and I thought, "How in the world could anybody smoke something like that?" My friends said, "Well, you have to keep working at it. You'll get used to it after awhile." I did get used to smoking after awhile. I got so used to it that I could not lay the

habit down. I had to have that tobacco. When I woke up in the morning, I had to have a cup of coffee and a cigarette to start my day. Had it not been for Jesus Christ, I probably would have been eaten up with lung cancer from tobacco.

Child of God, you need to stay close to God, because the devil wants you. He does not care how spiritual you may say you are or care how many times you get on your knees to pray. He wants to get you when you are not on your knees. He will use the slightest little thing to try to ensnare you.

When Abraham got to Bethel, he went right back to the altar and offered a sacrifice to God. Some people are weak in their devotions to God. They have all they can do to get through the door on time for church, and they do not really talk to God. Oh, they will say a prayer over their meal once in a while, and they may whisper a few words to God in their mind once in a while, but they do not truly worship God.

Abraham was a true worshiper of God, but Lot was not. Abraham was close to God; he was a friend of God. Genesis 13:3-4 tells us that he went with his wife and Lot to "Bethel, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Hai; Unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first: and there Abram called on the name of the LORD." Lot did not call on the Lord, and he was weak.

How did Lot make such a wrong choice? Verse 10 says, "Lot lifted up his eyes." He should have lifted up his voice and said, "O God, please direct me. Please guide me in my decision." You have to watch basing your decisions on what your eyes see, because they can deceive you. Lot saw the well-watered plains of Jordan. His choice was wrong because his motive was wrong. By rights, he should have insisted that the older man, Abraham, choose first. Lot was greedy in his decision. Jordan was a great place to raise cattle, but it was a terrible place to

raise a family.

Dear one, there are cities where you can make much more money, but first you need to check to see if there is a thriving Church of God congregation there before you go. If you do go, you need to go with clean tracks. The flesh will lead you astray.

The Effects of Moral Pollution

Lot's choice was based on his material gain and ease of life. It is much easier to raise cattle where the grass is thick and green and where there is plenty of water than to continually have to look for food on a mountainside. No doubt, Lot thought: "Who wants to walk up a mountain when you can walk on flat ground? Who wants to continually have cattle on a mountain where there are pitfalls and where they could slip and fall off the side? Why not have your cattle down on the flat ground where you can see them and so that you can see where you are walking? You would have comfort, it is well watered, and the grass is thick."

In time, fleshly choices will destroy the very fibers of faith and your experience with the Lord. Sin has its well-watered plains, just as Jordan did. Sin says: "Have a good time. You only live once! Why deprive yourself of all those good things and good times?" Dear one, you have to understand what is a good thing and what is a good time. If something is good, God does not want to deprive you of it. In fact, if something is good, God will help you to get it.

Lot pitched his tent toward Sodom. Notice that he did not pitch it *in* Sodom, but *toward* Sodom; then it was not long until he was in Sodom. You should not fool around with temptation or look toward temptation. If you keep looking toward temptation, the time will come when you will give in to it. It is bad enough to live among great sinners; it brings a vexation. However, it is worse when you bring

things on yourself. This wrong move was costly to Lot.

In Genesis, Chapter 14, you can read that a war broke out and Sodom was overthrown. Lot was taken captive. Lot's uncle, Abraham, along with his servants, rescued Lot from that terrible bondage. Afterward, Lot went into Sodom again instead of staying out of there. In Genesis, Chapter 19, we find Lot sitting at the gate of Sodom. He was actually an official of the city. No doubt, he was considered to be one of the elders.

What was in Sodom? The Bible lets us know that Sodom was filled with great sinners, great sin, and great wickedness, which included the sin of homosexuality. Today our society whitewashes sin, but God still names things as they are in His Word. In our society people call a drunkard an alcoholic, a thief is called a kleptomaniac, adultery is called an affair, and one involved in sodomy is called gay. God does not dress up sin; He calls it just what it is.

Sodom had moral pollution, and it also had mental pollution. It had such an effect on Lot that it corrupted Lot's faith and his family. He lost his leadership as head of the family. At one time, his family probably looked to him for leadership. Now his word no longer had any effect. No doubt, his family said: "Why leave Sodom? You didn't. You were rescued, but you came back. It must not be that bad, since you returned. Why did you come back if it was such a bad place?"

A Day of Great Wickedness

We read that Lot went from the plains of Jordan with his uncle to incest in a cave. That is how sin works. Look at the steps of some people. They go from one sin to another. What did Jesus say about Lot's day? He said in Luke 17:30, "Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed." Today we have daily living as in Noah's day, great sinners as in

Noah's day, deliverance offered as in Noah's day, and destruction coming as in Noah's day.

The day in which we are living right now is fast approaching the sins of Sodom, if it has not already surpassed the sins of that day. Today you see things going on out in the open that people used to be embarrassed and ashamed to partake of behind closed doors. Lesbian women are openly showing affection toward one another, and gay men are doing the same. They have "gay days." The Walt Disney Company is one of the biggest backers of homosexuality there is. We thank God for those who do not want to live that way. Many people do not want to live wrong, but they are getting fewer and fewer.

Lot's thoughts were, "The grass is greener on the plains of Jordan." Today some people get the thought, "The grass is greener in another location." Once they get there, they find that what appeared to be greener grass is nothing but stubble. It is always the forbidden fruit that is tempting.

How could Lot do the things he did? I am sure that when he started, he never thought that he would lose his wife, lose his self-respect, lose all his material gain, and end up dwelling in a cave. He had no thought of those things transpiring in his life. He had thoughts of settling down and taking it easy on the well-watered plains of Jordan. He envisioned a life of comfort instead of going from day to day, pitching his tent up and down that mountain all the time. When he started out, he had no thought of ending up in Sodom, of becoming a captive and having to be delivered from captivity, or of going back to Sodom and sitting at the gate of the city. He had no thought of having to be delivered out of Sodom and ending up in a cave or of losing his wife and his family, but that is where he wound up.

Dear one, that which pads the wallet is not always what is best for the soul. Are the days of Lot like

today? They were exceedingly great sinners. Today many people are losing their self-respect and their souls. In our day the sins of Sodom are running rampant. The clouds of judgment are gathering over this great world, and soon time will be no more. You may say, "People have been saying that for years." Some people might have said that in Noah's day. "Hey, that old man has been out there preaching. Look at him! It has been a hundred years since he started preaching, but everything is still the same. Of all things, he is building a boat out here! Look how big that thing is! Noah has been saying the same thing for a hundred years."

Today many people say, "That preacher gets up and says there is a Second Coming of Jesus Christ. People have been saying that for two thousand years." Dear one, He is coming, and His coming is going to catch people in a lukewarm condition. It is going to catch many people fooling around with things that they should not be fooling around with. In Noah's day when people saw that a flood was really coming, just as Noah had told them, they began to knock on the ark, saying: "Let us in! Let us in!" However, God had shut the door. Friend, God is going to wrap it all up before long. Are you prepared?

Will You Hear His Voice?

Those who go to Heaven are going to go there because they earned it, and that is the place where they should be. Some people do not enjoy being around the people of God. How could they enjoy being with the saints in Heaven when they cannot even enjoy fellowship with the saints here?

How can you escape this awful sin? Luke 17:32 says, "Remember Lot's wife." She is a reminder to all of us. Dear one, you cannot do double service: you cannot serve God and the prince of this world at the same time. Lot's wife loved Sodom so much that she could not bear to

leave it. Although she was out of the city and on her way to safety, her heart was still there. Many times the same is true when individuals leave Babylon. They physically come out, but their hearts are still in Babylon.

When you leave this world and its follies, you want to leave it with no regrets and no desire to go back. You leave in pursuit of a far better world, where time will be no more and you can be with Jesus throughout the ceaseless age of eternity. However, you must leave the old life behind. Luke 17:33 says, "Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it." If you keep looking back to the old life, you are going to go back. One thing that God cannot stand is for people

whom He has saved and set on the highway of holiness to look back. Remember Lot's wife; she is there as a testimony. When you are out of sin, do not look back. There is nothing back there but fire and brimstone, destruction, and the wrath of God.

You should not get so busy with the affairs of this life that you fail to realize that Jesus is coming again. We all are going to be ushered to the final Judgment. If there was ever a time to make sure your vessel is clean, it is today. In Colossians 3:5 Paul said to mortify your members, but there are things that we need to put on. The days of Noah and Lot are as the days in which we are living right now.

If you will put your hand in the

hand of Jesus and keep your eyes Heavenward, you will make it. You can make it the same way Noah made it. Noah found grace, and you can make it by the grace of God. Have you allowed sin and the things of this world to detour your goal in life? You may say, "Well, I plan to get saved someday." Friend, the odds are stacked against you that you will not make it to that "someday." That is the reason the Bible says in Psalm 95:7b-8: "To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your heart." It is time to get yourself straightened out. If you have a need, won't you obey the Lord? God is not against you. He wants to help you.

(Compact Disc TR-289M)



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The Home—Our Immediate Mission Field



Brother E. David Stegmeier

The Principles of God's Word

Many years ago I heard a story about the ministry of Gypsy Smith. He was preaching on the need of missionaries going to foreign fields. A young mother went forth and met him at the altar and said, "I really have a burden to go to India."

He said: "That is wonderful! What are you doing now?"

