

SOUNDING FORTH THE SEVENTH AND LAST TRUMPET

Vol. 46 January 2016 No. 1



Church of God Tabernacle in Newark, Ohio

**"I was glad when they said unto me,  
Let us go into the house of the Lord."  
Psalm 122:1**

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

# Guest Editorial

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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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"Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."

Hebrews 3:12-13

### A HEART OF UNBELIEF

The Hebrew writer exhorted Christians to "Take heed," lest they be overtaken by a spirit of unbelief. Many people have fallen prey to this tyrant. None of us has it made. There is always the possibility of losing out with God. You may be saved today and be in good spiritual condition, but that can change if you fail to watch and stay alert. If others have lost out, it can happen to you also. The enemy is ever seeking an opportunity to turn the child of God away from the old paths of righteousness.

It is so important to take heed to yourself, to be serious, and to be sober and diligent about the things of God and your soul. Why? It is possible for you to become faint in your mind and begin thinking that serving God is too difficult. You must guard against becoming weary in the battle for Truth and right. You should never entertain the thought of laying your armor down. I ask you to consider the pitfalls that so many have fallen into and thereby lost their connection with God. We must realize that one day this life will come to an end. The race will soon be over, and only those who have been faithful to God, who have stood firmly, and who have endured to the end will obtain the final reward of Heaven.

In the Old Testament you can find many examples of the children of Israel failing and going back on the Lord. Oftentimes they provoked Him to anger with their unbelief. They did not believe that He would carry them through and supply all their needs.

When the Israelites were in the wilderness, they complained and murmured against God and His man. They complained of having no food to eat. God sent manna from heaven, but that soon became distasteful. Then they began to murmur and complain because they had no water to drink. God sent forth water from a rock. When the Israelites came to the place of entering Canaan land, which God had promised, they did not believe He would destroy the giants who lived there. Their unbelief caused them to send out spies to seek out the land. God's wrath was stirred to the degree that He said in Hebrews 3:11, "They shall not enter into my rest."

Unbelief working in the heart stirs the wrath of God. There is no sound reason for anyone not to believe God. The Lord performed many mighty miracles before their eyes. He is still doing great things for men and women today, yet some people grow careless in their souls because things do not go the way they think they should. Because God does not answer prayer as quickly as some wish, they are ready to give up on God. These misguided souls entertain the thought of turning back to the old sinful life, and those things they were once delivered from start to look good to them.

This deceptive thinking arouses God's displeasure. Unless those thoughts are quickly cast aside, one may find himself in serious trouble with the Lord. Jesus stated in Luke 9:62, "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back,

[continued on page 13]

# **The Cardinal Teachings of the Church**

## **The Discipline of the Church**



*Brother Roger L. Decker*

### **Obeying God's Word From the Heart**

We are continuing our study of the cardinal teachings of the church. As previously stated, not another religious organization or denomination anywhere in this world can stand on these teachings that are biblically based. The only church or assembly built by God with these teachings as their foundation is the Church of God. In a world where the church has been belittled, blasphemed, run down, and persecuted, it is time, if not past time, to elevate her to the glory that God gave her.

One of the minor prophets,

Zechariah, had this to say in Zechariah 2:8: "For thus saith the LORD of hosts; After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye." We read in Lamentations 2:18, "Their heart cried unto the LORD, O wall of the daughter of Zion, let tears run down like a river day and night: give thyself no rest; let not the apple of thine eye cease." God loves the Church of God; that is His body, and that is the only church He purchased at Calvary when He gave His life and was crucified on that particular day. He purchased and redeemed the Church of God.

The Apostle Paul wrote in Acts 20:28, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, [What is an overseer's position?] to feed the church of God, which he [Christ] hath purchased with his own blood."

As we continue these teachings, we want to look at the discipline of the church. Discipline is not a subject that many like to engage in, especially if you are on the receiving end, but it is necessary in every walk of your life. The word *discipline* means "training or rules to help improve a skill; training to improve behavior with rules of conduct main-

tained by teaching control."

The church that Jesus built is neither Catholic nor Protestant. Her discipline is neither of these teachings. These religions have accepted something else besides the Bible as their rules of conduct. For example, regarding the question of sin, no human creed or teaching can deliver its members from sin. It takes the pure Word of God preached in its fullness to bring a soul in right relationship with God.

In Romans 6:17-18 we read these words: "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." The doctrine is a discipline, or a set of guidelines. The only thing that will set people free from sin is Truth. We should really thank God for this. I sometimes wonder, "Why did God send Truth my way?" Of all the millions of people in New York State, God worked a way that I could hear the Truth. Many, many people have received Truth, but only those who walk in it reap the benefits. I repeat, the only thing that will set people free from sin is Truth, not something made up, but the pure Word of God.

### **The Way of Truth**

It says in Psalm 119:140, "Thy word is very pure: therefore thy servant loveth it." That is a good verse, is it not? We read in Proverbs 30:5, "Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him." First Timothy 3:15 says, "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."

The truth is the support, or the mainstay, of the church. Not one sectarian denomination stands for all the Truth. Now, some sects and denominations contain some truths, but they do not contain all the Truth; therefore, they cannot be the church

that Jesus built. The Church of God is the apex of the Truth. The Church of God preaches all the Truth.

Some may say, "Well, it does not make any difference what you believe as long as you are sincere and devout in your beliefs." You can be as devout and sincere as anyone on this earth, but if it is not Truth, then you are going to end up in a lost eternity. It *does* make a difference what you believe. There is nothing wrong with sincerity; may God help us to have more of it, but it has to be mixed with Truth.

We read in Joshua 24:14, "Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD." First Corinthians 5:8 states, "Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."

You cannot have spiritual life and be disobedient to the Word of God, although some are trying. Some are just pushing themselves along as each day goes by. If you are in that condition, you must stop and get awakened again, because evidently you are asleep spiritually. You are never going to succeed in what you are doing until you come back to the way of Truth. Whatever the cost, you need to pay it. If you will pay it, you will find that it pays great dividends. You must sell out completely. Do not keep trudging on. Some just trudge on like a man walking through three or four feet of snow, dragging one foot after the other, but you need to turn yourself around and get back to Jesus Christ.

John 6:63 says, "It is the spirit that quickeneth [or gives life]; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." We will face the Word of God at the Judgment. Many people seem to think the Judgment is going to be as nothing. They seem to think they will be able to convince God of this or that and He will say,

"Well, you have been a fairly good person; come on in." Friend, it is not going to work that way. The Word of God is going to judge you, and you need to be on the right side of the Word of God at the Judgment.

### **The Seriousness of the Times**

Jesus said in John 12:47-48: "And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." It is necessary to believe God's Word, because when you go to the Judgment, that is what you will face. You will be either justified or condemned. You are going to be told either to enter or to depart from Him.

The Word of God must be taken seriously. It is getting late to be playing church. Do not play around with God's Word. If you are not straight, you need to get straight. If you have things that are crooked in your life, you need to get them straightened out. You would have a better chance of making it if you were to grab hold of a high tension wire than if you mess around with the Word of God. This is serious.

Who knows when God is going to call you into eternity? You do not have to be old to die. If you go to a cemetery, you will see that death comes to individuals of all ages. There are graves out there for little babies as well as the old. It is not always older people who pass out of this world. It is time to take the Word of God seriously.

Matthew 24:36-41 reads: "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took

them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left."

Jesus put forth the truth of the day when the Son of man comes. What kind of day is it going to be? It will be just as any other day. It is going to be just like the day before, the week before, or the month before. Life will be as usual, with buying, selling, and eating. Those are natural things. Then He went on to portray two women grinding in the mill. This is a picture of the true church and false religion both working to grind out spiritual food to its members. In the Word of God false religion is pictured as a lewd woman who will do business with anyone at the right price.

### **The True Church**

You can read in Revelation 17:1-6: "And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.

"And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of

Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration."

The true church, the bride of Christ, is not involved in fornication; however, the lewd church, the prostitute, mixes with anything and everything for the right price. She will have singspirations, regardless of whether the singers or the players on the instruments are saved; it makes no difference there. Why? They just sing for entertainment. I tuned a radio to a religious station and listened to a song, and there was not much difference between that religious song and rock music. The beat was the same. That is the way many of these singspirations are in many places. They are nothing but entertainment.