She said, "I'm a housewife."

"Do you have any children?"

She said, "Yes, I have five."

Brother Smith said, "Sister, you have a mission field right in your home."

Years ago, a woman said she felt led to go to another city to work with those who were down and out. The pastor asked her if she was married, and she said, "Yes, but I feel that God's work is more important than my own home and my mar-

riage." The pastor said, "No! You have a husband and a family, and they come first!"

We have to follow the principles of God's eternal Word. A Christian man once told me, "If I can live to see my five children saved and living for God, I will feel that my life was well spent." We are living in a time of great transition. Many great changes are being made very rapidly. One songwriter wrote, "Change and decay all around I see. O thou who changest not abide with me." Times and situations are changing, but God remains the same. Malachi 3:6 says, "For I am the LORD, I change not." God's mind has not changed concerning marriage, the home, or the church. Zephaniah 3:5 says he fails not. God has a plan, and it will not fail.

When I was first married, I prayed often in adjusting to a wife.

My wife and I were married in 1968, and we have had a wonderful life, but I had many things to learn. I have prayed almost daily, "Lord, help me to be a good husband, a really good father, and the very best pastor that I can possibly be." I have prayed that prayer almost daily, because it takes help from God, and it takes work. I wanted a happy marriage, a wholesome family, and a thriving Church of God congregation. In Psalm 127:1 the Psalmist said if the Lord does not build the house, we are laboring in vain. It is imperative that you have God's help and approval upon your life.

Life in homes has been changing for some time, but the changes have been in the wrong direction. One reason for the morality problems in our country is due to decay in the homes. Most homes are not really Christian homes. There are many

reasons for these changes. First, the structure and the meaning of the traditional family (a husband and a wife marrying before living together and raising precious children) is being ridiculed as antiquated and is being thrown out. Nevertheless, it is still the standard of God's Word. God is the ultimate authority.

Jesus said in Matthew 19:4-6: "Have ye not read, that he which made them [the husband and the wife] at the beginning made them male and female [not male and male or female and female], And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife [a very close relationship]: and they twain [the two] shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." That is very serious. I realize that the success of my being a good father and a good pastor is contingent upon the way I treat my wife. Husband, the Bible says you are one flesh, and you need to treat her as such. Your children are a part of you, but your wife is *you*.

The Breakdown of the Home

The compelling desire to acquire material goods is calling many mothers away from the home. This deprives children of needed guidance, which is contributing to the delinquency of minors and a breakdown of the home. During my years of growing up, my father was the only wage earner, and we had a large family. In the spring of the year, almost every year, I had holes in my shoes. We looked for cardboard that was not too thick or too thin that would help them to last through the school year. In the summer we went barefooted. We had Sunday clothes and everyday clothes. Sunday clothes were for Sunday, and the minute we got home, we went to the bedroom and changed our clothes immediately.

Solomon wrote in Proverbs 29:15, "The rod and reproof give

wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame." When I got home, I said, "Mom, I have to tell you what happened at school!" She was always there, and if we did not see her, we thought that the world was coming to an end. We knew that she was there somewhere, maybe in the root cellar praying for us. The breakdown of the family home, with women working outside the home, started in World War II. Children need a good mother who is in the home.

Another reason for the breakdown of the home is the many different activities and pursuits of the individual family members. This kills valuable time that could be well spent on Christian endeavors and events geared for the entire family. When family members each have their own things to do, it takes them away from the home. Many people who have television do not even sit down and enjoy a meal together. While eating a meal, it is a good time for the whole family to sit down and talk, visit with one another, talk about what happened during the day, pray together, and talk about problems.

Do you have family worship in the home? It is in the Bible, and the father is the one who should initiate it. He sets the tenor for the home. I have four sons and three daughters. I want my sons to be good husbands and my daughters to be good wives. Also, I have three sons-in-law, and they watch me. I believe that if I were to mistreat my wife, they, in turn, could mistreat my daughters. Such things do come back around. I want my daughters to be treated well, so I treat my wife very well.

A spirit of individualism has been working in our society, and this also works against the good of the family unit. Many fathers and mothers are seeking fulfillment and satisfaction outside the realms of the family. That is very sad, but that is the trend today. The psalmist wrote in Psalm 113:9, "He maketh the barren woman to keep house, and to be a joyful mother of children. Praise

ye the LORD." Notice that this verse says "a joyful mother." Mother, as you are washing dishes, scrubbing floors, and washing the clothes, you should be joyful about it.

The Home – A Child's First Classroom

Children are gifts from God, and you ought to treat them as such. I am an old teacher, an old minister, and an old father. It bothers me when I hear parents talk crossly and ugly toward their children. Children have feelings just as you do. I agree with exercising discipline. I discipline students at school, and I discipline my own children at home; however, it should be done with love. Psychologists say if you tell a child so many times that he cannot do something, that he is stupid, or that he is clumsy, that child will carry that for the rest of his life. That child will grow up thinking, "I'm stupid and dumb." I do not like that.

Psalm 127:3-5 says: "Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them." The Bible standard is this: the mother is joyful, the father is happy, and it is a house full of love.

I had one of my sons-in-law as a student in school. I watched him grow up, and he was extremely troubled. Had someone told me years ago that he was going to be my son-in-law, I would have said, "Don't ever send him around to my house!" In school someone told him to try going to the Church of God (he was a Methodist). One morning he came to church, and then he came to our home. Later he told me, "When I saw your children bouncing around and having such a big time, my heart just ached." His home had been fragmented through divorce. He had seen his stepfather throw his mother against the wall and beat her. He said you would think that as a grown man those memories would

be gone, but it still hurts to see his dad walk away.

Paul wrote in Romans 14:7, "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself." Parent, you are affecting your children either favorably or unfavorably. The home is a child's first classroom, and the parents are his first teachers. A child adopts the attitudes and the thought patterns of the parents. Parents should be careful of their feelings, their thoughts, and their attitudes about the pastor, because they are copied by the children. Parent, you need to watch your attitudes about the church, the work of God, the government, and our country.

God gives stability to the home, and a godly home contributes to the strength and the stability of the church and the nation. Society suffers when homes become dysfunctional. Statistics say that 70 percent of the men incarcerated in the prison systems of our country had no fathers. One great educator said that the extinction of faith in the family system is identical with the movements in Greece and in Rome that undermined those great societies. This is going on in America today. Marriage is absolutely wonderful, and the home is a beautiful entity. God ordained it before the church. Another individual said that no society has ever survived after its family life deteriorated.

Controlling Your Children

Parents can be godly and yet their children can be very self-willed and rebellious. I thought of Eli. However, God dealt with Eli. We are never too old, and we have not been saved so long that God cannot help us along these lines. Eli was a good man and a leader of ancient Israel; however, his sons were vile and he knew it, yet he was too passive. As parents, we can be either too passive or too severe. It takes God to help us to be right where we should be.

First Samuel 2:12 says, "Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial

[wicked men]; they knew not the LORD." First Samuel 3:13 reads, "For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he [Eli] restrained them not." The International Children's Bible says in 1 Samuel 3:13, "I told Eli I would punish his family forever. I will do it because Eli knew his sons were evil. They spoke against me [God], but he did not control them."

Parent, *you* should control your children; your children should not control you. The wise man said in Proverbs 22:6, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." Ephesians 6:4 states, "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

We are living in a day when people have a real struggle with spanking, or corporal punishment. In this day and age, it would be better to take a child somewhere private to spank him. Spanking is still a part of God's Word. Proverbs 13:24 reads, "He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes." The International Children's Bible says, "If a person does not punish his children, he does not love them. But the person who loves his children is careful to correct them."

Proverbs 23:13-14 reads: "Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell." I believe that many children who have problems submitting to God when they are older did not receive adequate correction as children. It is easier for people to submit to God when they are corrected and brought into subjection as children. I am a living testimony to that. As a child, when I misbehaved or talked back to Mother, she corrected me. If that did not get through to me, my father spanked me when he came home.

The Importance of Rearing Children in the Fear of God

Someone said the home is to be a divine school in which the father is to be the teacher under Christ. Do you remember the adage, "Like father, like son"? Personality and character are developed in the home. Sometimes fathers are absent. As a boy growing up, my father hated the Church of God, yet he was religious. My grandfather on my father's side of the family was a preacher, but it was a church similar to the Lutheran Church. It was called "Reformed Church of America." We moved and attended the Church of God, and my mother accepted the Truth. She said, "This is what I have been looking for. This is what I have been waiting for all my life." It bothered her that the Reformed Church of America's ministers smoked tobacco and drank alcohol.

I can look back in life and see the providence of God so outstandingly. We decided to move farther west where people were doing better economically. We got as far as a small city in western Montana, and my father said, "Wow! This is beautiful. Let's settle down here." God was speaking to him. It was the only thriving Church of God congregation in that entire state. Brother and Sister Robert Mullen were the pastors at that time. We went there on a Sunday night. Sunday morning we went to the Methodist church, and it was as dead as it could be. We did not see any children there, so my mother asked the pastor, "Where are the children?" We were all lined up beside my mother and father. The pastor said that the children did not come to church there in the summer. He said there was no school, so there was no church for the children in the summer either. My mother said, "That does not sound very good to me. We'll try the Church of God."

We went to the Church of God that night, and it was a lively service. My mother said, "This is it!"