The true church, the woman, is working; she is grinding out the pure Word of God. She is not mixing or joining with false religion to add to her numbers or to take in money. She does not have bingo parties, soup suppers, or such things. How does she get her numbers? She preaches the pure Word of God. She will not compromise or let down the standard; she wants to please her Husband. She is the true bride of Christ, and He still has everything she needs.

When you get on this highway of holiness, there are some things that you are going to need. Jesus Christ, the Head, has everything you need. For example, in Isaiah 55:1-3 the Prophet Isaiah said this: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David."

Many years ago, the late Brother Emerson Wilson consented to hold a

revival in another state with a family to try to get them out of false religion. The place he used was a grange hall, and right beside that grange hall, they had an artesian well. They had a spigot there and it was good, cool water. He was able to hook up his camper to it and get all the free, pure water he needed. Brother Wilson took his text from Isaiah, Chapter 55: "Ho, every one that thirsteth. . . ." He preached there for the remainder of the week, and one night it got very tight in there. As he was preaching, he came around the pulpit and into the aisle and said: "Whether you take the Truth or not, I had a congregation to preach to before I came here, and I'll have one when I go back. All I will do is shake the dust off my feet and go down the highway." That was very sobering.

You cannot fool around with the Word of God. When Brother Wilson felt their rejection, he quoted Matthew 10:14, which states, "And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet."

### **The Word of God Is a Premium**

In a world so mixed up, the Word of God has been slaughtered and mixed with almost everything. Wherever you turn, you find some man's opinion or idea or a new version of the Bible. This life is moving fast. You graduate from high school, and perhaps attend college, and then comes marriage and children. The next thing you know, you are in your thirties, forties, fifties, sixties, and seventies, and soon life is over. There are no do-over's in life. It will do you no good to say, "I wish I could do that over," because you are not going to get that opportunity. The water is under the bridge, so to speak, and the time is gone. If you are going to do something for God, you need to get at it now. It is time to really settle down and get serious.

Jesus was saying through the Prophet Isaiah that there is no charge for Truth. It is given to the poor as

well as the rich. It is given to the old as well as the young. It is given to the popular as well as the one who might be a bum on the street; it is given to all. The bread that is given is unleavened bread. First Corinthians 5:8 reads, "Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." Leaven signifies hypocrisy. Luke 12:1 says, "In the mean time, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trode one upon another, he began to say unto his disciples first of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy." Leaven also represents false doctrine.

Matthew 16:6-12 tells us: "Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have taken no bread. Which when Jesus perceived, he said unto them, O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread? Do ye not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees? Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees."

False religion is a curse to this world. Not everybody is right. Only one way is right. You have more chance of making it while sitting in a barroom than you have in some denominations. I am glad that when God found me, I was not sitting in a sectarian church, thinking I was all right when I was all wrong. One reason that homosexuality and abortion are so prevalent today is due to gutless preachers who are

compromisers and who are afraid of losing their jobs. A man bringing a man to a man or a man bringing a woman to a woman is the opposite of what the Bible says in the Book of Genesis. Genesis 2:22 says God brought the woman to the man. False preachers are not called to preach. All they want to do is fleece the people.

### **Enduring Sound Doctrine**

Second Timothy 4:2-3: "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come [may God help us, for the time is already here] when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears."

Paul said ones will not endure sound doctrine. What is sound doctrine? It is wholesome, pure doctrine. Many will endure doctrine if a preacher preaches it like they believe. They will endure it if he tells them that it makes no difference how they dress and that Jesus does not care about the outside because he looks on the heart.

Were you won to the Lord by looking at somebody's heart? On the contrary, you were won to Christ by looking at the manifestations of the heart, which means that you were looking on the outside. We are not God. We cannot see on the inside, but what you have on the inside spreads to the outside. When we look, we look at the outside, which is the manifestation of what is on the inside: a person's actions, conduct, speech, and so on.

How did our nation get into such bad shape as to have so many churches and yet have so much moral and spiritual decay? There is a reason that all of this has happened. There is a reason that so many people think that abortion is the way to go. There is a reason that same-sex marriage is allowed today. There is a reason that people march in the streets to proclaim and flaunt their

sexuality. The reason is found right in the Word of God.

In 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12 the Apostle Paul wrote: "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

Your spiritual walk with Christ and whether you will be kept till the end will be determined by your *love* for the Truth. I am going to prove it to you with the Scriptures. I am not talking about liking the Truth, acknowledging the Truth, or just hearing the Truth, but actually *loving* the Truth. Jude, verse 21 reads, "Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." Where did Jude say to keep yourself? He said to keep yourself in the love of God. What was the charge? There was leaven in the church at Ephesus.

### **Having a Love for the Truth**

What was the charge as compromise and apostasy began to take hold of the morning-time church? Jesus said in Revelation 2:4, "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love." What was the fix for this congregation? The answer is found in verse 5: "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent." What was the cure? It was not just to start loving the Truth again; the cure was repentance. The problem is, many people in this world, even some who claim to be Christians, do not want to repent.

If your love for the Truth is not still hot in your soul, then something is going to replace it, and you are going to end up being damned. I could not speak this any more ser-

iously than I am speaking now. If you have something else that you love besides the Truth, you had better get your fill of it while you are able to in this life, because you will have all eternity to wonder why you did not love the Truth instead.

Some people buck up against the standard of the church, and God gets sick and tired of babying them. They buck up against this, and they buck up against that. Jesus may try to console them a little and pamper them when they ought to have moved on, but when He sees they do not love the Truth, He lets them believe a lie, as if it does not even matter. They have let down the standard, yet they still believe they are in the Truth. How did that happen? They did not really love the Truth, so God let them go. They believe a lie. Maybe that does not mean anything to you, but when you mess around, God will let you go your own way. Soon, the old way of living will begin to creep in again. I have witnessed it. When people start to question the Word of God, next apostasy begins to come in, and then you cannot tell them from people in any other sectarian organization. It does not take long when disobedience starts.

What happened in America? It was not just the fact that the people elected a liberal president, although that helped. Where did it start? It started when they took prayer out of the schools and allowed the American flag to be burned in public. There is an answer to all of that, and it is found in the Word of God. Isaiah wrote in Isaiah 1:21, "How is the faithful city become an harlot! it was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers."

## **Redeemed With Judgment Preaching**

What is the answer to the problems? Isaiah 1:26-27 tells us: "And I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning: afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, the faithful city. Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness." What worked in a spiritual nation such as old Israel then also works in a literal nation called the United States. What is it? Judges who will adhere to the letter of the law need to be elected to office and preachers, pastors, and evangelists need to preach judgment. Then we will start to see some changes take place. The judges need to get out of politics.

Somebody may say, "You should not be in politics." It is part of us. We are surrounded by it every day. We have to face it when we read the newspaper.

There is discipline administered by those who hold office in the church. Discipline is not meant to destroy but rather to help one to grow, to mature, and to work out the wrong. Some people feel that to speak out against false religion is wrong. Well, you are a little late. You should have gotten that message to Jesus, because in Matthew, Chapter 23, Jesus spoke eight woes, and every one of those woes were poured out on false systems of worship. I am talking about the Sadducees, the scribes, the elders, and the Pharisees. Jesus called them "whited sepulchres" and hypocrites.

Who were the Sadducees and the Pharisees? They were of the Jewish religion of that day. Their religion

was not pure religion. James 1:27 says, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." There it is again. There is only one religion, and James tells how to recognize it. You can recognize it because they keep themselves unspotted from the world. It is called holiness. God's people live holy; they live right. They like living holy, or living right. It is not a hard task for them. It is something that they do daily.

What is the discipline of the Church of God? It is obedience to God's Word; that is the discipline tool. The messages may be shocking to you, especially if you are used to living out in the world. It may be shocking to hear that you are not dressing right or acting right. You can do one of two things. You can take off and run from God or you can line up with the Word and be blessed for the rest of your life. I am glad that I chose the latter.

Discipline is one of the cardinal teachings of the church. Denominations and sects cannot stand on these basic truths. If they did, they would no longer be a denomination; they would be the Church of the Living God.

If you are not doing well, do not stay in that condition. Why? Your heart will get harder, and next you will be taken over by a wrong spirit or a wrong attitude. You should take the discipline of the Word of God. The happiest days of your life will be when you are obeying the Word of God.