When we went home that night, we had a family meeting around the kitchen table, and we talked about the services we had attended that day. My father thought we could worship at home, but my mother said she was going back to the Church of God.

Mother was saved and accepted the Truth, and that is the reason I am saved today. She lived an impeccable life! If a father does not take the lead concerning spiritual things, then the mother must accept that responsibility. My mother wore out lots of the classic Elsie Egermeier's Bible Storybooks.

It is said that each week Suzanna Wesley spent one hour alone with each of her children. Her son, John Charles Wesley, made great contributions for the furtherance of the Gospel. As a Christian parent, you need to realize the awesome importance of rearing your children in the fear of God. It is a real challenge to raise children in this day and age. We need all the tools that we can possibly acquire in rearing them in the fear of the Lord so that they can stand against the opposing powers that work against the church. There are many enemies of Christianity. Father, if I were to walk into your home and you have to act differently than you normally do, then you are a hypocrite. I hate hypocrisy. You should act the same way at home as you do at church.

Christianity Begins in the Home

One of our former presidents said that the greatest need of America is religion that centers in the home. Family worship is needful. Parent, you need to share your faith, your trust, and your hope in the living God with your children. If you share it with them, they, in turn, will share it with your grandchildren. When one of my little grandsons was very sick, he kept saying, "Call Grandpa to pray."

When my daughter Korine was three or four years of age, her Grandpa said, "Unless God inter-

venes, she is going to be dead in the morning." She had laid there for four days. Brother Emerson Wilson came one night and prayed for her, and she recovered. We raised our children on divine healing, and we are still raising them that way. We are raising our grandchildren that way. God is still the same. Times are changing, and conditions are changing, but God is the same.

When I was very ill a couple of years ago, my wife said that when the saints at God's Acres began to really pray and fast, I began to get better. People have asked me what went through my mind while I was ill. I told them that most of the time I had no idea what was going on. It was as though I was sleeping in a dark abyss of some kind, but God brought me through it and healed me. We are serving a great and wonderful God!

In the home children should learn to know what is workable, what is acceptable behavior, and what is unacceptable behavior. The home is where we learn to relate to one another. I have seen children who cannot relate to others. They have so many problems, because in the home those problems were not dealt with correctly. Children need to learn how to relate to one another and how to share. Solomon said in Proverbs 20:11, "Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right." We have to work through things.

Deuteronomy 6:7 says, "And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." Parents must set the right example in relationships with each other. A father ought to be the husband and the father that he wants his sons to be.

The Union of Holy Matrimony

Marriage and the home was God's first organization. Marriage is

divine. Some time ago one of my former students said, "Mr. Stegmeier, I would like to have you marry me and my husband-to-be."

I said, "All right. When is the wedding going to be?"

She said, "I have a question to ask you first. Do you still include in your ceremony that the wife is to obey and honor her husband?"

I said, "Yes, I do."

She said, "Well, thanks, Mr. Stegmeier. I liked you as a teacher, but I think I'm going to choose another minister."

I said, "You need to look at the other side. If the husband is treating you as the Bible says he ought to, then you will have no problem, because the Bible says he should love you, honor you, and respect you."

"Oh," she said, "that sounds better. All right. We'll let you know when we want to get together." There are two sides. Genesis 1:27 says, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." Adam was given one wife, and had he decided to put her away, what would he have done for another wife? He would have been awfully lonesome. In the plan of God, the union of holy matrimony should last for a lifetime. I hold tenaciously to this statement: a couple living in total obedience to the will of God will never seek a divorce.

In Genesis 2:18 and 20 we read that the woman should be a help meet to the husband. Husband, your wife should be a tremendous help to you. My wife is a tremendous help to me in the ministry; she is an awesome help. Also, she is a wonderful mother to our children. In Proverbs 12:4 Solomon said, "A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband." In other words, a man who has a good wife is as happy as if he were sitting on a royal throne. Proverbs 18:22 tells us, "Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing." Malachi 2:14 lets the husband know that a wife is a companion. I enjoy traveling, but it makes it so much better if my wife can travel with me. I tell my wife

that she is my sounding board. I like to get her opinion once in a while.

First Peter 3:7 says that the wife is the weaker vessel, and the husband should treat her as such. A man said that one day he saw a man going to the market, and he was walking beside a cart. Harnessed to the cart was his wife and an ox. If one of them was harnessed with the ox, it should have been the husband. She should have been walking beside the cart or sitting in it. She is the weaker vessel.

Attributes of a Godly Home

Titus 2:4-5 says: "That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed." According to God's Word, the woman is to submit to her husband, but she will have no problem if he treats her right. She is to love and respect him; however, this must be mutual. Proverbs, Chapter 31, lets us know that she should be trustworthy and faithful. The husband has the responsibility to love her, honor her, provide for her, and protect her.

I am very careful of how I speak to my wife. In the past, I have spoken harshly to my wife, but I got a good spanking from God for it, and it really hurt. I said, "God, help me." Hebrews 12:5-11 says: "And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening [discipline], God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

"Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence:

shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." Child of God, sometime in your life, God has chastened you. We will be chastened, but let us not repeat it. As I have said, I have seven children and three sons-in-law, and I want to be the right example.

There are conjugal rights in marriage. Simply stated, 1 Corinthians 7:1-5 in the *International Children's Bible* reads: "Now I will discuss the things you wrote to me about. It is good for a man not to marry [that was because of the present situation at that time]. But sexual sin is a danger. So each man should have his own wife. And each woman should have her own husband. The husband should give his wife all that she should have as his wife, and the wife should give her husband all that he should have as her husband.

"The wife does not have power over her own body. Her husband has the power over her body, and the husband does not have power over his own body. His wife has the power over his body. Do not refuse to give your bodies to each other. But you might both agree to stay away from sexual relations for a time. You might do this so that you can give your time to prayer; then come together again. This is so that Satan cannot tempt you in your weakness."

What is going on in your home? Is the following motto true in your home? "Christ is the head of this house, the unseen guest at every meal, the silent listener to every conversation." Members of a godly family can draw strength from one another. We have gone through some very difficult times as a fam-

ily. During those times, I received strength talking to my children. You should receive strength from one another in your home. If you are misunderstood any place else, you will be understood at home. There is real support in a godly home.

Is your home truly a Christian home? Does Christ feel comfortable in your home? If there are any inadequacies, insufficiencies, or anything that is not the way it should be, you need to ask God to help you to correct it. God is willing and waiting to help you.

(Cassette C-5610M)

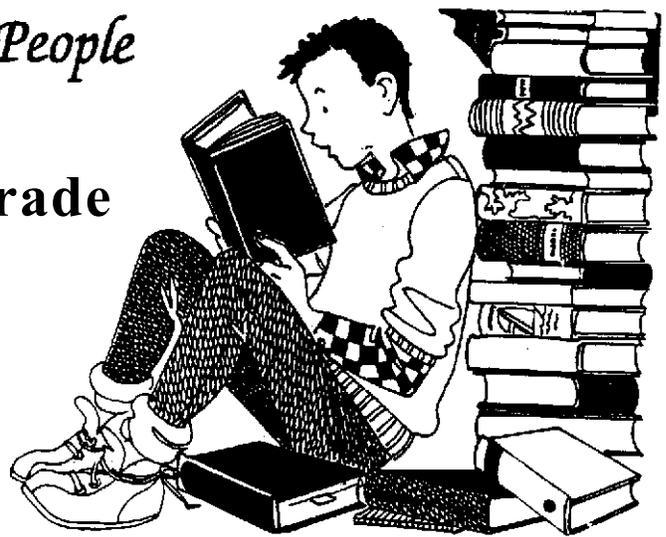
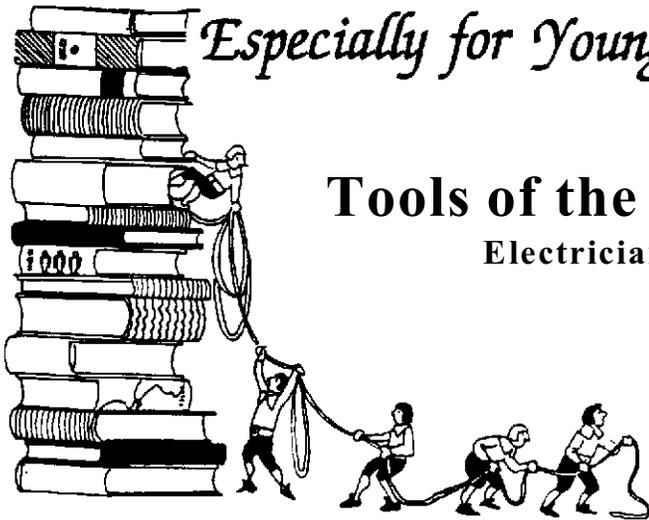
[Camp Meeting Report—continued from p. 2]
and mind, judgment, and being ready to meet the Lord when He appears. The audience was brought under solemnity as the Lord spoke through His prophets. We would certainly encourage the readers to obtain a copy of the sermons preached.

Last, but not least, we would not want to fail to mention how good the singing was in the camp meeting. The Newark choir surely helped set the tenor of the services as they sang the songs of Zion. The special singing by the different groups also added much to the success of the meeting. Oftentimes as the singing went forth, it brought tears and rejoicing to the saints.

The Lord surely gave us pleasant weather with temperatures in a comfortable range. He even dropped the price of gasoline to make it easier for the saints to travel here. Camp meeting is always a good place to be, but it was especially good this year. We hope that if you did not make it to the June camp meeting that you will include in your plans to be in the August camp meeting, which has already begun (July 31-August 7). For lodging reservations, please call Brother or Sister Bush at 740-345-1213.

Especially for Young People

Tools of the Trade Electrician



In my job as an electrician, I use many different types of safety tools. When working on a job, it is important to know what tool to use and where to use it. When I open the panel on an electrical box and start unbolting the fingers, I might think it is dead; however, just because the switch is in the off position does not always insure that the power is off, so I use a safety tool called a lockout. This is a padlock that electricians put on one of the six holes in the box, along with a special required tag. This must display the electrician's name and the date that he is working on it.

When I put the padlock on, I am the only one who has a key to it. The reason is that we do not want anyone else working on that same circuit. It does not take much (only thirty-five volts) to kill a person. Many times we are working with hundreds or possibly thousands of volts. Therefore, this safety device is of utmost importance. Potentially, five other electricians could be working on the same panel, and they each would have their own padlocks on a circuit as well. Before that panel is ever cleared for operation, all those padlocks must be removed.

The Word of God has some good safety tools and good safety procedures for the Christian to utilize. In Ephesians, Chapter 6, some of these tools are mentioned. Verse 17 tells

us to take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit. These help us to fight against the wiles of the devil. God did not put us here without giving us something with which to work. He gave us the Word, which tells us how He will save souls and forgive sins. Then He gave pastors, evangelists, Sunday school teachers, and other saints to help us in our walk with Christ. These safety devices help us along the way.

As an electrician on the job, I must follow the proper guidelines and OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) standards. We must adhere to many federal standards for safety. Safety is the number one thing that is taught on the job. As you know, equipment can be replaced, but it is impossible to replace a person.

A circuit breaker in a fuse cabinet may be in the off position and tagged, but one must not take it for granted that the power is off. A person must always treat it as though it is hot, or live. I use a tool called a voltmeter to test it. This tool does many different things, and there are lots of different attachments for it. When I use a voltmeter on a panel, it will tell me whether it is a three-phase system or if there are different lines powering it. I can check between each line and take each one right to the ground wire to make sure that

phase is dead before I try to work on it. The voltmeter is another one of those safety devices. Even though the probes of that voltmeter are insulated, I must take extreme precautions when going into a circuit. I must put on special rubber gloves with leather over them for protection. Those gloves are good for up to five thousand volts. When I put on those gloves, I can work with live circuits; that is what the gloves are made for.

There are other types of safety tools called blankets. Many times I might have to take out the cutouts on high voltage. I use a ten-foot or longer fiberglass pole. The pole is good for up to 20,000 volts. I must use the pole because safety is the number one priority.

When I buy a tool, I buy the very best, like the gloves that I spoke of. I would not go out and buy just any pair of gloves. I want to know that I have the best available. The paperwork that comes with the gloves states that they have been tested and have passed certain criteria. I especially want to know this when I am the one using the gloves. I want to make sure that they are safe and that they do not have pinholes in them.

This is the same way it is with the plan of salvation. We are bought with a price. Salvation is not something cheap, but it is God's very best. This is the same attitude

that I take with a tool. I do not like to work with cheap tools when I am working with high voltage.

God gave us the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit. He prepares us with the Word of God and the Holy Spirit. When I am working in the field, I check not only for voltage but also for phase rotation. This is checked by a meter on a three-phase system. If those phases are not in the right sequence, they can actually run backwards and possibly burn up a motor. If somebody is working on a piece of equipment and it starts to run backwards, many things could happen. Someone could be hurt or killed. So it is with our spiritual lives. If we do not take the utmost precaution and go by the Word of God, listening and obeying, we can do more harm than good.

Most electricians carry a tool pouch. I carry many types of tools in my tool pouch, and I have a certain spot for each one. I liken these tools to the members in the body of Christ. There are many members in this body, and if any one of those members is out of place, it will hinder and things will not go right. If I pull out a tool to use, I put it back in the correct spot. Otherwise, when I need it again, if it is not in the right place, I would waste time fiddling around with the tools, trying to find the right one.

Each member of the body of Christ has his specific job. First Corinthians 12:1-12 reads: "Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. . . . Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of heal-

ing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. For as the body is one, and hath many members."

Again, verse 12 says, "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ." There are many gifts in the body. The pastor's gift is to lead the body; that is his calling. Other gifts are custodians, song leaders, Sunday school teachers, young people's leaders, and helpers. Each one has a part in the body of Christ. You may think, "My job is little." It does not make any difference how little or how big the job is. We all are a part of the body of Christ. It may seem like a little thing, but often that little thing is more important than you may realize.

In my job as an electrician, the big fuses often will not operate in a circuit until the little fuses control the big fuses. Many times in a circuit, relays relay the interlock. Locking in requires pulling a coil, which is done by low voltage control circuitry. Sometimes control circuits are operated by temperature. For instance, in a heating system there are relays in the room and in cabinets. For a heater to trip on, it has to sense a certain temperature. A small control circuit energizes a relay, and when that relay pulls in, it makes contact. When the relays snap in, they snap in a millisecond. This is what energizes the big fuses to carry the load.

A 1600 amp fuse may be little, but it has a lot of impact on a big one. A big fuse is not going to work unless the little fuse is working. No matter how small you think your job is, it is big in the sight of God. However, you must always keep a humble spirit and a humble atti-

tude. The gifts you have and the things you are doing are contributing to the body of Christ. You may think, "Well, I'm not doing much," or "What I'm doing is not really having the effect it ought to have." First Corinthians 12:26 says, "And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it." No matter how small that member may be, if it is suffering, the whole body suffers.

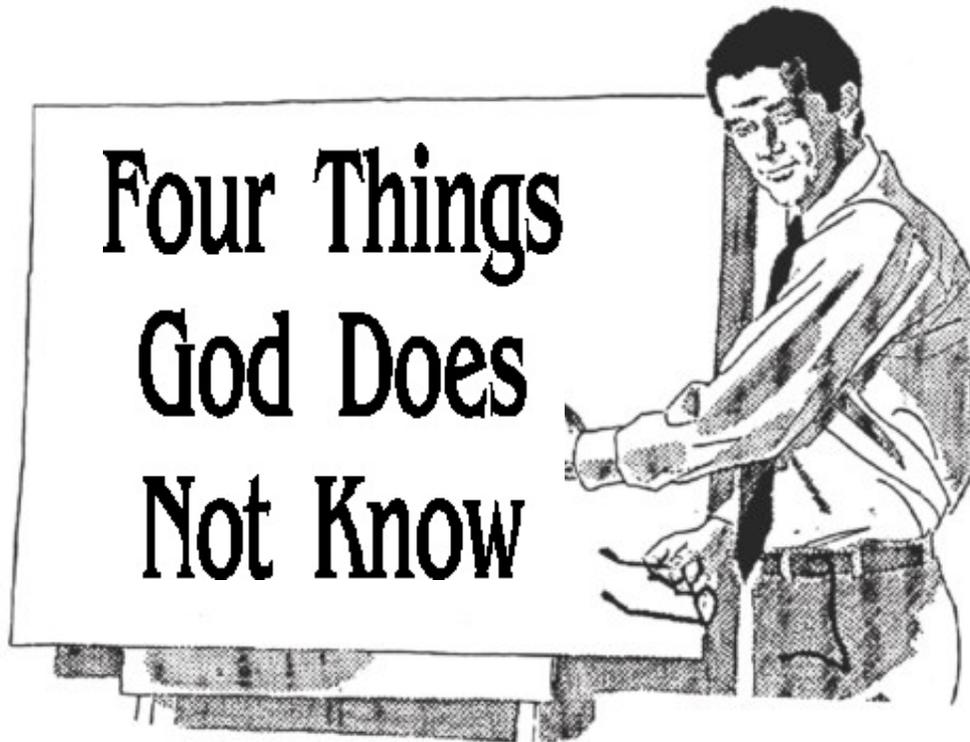
When using my tools, if I need to tighten a screw, I do not take a wrench out to turn the screw. Each tool has its own particular function. It is the same with the members of the body. I would be out of order if I stood in the pulpit and pretended to be the pastor. It would not work, because that is not my position.

Another great tool is a level. I use this so things will be straight. If I am hanging an electrical panel on a wall, I want it to be level. Isaiah 28:17 talks about laying judgment to the line and righteousness to the plummet. I expect something to be straight, and it is important not to do a sloppy job. Many times sloppiness causes safety problems. Sagging pipes can cause trouble down the road by fracturing the insulation on a cable that carries the power. There are guidelines to prevent sloppiness.

The same is true in our Christian walk. We must listen to the pastor, stay in the Word of God, and always be in a spirit of prayer to prevent sloppiness. We must keep safety in place as we build by the plan of God's Word. If we build our lives according to the blueprint, or the Bible, we will be fitly framed together (Ephesians 2:21). I am glad that God's guidelines are not by trial and error. He established them from the foundation of the world, and they are from everlasting to everlasting. We can stand on the Word of God and build our lives around it. What if something happens? We have proper safety guidelines to follow in the Bible.

Brother Jan Romine

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.