*(Compact Disc TR-1383E)*

**The Cross of Christ reveals the love of God at its best and the sin of man at its worst.**

*Jeremiah 13:21 What wilt thou say when he shall punish thee? for thou hast taught them to be captains, and as chief over thee: shall not sorrows take thee, as a woman*

*in travail?*

*22 And if thou say in thine heart, Wherefore come these things upon me? For the greatness of thine iniquity are thy skirts discovered, and*

*thy heels made bare.*

*23 Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.*



# Whom Will You Blame for Your Lost Soul?

*Brother Larry Dishman*

## **Choosing Your Eternal Destination**

Our Scripture text says, "What wilt thou say when he shall punish thee?" If you are without the Lord and die in that condition, you are going into a lost eternity. There, according to the Word of God, you will be punished. Matthew 25:46 says, "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." Most people believe that the righteous will go into eternal life and there will be no end to the joy, the happiness, and the glory that we will share throughout eternity. However, the same chapter

and the same verse speaks of those who are not saved going into everlasting punishment. Second Thessalonians 1:9 reads, "Whom shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."

What would you say if you were to stand before God at the Judgment unprepared to meet Him? What would you say if He were to punish you? Whom would you blame for your lost condition? It is easy to put the blame on other people. It may make you feel better if you put the blame on somebody else or on a circumstance. If you got caught by

the police going twenty miles over the speed limit and the officer gave you a ticket, you would feel bad about it, but you might feel a little better if you had a good excuse.

In the Bible Adam and Eve blamed their sin on others. In Genesis 3:12 Adam said, "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." Eve blamed the serpent. Genesis 3:13 reads, "And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat." What would you say? Whom would you blame? We read in Matthew 7:22, "Many will

say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?"

As Christians, we should be careful of what we say and of how we live so we do not cause souls to be lost. We must take heed to what the Bible says in Ezekiel 3:17-18: "Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand."

### **Are You Lighting the Way for Others?**

An old song entitled "You Never Mentioned Him to Me" says:

*When in a better land before the throne we stand,  
How deeply grieved our souls will be;  
If any lost one there should cry in deep despair,  
You never mentioned Him to me.*

*O let us spread the Word where'er it may be heard,  
Help groping souls the light to see,  
That yonder none may say,  
You showed me not the way,  
You never mentioned Him to me.*

*A few sweet words may guide a lost one to His side,  
Or turn sad eyes on Calvary;  
So work as day goes by, so that yonder none may cry,  
You never mentioned Him to me.*

*You never mentioned Him to me,  
You helped me not the light to see;  
You met me day by day and you knew I was astray,  
Yet never mentioned Jesus to me.*

Father, what about your sons? I read a poem entitled "Does Daddy Go?" It says:

*Daddy had a little boy,  
His soul was white as snow,  
He never went to Sunday school,  
Cause Daddy wouldn't go.*

*He never heard the Word of God,  
That thrills the childish mind,  
While other children went to class,  
This child was left behind.*

*As he grew from babe to youth,  
Dad saw to his dismay,  
A soul that once was snowy white,  
Became a dingy gray.*

*Realizing that his son was lost,  
Dad tried to win him back;  
But now the soul that once was white,  
Had turned an ugly black.*

*Dad even started back to church  
And Bible study too;  
He begged his preacher, Isn't there  
A thing that you can do?*

*The preacher tried, failed, and said,  
"We're just too far behind;  
I tried to tell you years ago,  
But you would pay no mind."*

*And so another soul was lost,  
That once was white as snow;  
Sunday school would have helped  
But Daddy wouldn't go.*

Mother, are you living for God? Are you setting the right example before your daughters? What about your brothers, sisters, and your next door neighbors? As Christians, we should be careful that we live blameless lives.

I want you to read another poem entitled "My Friend" by D. J. Higgins.