Brother Larry Dishman

God's Hatred Toward Sin

The thought may come to you that God knows everything. It is true in the real sense of the word, but I believe if you will consider this with me for a little while, you will agree that there are four things that God does not know.

First of all, God does not know of a sin that He does not hate. God hates every sin. God made Adam and Eve and placed them in the garden long ago, and it was due to their own sin and rebellion against God that they were cast out of the garden. God hates sin; He detests it and deplores it. If you have sin in your life, though God loves you, He hates the sin that has you bound. We do not need perfumed preaching, so to speak, that does not make sin stink. The world smiles upon many things that the Bible calls sin. Even though

things are labeled as failures, weaknesses, or drives, there is no innocent sin, because the Bible says that all unrighteousness is sin.

Today we have a hard time imagining God's wrath against sin because we have never seen the fullness of God's wrath unleashed on sin. Upon this earth, God's wrath is tempered by His mercy. However, nothing can protect or insulate people in hell from the fierce, unrestrained wrath of God. God's fierce wrath against sin is as much a reflection of His character as His love. Romans 1:18 says, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness." God's hatred toward sin caused Him to destroy the world in Noah's day. God said that He was going to destroy man whom He had made. God

did not spare the old world and their sin. My friend, God's hatred toward sin caused Him to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. Genesis 13:13 tells us, "But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly." God's displeasure can reach a boiling point when sin reaches an intolerable level. I believe we are approaching a time in the United States of America when sin is reaching an intolerable level.

Many people are living in sin, and they are breaking the laws of God's Word. They are living against God's Word, yet they think they are getting by with it. Nevertheless, God will bring all sin into judgment, according to the Bible. All you have to do is look in the Word of God. Ask Joseph's brothers how God feels about the sin of jealousy. Ask Nebuchadnezzar how God feels about the sin of pride. Ask Demas how God

feels about worldliness. You could ask many different individuals. Ask the church at Laodicea how God feels about lukewarmness. God really does hate all sin.

Proverbs 6:16-19 states: "These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren."

Again, God hates all sin. Romans 6:23 tells us, "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Ezekiel 18:20a reads, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Galatians 6:7 says, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

Friend, your sins and my sins nailed the Son of God to the Cross. Your sins and my sins placed the crown of thorns upon His head. Sin drove those cruel nails into His hands and His feet. Sin lifted Him up between earth and heaven. As you think about this, surely you should be ready to say, "If sin could do such a thing as that, then I am going to turn my back on sin forever." Friend, God loves you the way you are, but He loves you too much to leave you that way. It is His will to save you, change your life, and make you a new creature.

God's Perfect Plan of Salvation

The second thing that God does not know of is a better plan of salvation. There is not a better plan. God came up with the best plan, and it is a wonderful plan. One song says, "*I'm satisfied with God's great redemption plan.*" I am satisfied! I believe that it is sufficient for all men. God thought it out and came up with a good plan to deliver men from sin.

Some people may say, "I just do not like that old bloody Gospel, and I do not like a preacher getting up in the pulpit and holding up that old

black Book and saying, "This is the Word of God." Friend, it is the Word of God, and within its pages is the perfect plan of salvation. Acts 4:12 states, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." There is no salvation in a pope, a preacher, a church membership, or water baptism. Thank God, the only salvation that a man can have is in Christ Jesus.

My friend, the plan of salvation is not a hard, complicated plan. Isaiah 35:8 tells us, "The wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein." It is not hard to be saved if you want to be saved. Luke, Chapter 14, lets you know that you must sit down and count the cost. One old saying states, "You get what you pay for." That holds true in religion too. Good religion is not cheap, and cheap religion is not good. An individual must die out to sin to be saved. God hates sin, and you have to give up sin to be saved. It has been said many times that salvation is free, discipleship costs, but it pays to serve Jesus.

In God's perfect plan of salvation, counting the cost is first, and then an individual must repent. Jesus said in Luke 13:3, "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." God will only forgive to the extent of your repentance. The Apostle Paul said in 2 Corinthians 7:10, "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death." Repentance is more than a change of mind; it is a change of heart and a change of action.

The next requirement in this perfect plan of salvation is believing. Ephesians 2:8 reads, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." In dozens of Scriptures throughout the Bible, salvation is promised to the individual who will truly repent. The Philippian jailer said in Acts, Chapter 16, "What must I do to be saved?" Paul and Silas told him to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and he would be saved.

The Bible also talks about confessing. Romans 10:9-10 states: "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

God's Great Love

The third thing that God does not know is a better time for you to get saved than today. You need to think about that. The all-wise, all-knowing God does not know of a better time for you to get saved than right now. Proverbs 27:1 says, "Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." Proverbs 29:1 tells us, "He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."

Hebrews 3:7-8 says: "Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts." To make it clearer, Paul said in 2 Corinthians 6:2, "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." Now, at this present time, at the very time the command is given, is the time you ought to move. You should not wait until tomorrow. All of God's commands relate to this day, to the very passing moment. God does not require an individual to repent and turn to Him five years from now, but today is the day of salvation.

The fourth thing I want to talk to you about is that God does not know a sinner whom He does not love. He loves everyone. If you are without God, regardless of where you have been or what you have done, God loves you. No matter how deep in sin you may be, no matter how far you have gone, God still loves you.

Romans 5:6-10 reads: "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But

God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life."

Thank God, He loved us when we were unlovable. Ephesians 2:4-5 says: "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)." Toward whom is this love exercised? It is extended to all beings of the human race. Friend, Jesus loved each of us personally, even when we were out in the depths of sin.

You may think that to give a friend a great sum of money is to show evidence of strong love, but what is any sum of money compared to God giving His only begotten Son so that we could have life, and have it more abundantly? He loved us, not because we were lovable, but because He *is* love. He proved that love upon the Cross when Christ hung and bled and died. He was saying to the world, and He was saying to you, friend, "I love you."

Many years ago a husband and a wife were unable to have a child, and they waited a long time for a child through an adoption agency. When that finally transpired, they had a celebration. They called their family, friends, and neighbors to their home to rejoice with them over the fact that they had become newly adoptive parents. When that mother took her visitors into the bedroom and they looked into the crib, they saw a helpless cripple. They began to say that little baby would never be able to care for himself and that he would always have to be attended to. One of them went so far as to say, "Why, you did not need *that* little baby." Tears began to well up in that mother's eyes, and she said, "I know, but he sure did need us."

That is the way I feel about God.

He did not need me, and He did not need you; but He saw how desperately we needed Him. He so desperately loved us that He was willing to give His Son to die for us so that we could have life, and have a more abundant life.

God, who hung the sun in space, every morning causes those gates of the East to open, to allow the sun to illuminate the heavens. He closes those gates each evening. That same God causes the stars to shine and causes the moon and the planets to revolve in orbit. He does all of this without our assistance. He really did not need us, but we desperately need Him. God is love, and He does not know a sinner that He does not love.

Undeserved Love

A pastor had pastored the same church for twenty-four years. A dear saint of God in his congregation, a sister, was married to a godless rascal. This man would go and get drunk at least one weekend a month. He would go out on a binge, and then he would come home and kick the children around and beat his wife unmercifully. (I am not saying that anyone has to put up with this type of abuse, but this lady really loved her husband despite all these things.) The pastor became weary with it. He said that he began to despise the man.

One day this pastor said he was in his study, and someone knocked on the door and said: "You had better go over there. He came home in the wee hours of the morning, and he almost killed her. He almost beat her to death." As the pastor drove over there and as he walked up the driveway, he was thinking: "Why doesn't he pick on a man? Why does he have to be like this?" With anger and almost animosity in his heart, he went toward the door and a teenaged girl met him in the yard and said, "Please convince my mommy that she has to leave Daddy and divorce him."

He said, "That is exactly what I intend to do." When he stepped inside the house, a young teenaged boy

met him with tears in his eyes and said, "Please convince Mommy that she has to leave Daddy. We can't go on living like this anymore." He walked in the bedroom, and there she lay. Her lips were cut from her teeth being pushed through by a cruel fist, her nose looked as if it was broken, her eyes were tightly swollen shut, and her hair was matted down in her face with dried blood. He took her bloody hand, and she began to try to moisten her lips and said, "Pastor, can I say something before you say anything?"

He said, "Sure, you go ahead and say whatever you want to say." He thought she was going to say that she was finished with him.

She said: "You know, one day I stood at the altar and was asked, 'Do you take this man to be your wedded husband, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, till death do you part?' and I said yes. I am going to do that to the best of my ability. I do not ask you to understand it, but I still love him."

That preacher said he had never been so lovingly rebuked in all his life. He prayed with the lady, and then he went back to his study, got down on his knees, and began to pray. He said, "God, I have seen love personified today." The pastor watched the effects of that love, and in less than six months, she had won her husband to the Lord. What caused that? Love did. That man did not deserve that type of love, but she loved him anyway. We never deserved the love and the mercy of God, but He loved us when we were unlovable. I thank God for Jesus Christ!