*My friend, I stand in judgment now,  
And feel that you're to blame somehow.  
On earth, I walked with you day by day,*

*And never did you point the way.*

*You knew the Lord and truth and glory,  
But never did you tell that old, old story.  
My knowledge then was very dim,  
And you could have led me safe to Him.*

*And though we lived together on earth,  
You never told me of your second birth.  
And now I stand this day condemned,  
Because you failed to mention Him.*

*You taught me many things, that's true,  
I called you friend and trusted you.  
But I learned now that it's all too late,  
And you could have kept me from hell and my fate.*

*We walked by day and talked by night,  
And yet you showed me not the light,  
You let me live, love, and die,  
And you knew I'd never live on high.  
I called you friend in life,  
I trusted you in joy and strife.  
Yet now coming to this horrible end,  
Could I now call you my friend?*

### **God Is Not Willing That Any Should Perish**

Our Scripture text asks the question, "What wilt thou say when he shall punish thee?" Whom are you going to blame? Sinner friend, you cannot say that you were not included in this great salvation plan. Everybody in the world has been included in God's great salvation plan. So no one can say to God, "I was not included; I was excluded."

Hebrews 2:9 reads, "That he [Jesus] by the grace of God should taste death for every man." According to the Word of God, His blood

was not shed for only a few select people. Thank God, His blood was shed for every man.

First John 2:1-2 says: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." Christ is the propitiation for our sins, but John went on to say, "and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." His blood was shed for you! However, you need to meet the conditions for salvation.

Sinner friend, you cannot blame God if you end up in a lost eternity. No one can say, "God, it is Your fault," because the Bible says in 2 Peter 3:9, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

God does not want one soul to perish. He wants all to come to repentance. No matter where you are in life, if you are a good moral person or if you are at the very bottom, He is not willing for you to perish. Therefore, God has never devised or decreed the damnation of any man. In other words, God does not sit in Heaven and say, "I choose to save this one, and I choose to send that one to hell." God never decreed to send any man to hell.

Men go to hell because they refuse God's mercy. If God were not willing to save all men, it would be easy for Him to cut some people off and exclude them from hope immediately. "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" (John 3:16). You will not be able to blame God. He is the One who gave His Son so that you might have life, and that you might have it more abundantly.

I like what Ezekiel had to say about this. In Ezekiel 33:11 we read, "Say unto them, As I live, saith the

Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" God is still the same today. He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked. He wants all people to turn from their wicked ways. God has no pleasure in the death of wicked sinners because it is a state in which He can no longer show His favor to them. When mercy has had its day, there is nothing left but judgment once an individual leaves this life unprepared to meet God.

### **Jesus Came to Save Sinners**

The only possible way in which the sinner's death, spiritually speaking, can be avoided is for the sinner himself to turn from his evil ways and live. That is what the church is praying for. We want to see sinners turn from their evil ways and live. Someone may say, "Well, I want to hold on to my evil ways, but I want to be saved at the same time." It does not work that way. You have to turn *from* your evil ways. The Bible says if the wicked will forsake his way, God will have mercy, He will pardon, and He will forgive every sin.

We read in 1 Timothy 1:15, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." You cannot blame Jesus because He came to save sinners. Everybody was once a sinner. You may still be one, and if you are, Jesus came to save you.

Jesus said in John 10:10, "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." I thank God for that! God has more abundant life. You may say, "Oh, you do not know what a good time I am having!" Regardless of what a good time you are having, God has more abundant life. He will give you life more abundantly. If you have never been a real Christian, you can-

not make that judgment. I can make that judgment because I was once a sinner. I know what it is to live a life of sin, and now I know what it is to live the Christian life. This life is a more abundant life.

John 6:37 says, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." You cannot blame Jesus if you end up at the Judgment unprepared to meet God. He said all that come to Him He will in no wise cast out. Christ does not cast away a sinner who will come to Him and meet the conditions for salvation.

If you die lost, you cannot blame the Holy Ghost. I did not get saved the first time that God spoke to my heart. I went on until I was eighteen years of age before I got right with the Lord. Had I died during that period of time, I would not have had anybody to blame but myself, because the Holy Ghost of God had been faithful to me. The Holy Ghost of God has been faithful to you as well.

Revelation 22:17 says, "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." The Spirit still says come. Those people in Stephen's day could not blame the Holy Ghost because Stephen had given them a Holy Ghost message. He taught them in Acts 7:51, "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye."

### **Have You Been Born Again?**

Friend, you cannot blame circumstances, no matter what kinds of circumstances you might be faced with. Your circumstances will not excuse you on the Day of Judgment. You cannot blame a family member, a hypocrite, or a church problem. You will not be able to stand before God and bring any excuses that are going to get you into Glory, because you have no excuse if you do not

know the Savior. If you want to come to Christ, nothing can keep you from coming to Him. If you really want to be saved, nobody can keep you from being saved. If you want to live the Christian life, you *can* live the Christian life.

You cannot say, "I am not a sinner." Romans 3:23 tells us, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." You cannot say, "I do not need salvation." You need salvation because you are a sinner. Romans 5:12 says, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."

You cannot say, "I am doing the best I can" or "I am doing as well as any other individual." Matthew 19:16-22 reads: "And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions."

Within this man's own strength, he was doing the best he could. However, if you are a sinner, doing the best you can will not save you. Isaiah 64:6 says, "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away." The Bible says in Acts 13:39, "And by him all that believe are justifi-

fied from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."

Sinner friend, you cannot say, "I have turned over a new leaf, and I have joined a church." Turning over a new leaf, so to speak, will not save you, and joining a church will not save you. You cannot go to the Judgment and say: "Lord, do You remember when things started going bad and I decided to turn over a new leaf? I decided to stop drinking, stop smoking, and stop doing drugs."

You ought to quit those things, but simply quitting those things will not save you. You must be born again. I fear that many folks are trusting in putting their names on a church book. When someone asks them, "Are you a Christian?" many respond, "I joined the church years ago." Joining a church cannot save you and neither can being baptized in water. A person must be born again.

Titus 3:5 says, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Salvation does not come by turning over a new leaf, by being baptized, or by joining a church. It comes through the regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost.

Romans 3:24-28 tells us: "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law."

### **God Gives You a New Heart**

Sinner friend, you cannot say, "I have a good heart." Do you know

why? If you are without Christ, you do not have a good heart. That is the reason you need to be saved, because you have a bad heart. You might be a good moral person and do lots of things right, but you still have a bad heart. Luke 16:15 says, "And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God."

Jeremiah 17:9 tells us, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" If you are not a Christian, you have a heart within you that is desperately wicked. You need a new heart, and that is what salvation is all about. God does not work the old heart over. According to Ezekiel 36:26-27, He takes out the old stony heart and gives you a new heart. He said by giving you a new heart, you will keep His commandments. He will put His law in your heart.

We read in 1 Samuel 16:7, "But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart." If you are not saved, God sees that you need a new heart, and He is in the business of heart transplants. He does not lose anyone on the table. He is successful 100 percent of the time. He has never lost a patient who comes to Him wanting a new heart.

Someone may say, "Well, preacher, I am going to do all I can first, then I will trust the Lord for the rest." Proverbs 14:12 says, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." Friend, salvation is by grace through faith. You cannot work your own way into it. Romans 11:6 says, "And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work."

Ephesians 2:8-9 tells us: "For by

grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." Zechariah 4:6 states, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts." It is not what I can do or what you can do, but what God can do through us.

I like the Apostle Paul's testimony in Galatians, Chapter 2, where he said in so many words: "The life that I live, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me. It is really not me, but it is Christ living in me."

### **Heed the Warning**

Sinner friend, whom are you going to blame? You cannot say that God is too good to punish you in hell. Romans 6:23 says, "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Revelation 20:14a reads, "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire." If you end up in hell, you will go there by your own choice. You may say, "I have done nothing worthy of hell." Have you repented? If you have not repented, you have done something worthy of hell. In Luke 13:3 Jesus said, "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

Have you refused to believe on Christ? If you refuse to believe on Him, you have done something worthy of hell. The Bible lets you know that you are condemned because you have not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. We read in John 8:21-23: "Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come. Then said the Jews, Will he kill himself? because he saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come. And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world." Jesus said if you die in your sins, you cannot come where He is.

Sinner friend, you may say, "I have never been warned." This is what the rich man was talking to

Abraham about in Luke, Chapter 16. He realized there was no mercy for him, no water for him, and no way he could get his prayers answered. He could not get any relief or help. Then his mind was drawn to his brothers. He said, "Go and send Lazarus that he may warn them, lest they also come to this place of torment." What did Abraham say? He said, "They have Moses and the prophets: let them hear them."