"God So Loved the World"

Two thousand years ago, God looked down upon this old, sin-cursed world, and He saw how sick it was. It was sicker than Peter's wife's mother who had a devastating fever. Our world was sicker than Naaman, the captain of the Syrian host who had leprosy. Our world was sicker than the man who cut

himself and dwelled among the tombs. Our world was sicker than the lady with the issue of blood who sought many physicians and yet grew worse. About two thousand years ago, one morning God walked through His rose garden and plucked a beautiful bouquet. It was made up of the Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the Valley. He took that bouquet and wrapped it in the soft tissue of Heaven. Before He sent it to this world, He wrote a little card and pinned it to that soft tissue. The card simply said, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

Sinner friend, God loves you and cares about you, and He is willing to

forgive you. My question to you is, Do you have a heart to appreciate the dying love of the Son of God? Can you possibly go on when you know the love that was shown to you on Calvary?

Sinner friend, if you will be honest, you will have to admit that your life lacks purpose and fulfillment. You have an emptiness in your heart. Perhaps you have sought for peace and happiness in many different ways. No doubt, you thought you had almost found what you had been searching for, and then it vanished away. Possibly at night you have stayed awake while other family members were asleep, and you have dampened your pillow with the tears from your eyes and asked yourself the questions: "Is this all there is to

life? Can't there be more? Will it always be this way? Will it ever be better?" Friend, it can be better, because Jesus is what you have been searching for.

In closing, someday, sometime, someplace, everyone is going to touch down in eternity. If you were to touch down in eternity right now, would God be there to turn on the landing lights? Would Jesus be standing there to welcome you home, saying, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant"? If you cannot answer yes to that question, won't you find a place to pray and ask God into your heart and life?

(Compact Disc TR-036M)

Announcements

NEWARK, OH

July 31-August 7

CAMP MEETING: Church of God, 675 N. Cedar St., Newark, OH 43055

Three services daily: 10:00 a.m., 3:00 p.m. & 7:00 p.m. The first service begins Sunday morning at 10:00 a.m. The afternoon service will be a teaching service.

For lodging reservations, please call Bro. & Sis. Dave Bush at 740-345-1213.

For further information contact: Pastor Roger Decker, 87 Decrow Ave., Newark, OH 43055
Telephone: 740-344-2543

CANBY, OR

August 15-21

CAMP MEETING: Church of God, 522 NW 2nd Ave, Canby, OR 97013

See ad on page 8 for additional details.

MEDINA, OH

September 5

LABOR DAY MEETING: Church of God, 6745 Wooster Pike, Medina, OH 44256

Service times: 10:00 a.m. & 2:00 p.m.

Dinner and supper meals served by the congregation

For further information contact the church at 330-725-5993

“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”

Hebrews 10:25

Malachi 3:16 Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name.

17 And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own

son that serveth him.

18 Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.

Acts 16:16 And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying:

17 The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation.

18 And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.

Discernment



Brother Earl R. Borders

"Try the Spirits"

These two passages of Scripture text contain a vast body of truths, but one common vein of truth unites them. The Prophet Malachi employed the expression in verse 17, "And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day." Here he employed the prophetic expression "in that day." He looked down through the telescope of time and envisioned what would occur in this Christian dispensation.

Verse 18 of our Scripture lesson reads, "Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not." In this verse the Prophet Malachi spoke of discernment. In our companion text we see an exhibition of

this discernment through the Apostle Paul in Acts 16:18, which states, "And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her."

The Apostle Paul exercised discernment, and Malachi spoke of discerning between the righteous and the wicked. Why is this important and why is it necessary? The answer is, we are living in a spirit world, and we are in a battle of spirits. These spirits are out to seduce and to overcome each of us, which makes discernment very crucial. This places extreme importance on exercising appropriate discernment.

The Apostle John said in 1 John 4:1, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits." My friend, we do not have to be gullible and accept

everything at face value. People are not always what they appear to be, so God wants us to exercise old-fashioned, Holy Ghost discernment. The Apostle John said to "try the spirits." I want to draw your attention to the fact that the word "spirits" is plural. In our world there are legions of devilish, demoniac spirits. We read in Mark 5:8-9: "For he said unto him, Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit. And he asked him, What is thy name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion: for we are many."

According to Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, the word *legion* is a reference to a Roman troop formation. A Roman legion at the time of Christ's First Advent was up to five thousand men. So a legion of devils would be a

lot of devils. We know that the man called Legion had at least two thousand devils, because we read in Mark 5:13, "And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand;) and were choked in the sea." This man possessed a great host of spirits, letting us know that he had legions of demonic spirits.

We read in Mark 16:9, "Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils." Legions of devilish spirits inhabit the world about us.

First Kings 22:21-22 tells us: "And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the LORD, and said, I will persuade him. And the LORD said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also: go forth, and do so." These verses speak of a lying spirit. We can find many other types of Scriptures referring to spirits.

Deceptive Spirits

Our Scripture text in Acts speaks of a damsel possessed with a spirit of divination. Ephesians 2:2 reads, "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." A spirit goes along with disobedience.

The Apostle Paul taught in 1 Corinthians 2:12, "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world. . . ." There is a worldly spirit. You may wonder why your teenage daughter, after you correct her, tries to slip around and do the same thing again. She has picked up a worldly spirit. A worldly spirit is behind certain things. Also, there are disobedient spirits and lying spirits. Perhaps you know of individuals who lie when the truth would serve

them better. They have a lying spirit. Certainly not everybody who lies has a lying spirit, but some people are bound with a lying spirit. Other people are bound with disobedient spirits and worldly spirits.

First John 4:3 talks about the spirit of antichrist: "And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist." My friend, we must recognize that people do what they do because of the spirits they possess. Our lives are dominated by a spirit. I will not digress and deal with it, but when we get saved, every one of us has a part of us that is as eternal as God is: we each have an eternal soul.

When a person gets saved, what makes the difference in how that soul behaves is that God changes his or her spirit. It was the spirit that you possessed prior to getting saved that caused you to live how you lived. When a person gets saved, God changes his or her spirit. There are many types of spirits, but the most deceptive spirits are religious spirits.

First Timothy 4:1 tells us, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith." Why do people walk away from Truth? They are "giving heed to seducing spirits." The deceptive thing is, when they are seduced by these spirits, they do not quit practicing religion; they turn to doctrines of devils. They continue to preach and profess salvation. That is the reason the most deceitful and damnable of all spirits are religious spirits. They are very deceptive, and they are deadly. Why are they deadly? They cause people to depart from the faith, yet they continue to adhere to doctrine and practice religion.

Few people will admit that they are backslidden. Many of them have been seduced by spirits, yet they have departed from the faith. Oh, they will smile and tell you how well they are doing and how much God is blessing them, but they are deceived. Those religious spirits are seducing spirits, and they are very deceptive.

Spirits Motivating False Religion

We read in Revelation 16:13-14: "And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon [paganism], and out of the mouth of the beast [papalism], and out of the mouth of the false prophet [Protestantism]. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty."

I want you to notice how deceitful these spirits are. Verse 13 says the unclean spirits are like frogs. If you ever try to do any frog gigging, you will find that they are very slippery and hard to get hold of. That is the way these spirits are. They are difficult to pin down. You would have to be a skilled attorney to deal with some people because if you do not have every word just right, they say, "I didn't say that."

Verse 14 says they are the spirits of devils working miracles. Let me qualify this statement. John introduced the expression "working miracles." Then in Revelation 13:11 he said, "And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth." This beast represents the religious system of Protestantism, which came from the minds of men.

Revelation 13:13-14 tells us: "And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast." First, I want you to notice that verse 13 says "he doeth great *wonders*," and verse 14 speaks of "those *miracles*."

Verse 14 tells us that he "deceiveth them." A truly miraculous work is not a work of deception. Therefore, the fact that this is a work of deception lets us know these are not *true* wonders and miracles. Again, verse 13 reads, "And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men." These were nothing

more than miracles and wonders in the sight of men, or in the sight of people who do not have a knowledge of Truth. It is the work of deception. The spirits motivating false religion are deceptive spirits, and they are out to deceive and to damn the souls of men.

Verse 14 begins, "And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth [In other words, they deceive those who are not in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Ephesians 2:6 speaks of the position that the church occupies. However, these people of whom John spoke are on the low earthly level of man-made religion and are void of the knowledge of Truth.] by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast." These are merely an appearance of miracles in the sight of people who are in a system that does not have the revelation of Truth and does not understand the Truth. It appears to be something other than it is.

A Battle of Spirits

We read in 2 Thessalonians 2:9, "Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders." The Amplified Bible renders it, ". . . with all sorts of [pretended] miracles and signs and delusive marvels — [all of them] lying wonders." These deceptive works are designed to dupe the souls of men. When we rightly divide the Word of Truth, we find that the devil cannot work miracles. These spirits use supposed acts to gain influence and to deceive people.

We need to understand that the spirits that motivated those systems are no longer merely housed in the systems they originally produced. They have come out, and they are working right around the camp of the saints to deceive the saints of God. This is the reason we need some old-fashioned, Holy Ghost discernment. The enemy will plant tares right among the wheat. The Scripture talks about men right among the church rising up. The enemy wants to plant

ones right in amongst the camp of the saints. It will appear that God is using them in many ways, but the intent is to deceive the saints. These spirits are out to war against your soul, your experience, and the true church.

We are in a battle of spirits. The Apostle Paul used the analogy of putting on the whole armor of God in Ephesians 6:12, which tells us, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." One scholar said these are expressions used to denote various ranks and classes of demoniac spirits. The Greek Version says "wicked spirits" instead of "spiritual wickedness."

We are in a battle of spirits. Today a host of legions of unclean devilish spirits are loose and working. Sad to say, too many of them are successful. They are extremely cunning and sly. Without discernment you can be deceived. You may think, "Oh, I could not be deceived." Other people once thought the same thing, but today they are deceived.

Matthew 24:24 reads, "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders [they appear as though they are doing great wonders and as though God is really using them]; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." The words "it were" are in italics, which means they were not in the original Scriptures; translators inserted those words. The original text reads, "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if possible, they shall deceive the very elect." This is possible.

The Need of Discernment

Matthew 24:5 reads, "For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many." Many people misunderstand this. These are not people saying they are Christ, but rather they supposedly

acknowledge Christ. They could not deceive anyone if they said they were the Christ. Jesus said many would come in His name saying "I am Christ." They acknowledge Christ, but they deceive many. Without discernment we can be deceived.

Over the years, many people once enjoyed camp meetings, felt God's Spirit, and were thrilled with the Truths of God's Word; however, some came in amongst the sheep and deceived them. Tares were sown by the enemy amongst the wheat. Some propounded their particular ideas, and many were carried away.

When God brings Truth, it will bring people together and it will bring clarity, not confusion. God is not the author of confusion. Light does not confuse. Isaiah 5:20 tells us they "put darkness for light," but look what it produces. Many people cannot see clearly. This is a good indication that it is darkness and not light. You risk being deceived unless you can exercise discernment.

Consider the old prophet who deceived the man of God in 1 Kings, Chapter 13. The man of God prophesied against the altar and smote King Jeroboam, and Jeroboam put out his hand and his hand dried up. The man of God prayed and God restored the king's hand. The king then was more kind and invited him to come to his house, but the man of God said, in essence, "No, God told me not to come down to your house and not to go home the way I came." When the man of God was on his way home, he stopped to rest and an old prophet came along and lied to him and persuaded the man of God to go back with him.

Dear one, God's Word and His revelation of Truth to you does not change just because someone who has an influence on you tells you differently. That does not change the revelation of Truth that God gives you. Let us read some of this account. Verse 18 reads, "He said unto him, I am a prophet also as thou art [the man of God would not give consideration to the king when the king invited him to come, but when a

prophet came and said 'I am a prophet also,' he was influenced to change his mind]; and an angel spake unto me by the word of the LORD, saying, Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water. But he lied unto him."

Galatians 1:8 tells us, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." If you are not cautious, you can be moved away from a divine revelation that God has given you, just because of who is saying it. Godly influence is wonderful, but you need to be careful. You need to have enough discernment so that if something begins to cross up a divine revelation that God has given you, you will not be moved, no matter who says it, if God has not changed what He told you. If you read the rest of the account, you will find that because the man of God went back with the old prophet, a lion killed him in the way. Discernment would have prevented his death. Deceptive spirits work through people. The old prophet was being used by the devil.

What Does Spiritual Discernment Entail?

First Timothy 4:1 states, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." First John 2:26 reads, "These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you." Wrong spirits do not merely float around and inhabit the atmosphere; they work through people. Again, 1 John 4:1 instructs, "Beloved, believe not [do not be so gullible; do not take everything at face value] every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." Notice that they started out with spirits, but they picked up some bodies—now they are false prophets; these spirits are working through people.

In our Scripture text in Malachi,

the Prophet Malachi envisioned this New Testament dispensation. Verse 18 says, "Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not." Now, I recognize that 1 Corinthians 12:10 speaks of the gift of discerning spirits; that is a particular gift. However, Malachi was not speaking of the gift of discernment, but rather he was letting us know that we have the privilege of operating a certain level of discernment.

Our Scripture text says in verse 18, "Then shall ye [Who is the ye? Verse 16 says 'they that feared the Lord.'] return, and discern." This is a privilege that every saint can exercise.

First Corinthians 2:15 says, "But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man." Here we can gain insight as to what discernment actually is. When Paul said "he that is spiritual judgeth," he let us know this is a benefit for every spiritual person.

Someone may say, "I do not feel that I have much discernment." God wants you to be able to exercise more discernment, because it is for your own spiritual safety and welfare. The Greek word for *discernment* means "a judicial estimation," but bear in mind this is spiritual, not carnal.

Jesus tells us in John 7:24, "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment." This gives insight into what spiritual discernment entails. Isaiah 11:3 tells us, "And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears." Discernment is not something that comes through the natural senses. We are very earth-bound creatures, and we are affected by what we see and what we hear. Those things are important, but we need discernment because some people may look right, talk right, and act right, and yet be wrong.

Jesus had to deal with those whom He called "whited sepulchres." He said in Matthew 23:27, "Woe unto

you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness." In other words, they had no spiritual life, yet they had an outward form of religion. One could not put a finger on their lives outwardly, but inwardly something was wrong. Real spiritual discernment is vitally necessary. Spiritual discernment deals with a person's spirit. Righteous judgment is not the seeing of the eye or the hearing of the ear.

Having a Keen Ear to Hear

We read in Hebrews 5:14, "But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." Discernment is a spiritual sense. Have you ever met someone whom you had never seen before and in seconds you felt as if you had known that person all your life? Your spirit bore witness with their spirit, and there was sweet fellowship. On the other hand, you may feel uneasy every time you see another individual. When you start talking to that person, a warning signal may go off. You had better pay attention to that. You do not have to say anything to anybody; all you need to do is keep open to the Spirit of God. Sometimes when you give it enough time, you will understand why you felt that way. Discernment is a spiritual sense, and the more you use it, the more developed it will be.

We read in 1 Corinthians 2:14-16: "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ."

Real discernment is receiving the things of the Spirit. The latter part of verse 16 says that "we have the

mind of Christ," telling us that discernment is allowing the Spirit of God to judge a matter and then allowing Him to give you the mind of Christ concerning it.

John 16:13 says, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth." He will give you discernment concerning who is right and who is not right, and He "will guide you into all truth." How? The latter part of that verse says, ". . . he shall not speak of himself [in other words, the Holy Spirit does not take His own initiative]; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come."

Verse 14 continues, "He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." When Christ speaks to the Spirit and reveals His mind, then the Spirit of God can reveal it to you and give you Christ's mind, or judgment, on the matter. Spiritual discernment is allowing the Spirit of God to judge a matter and receiving the things of the Spirit of God. We must have the mind of Christ. His judicial estimation reveals it to the Spirit, and the Spirit reveals it to you. As a Christian, it is very essential that you have a keen ear to hear what the Spirit says.

We read in 1 Kings 19:12, "And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice." The earthquake and the fire are natural elements. This reveals that God does not bring discernment to you through the natural; He works through the supernatural. He spoke in "a still small voice." The Hebrew translation of this word means "silent." This was not an audible voice, no more than an audible voice speaks to you and me.

Verse 13 reads, "And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him. . . ." The Septuagint Version talks about a still, small voice as a voice of a gentle breeze. What is the breeze? John, Chapter 3, lets you know the Spirit is like the wind. You

need not look to natural things to receive the discernment you need, but you must have an ear to hear the Spirit of God.

Isaiah 30:21 says, "And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left." When the enemy tries to get you to veer off the path of righteousness, an inaudible voice will speak to your mind that will let you know, "Do not go that way; do not make that move."

The Operation of Discernment

Our Scripture text in Acts 16:16-18 gives keen insight concerning the operation of discernment: "And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying: The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation. And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour."

Paul wanted to seek direction from the Lord. They were forbidden to go every other direction except west, so they began to move west. Then he got a vision of the man, which was the Macedonia call to go over and help them. That was the first call to take the Gospel into Europe. They came to Philippi, and verse 13 says, "And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made." So this is where they were as they went to prayer (verse 16). They were where prayer was accustomed to be made, with Lydia the seller of purple and the other sisters.

Verse 16 also tells us this was where "a certain damsel possessed with the spirit of divination" met them. Many times the wrong spirit seeks out where Truth is trying to work. In our Scripture text we see

Paul, a missionary, trying to find the will of God. This chapter is a beautiful picture of Holy Spirit leadership.

Acts 16:6-7 tells us: "Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia [these were ancient provincial areas in Asia Minor], and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, After they were come to Mysia [where they had moved west], they assayed to go into Bithynia [which was north]; but the Spirit suffered them not." The Spirit shut off every other avenue.

Verse 9 reads, "And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia [which was west, on the European side], and help us." They had just gotten into Philippi and assembled with Lydia and the other sisters. They were beginning their first missionary endeavor on the European continent, and there in the first service was the devil. The devil was right there in Philippi, portraying that many times the wrong spirits seek out where Truth is trying to work.

Acts 8:13, speaking of Simon the sorcerer, reads, "Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip." Simon went through the motions of getting saved. He feigned the conversion. Obviously, Philip lacked a little in the area of discernment, because he baptized Simon. Peter came along and let Simon know that he was full of the devil. The difference was that Peter was an Apostle, or one who was supposed to sow new congregations. Philip was an evangelist; his call was to come along and strengthen them after they had been established. Philip did not have the same gift that Peter had.

Discerning More Than the Eye Can See

Acts 8:18-23 reads: "And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money,

Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity."

How did Peter find out about Simon's condition? He found out the same way he found out about Ananias and Sapphira: he had spiritual discernment. Many times a wrong spirit seeks to work where Truth is. The enemy will try to work wherever Truth is going forth. This is the reason we need discernment.

Psalm 55:12-14, 21 reads: "For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him: But it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company. . . . The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart: his words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords."

You cannot go by the seeing of the eye, by the hearing of the ears, or by the natural appearance. We read in Psalm 64:2-4: "Hide me from the secret counsel of the wicked; from the insurrection of the workers of iniquity: Who whet their tongue like a sword, and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words: That they may shoot in secret at the perfect: suddenly do they shoot at him, and fear not." They work in secret. They want to get you alone. They may say, "I am just telling you this so that you can pray." You ought to drop on your knees and start praying, because you will find that they are not interested in praying; they are

only interested in talking.

In our Scripture text in Acts, Chapter 16, we find that where Truth was beginning to work, the enemy moved in. In verse 17 we read, "The same followed Paul and us." This damsel possessed with a spirit of divination purported to be following them. Many times in order to gain confidence and to be effective in their diabolical work, people appear to be followers. They could not deceive anybody if they did not. The woman in our Scripture text was a follower, and she was vocal in her support. However, just as you read in Psalm 55:21, "The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart: his words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords." What was in the heart? War was in the heart.

If you will examine the words of this damsel, you will find that she said nothing wrong. Look at her words in verse 17: "These men are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation." Although nothing was wrong with what she said, an evil spirit was back of it. Some people say the right things and act the right way to gain an influence. This is where you really need to understand discernment. What she said was the truth, but the spirit behind it was of the devil. Technically, there are people that cannot be faulted by their words, but the spirit behind what they say and their intentions behind them are devilish works. Just because someone can speak well, seems knowledgeable, sings, testifies, or even preaches does not mean that he or she has the right spirit. The devil has more preachers than God has.

"By Their Fruits Ye Shall Know Them"

How can you know when a wrong spirit is working? Our Scripture text reveals this. Also, Paul said in Romans 9:6, "Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel." They are not all Church of

God who say they are Church of God. Being the Church of God takes more than a sign over the door, and it takes more than a name and a profession. You could stand in a garage all day, but that would not make you a mechanic. When Paul said, "They are not all Israel, which are of Israel," he was saying that everything is not as it seems. Everything that glitters is not gold. There is a lot of fool's gold out there.

Jeremiah 7:4 reads, "Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, are these." The next verse says to "amend your ways and your doings." It is not what people say that is so important, but it is what kind of tracks they are leaving behind them. Today people do not say "the temple of the LORD," but they say "the Church of God." In other words, people can say they are Church of God, but what about their doings? What about their ways? What are they producing? Jesus said in Matthew 7:20, "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." When you go into a grocery store, where do you find the fruit? You find it in the produce section. Jesus was saying that you will know people by what their lives produce.

How can you determine when a wrong spirit is working? Acts 16:18 says, "Paul, being grieved. . ." What does this mean? The Greek word for *grieved* comes from a word that means "anguish or pain." What type of anguish or pain was this? Isaiah 54:6 tells us, "For the LORD hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit." Paul was grieved in his spirit. Christ had the same type of anguish over spiritual conditions. We read in John 11:33, "When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled." Jesus was grieved over the spiritual condition of those unbelieving Jews. His grief was in His spirit, because He discerned their spiritual conditions.

One way to discern a wrong spirit is, a wrong spirit brings a

wrong effect to your spirit. The damsel walking behind Paul was saying the right thing, yet his spirit was grieved. It was having a negative effect because it was a wrong spirit. A wrong spirit begins to confuse, depress, and grieve.

Romans 8:16 tells us, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." When someone has the Spirit of God, he might not have an understanding of Truth; however, if his spirit is right, you should be able to discern that. When a wrong spirit is working, you will begin to feel anguish and discomfort. A person may be just testifying, but you will feel that something is just not right. Maybe the person has not said anything wrong, but it brings the wrong effect on your spirit. In the song "The Shield of Faith" in the *Evening Light Hymnal*, the first half of verse 3 says, "And when trouble specters round thee, Come, thy spirit to depress." Any spirit that brings a heaviness, when the effect depresses you, brings anguish or pain, or even if things said appear to be correct, it is a wrong spirit. God does not push us down; He lifts us up.

Psalms 3:3 states, "But thou, O LORD, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head." God will lift you up. One way you can tell an accusing spirit this: when an accusing spirit comes, it starts pushing you down and telling you that you are wrong, but it will not tell you what is wrong. That is a devilish spirit. God comes to edify and lift up, not to push down.

Isaiah 61:3 says, "To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." God's Spirit does not put a person under a heaviness in that sense (I am not talking about burdens).

The Need to Sharpen Your Spirituality

When we look at our Scripture text, we see that the woman had a

deceptive spirit. What she said was correct, but the spirit behind what she said was devilish. We need to understand that we are living in a time when religious spirits are loose. They have come out, and they are working around the camp of the saints. You need to have Holy Ghost discernment so that you can tell what type of spirit is working. You need to have discernment to judge the effect on your spirit whether it is something that will build up or tear down, something that will clarify or confuse. Is it going to effect greater unity or cause division?

Jude 4 states, "For there are certain men crept in unawares [if we were aware of them, they could not do their devilish work, so they do their best to make themselves look like saints, act like saints, and talk like saints], who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ." What are they doing? They want to turn people away from the Lord Jesus Christ. They do not deny His existence, but they deny His Lordship. When people try to turn others against the Lordship of Jesus Christ, that is a devilish work. Jude warned that these are certain men crept in unawares.

We read in 2 Peter 2:1, "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you. . . ." He was talking to Church of God people. Ecclesiastes 1:9 says, "There is no new thing under the sun." If you want to know what lies ahead, look back at what has already happened. The preacher said earlier in that verse, "The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be." The devil has never yet had to open a new bag of tricks. The old ones are still working. Peter went on to say in 2 Peter 2:1-2: ". . . who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of." Just as there were false teachers in the first century, so there are in the twenty-first century.

Acts 20:30 tells us, "Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." That ought to be a warning to you. Truth is not done in the corner. When Truth comes, it will be something that people will be able to see and understand. Just as these things occurred in bygone days, they will occur today. From time to time, it will try to work in a congregation, and it will certainly try to work in the church at large. We must be ever vigilant. We do not have to accept everything at face value. We do not have to be gullible.

Again, 1 John 4:1 says, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God." We have the privilege of exercising the spiritual sense of discernment in this critical time when spirits are feverishly working. May God help us as never before.

Our Scripture text instructed us to "discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not." First Corinthians 2:15 tells us, "But he that is spiritual judgeth all things." How spiritual are you? If you do not feel that you have much discernment, then you need to sharpen your spirituality, and there are many ways that you can do that. May God help us all to exercise a greater degree of discernment. If we do not, we could fall prey to many things.

Dear heart, if you do not feel that your discernment is as sharp as it ought to be, you need to look at your spirituality. The Bible lets you know that you can pray. You can ask God to help you; then as He begins to reveal things to you, you need to make sure that you exercise that which He reveals and put it into practice. Spiritual discernment affords us great safety. May God help you to take hold of these truths and put them on so that you are not so susceptible to the moves of the enemy.

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Recrd. No.	Date	Message Title	Minister
TR-807	6-19-11	Characteristics of a Good Father	Bro. Roger L. Decker
TR-808		Superficial Worship Versus Heartfelt Worship	Bro. E. David Stegmeier
TR-810	6-20-11	Planting, Cultivating, Inspecting, and Tasting the Fruit of the Spirit: Love	Bro. E. David Stegmeier
TR-811		Are You in a Prison?	Bro. Larry Dishman
TR-812	6-21-11	Teacher, Is It Nothing to You That We Are Going Down?	Bro. Lee Green
TR-813		Planting, Cultivating, Inspecting, and Tasting the Fruit of the Spirit: Joy	Bro. E. David Stegmeier
TR-814		What Is Right With the Church?	Bro. Larry Dishman
TR-815	6-22-11	In the Way	Bro. Anson Johnson
TR-816		Planting, Cultivating, Inspecting, and Tasting the Fruit of the Spirit: Peace	Bro. E. David Stegmeier
TR-817		Ready or Not, Here He Comes	Bro. Larry Dishman
TR-818	6-23-11	We Are All Dwelling in a Holy Habitation	Bro. Ryan O'Neil
TR-819		Planting, Cultivating, Inspecting, and Tasting the Fruit of the Spirit: Long-suffering	Bro. E. David Stegmeier
TR-820		There's a Line That Is Drawn by Rejecting the Lord	Bro. Larry Dishman
TR-821	6-24-11	The Old School	Bro. Calvin Foster
TR-822		Planting, Cultivating, Inspecting, and Tasting the Fruit of the Spirit: Gentleness and Goodness	Bro. E. David Stegmeier
TR-823		Thanks to Calvary	Bro. Larry Dishman
TR-824	6-25-11	Help	Bro. Allen Polston
TR-826		A Prayer Meeting in Hell	Bro. Larry Dishman
TR-827	6-26-11	A Deep-Settled Peace	Bro. Richard Talbot
TR-828		Planting, Cultivating, Inspecting, and Tasting the Fruit of the Spirit: Meekness and Temperance	Bro. Reggie Stegmeier
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TM-253	2011	Spring Camp Meeting Songs #1	
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