Some people have been warned hundreds of times. I believe that some folks have had more than a thousand warnings. You cannot say nobody warned you. You have been warned. Some have been warned week after week. You are being warned right now. The Lord said in Genesis 6:3, "My spirit shall not always strive with man." Proverbs 29:1 says, "He, that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." We read in Job 36:18, "Because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke: then a great ransom cannot deliver thee."

You may say, "I have plenty of time to settle this matter." Nobody can say that. Nobody knows for sure that he has one more year or even one more month. Not a person alive has the assurance from God that he has another month to get right with God. Nobody can say, "I know for sure that I have one more day." The Bible says in 2 Corinthians 6:2, "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." In Hebrews we read that today is the day of salvation, but according to 2 Corinthians 6:2, we only have right now to decide. Now is the appointed time; now is the time of salvation.

One of my greatest fears is that folks who have been raised in the Church of God are getting hardened by failing to give heed to the Gospel. It is a dangerous thing to turn down the Gospel. If you do not accept it, and you keep rejecting it, it has an hardening effect on your heart. When a dear brother has preached an anointed, convicting message from

God, I wonder how people can leave unmoved after hearing the Word of God that deals with eternity, death, and what is beyond. How can people in need of salvation be unmoved? The answer is, they are being hardened to the Gospel. They think they can get saved whenever they get ready, so they keep hardening their hearts.

The Word of God ought to put some fear in your heart. We read in Proverbs 1:24-28: "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me." You do not know whether this will be the last time that you will be warned.

Isaiah 55:6 says, "Seek ye the LORD while he may be found." If the Holy Ghost of God is knocking on your heart's door, this is positive proof that you can find God. He would not convict your soul if you could not find Him. The very fact that He draws you is proof that you can find Him, but He said you have to do it "while he may be found."

### **Make the Right Choice**

Sinner, you may say, "I keep the Law." James said in James 2:10, "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." Romans 3:19 tells us, "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." It takes the blood of Jesus Christ to cleanse you from your sin.

When you come to the Judgment, you may think you will say, "God, I never had a choice." Joshua

24:15 says, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve." It is your choice. A song in the *Evening Light Songs* says, "Heaven or hell you are choosing." You are going to make a choice between Heaven and hell. I cannot make the choice for you, and no other minister can make the choice for you. Your parents cannot make the choice for you. God will not force you. He said, "I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live" (Deuteronomy 30:19).

I honestly believe one of the greatest torments of hell that will gnaw at you more than anything else throughout the ceaseless age of eternity is that you have to live with the thoughts in your mind: "I chose this;

it was my choice. I did not have to come here. I could have gotten saved and lived for the Lord." This is your choice, my friend.

You may say, "I do not believe in hell." Friend, it will only take you two seconds after death and you will become a believer in hell. You will realize that the Bible is the Word of God. You are a sinner. Christ died for you. You will realize that you could have been saved by repenting and trusting in Christ. The responsibility is yours. You must make the choice.

Romans 1:20 says, "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without

excuse." Sinner friend, if you fail to get saved, you are going to the Judgment without an excuse on that day. One song says: "*There is no excuse if you do not know the Savior. There is no excuse if you will not let Him in.*"

It does not take education to get saved, and it will not cost you a cent. You will not have any excuse if you die in sin. The Scripture says, "What wilt thou say when he shall punish thee?" What are you going to say then? What is your argument going to be? Whom are you going to blame? There will be only one person to blame, and that will be you. You will have to blame yourself.

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[Guest Editorial—continued from p. 2] is fit for the kingdom of God."

Times of temptation can be times of great danger. God is going to allow every person to be tested and proven to see what is truly in his heart. This time of testing is also a good opportunity for each one to see what is really motivating his life. Is it a true love for God and His way or does one just follow Him for the blessings he can receive? In Deuteronomy 8:2 we read, "And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no."

There is danger in temptation because it brings the possibility of becoming disgruntled. The devil causes some people to think the old life was a better way to live, a time when they had more pleasure and things went better. That is what the children of Israel thought when they faced hardships. They actually accused God of mistreating them and making their way hard. They also accused Moses of bringing them into the wilderness so they

would die. These accusations hurt God and stirred His wrath. The Scripture shows us that Israel's unbelief and disobedience in following God prevented them from gaining the rest He had promised them.

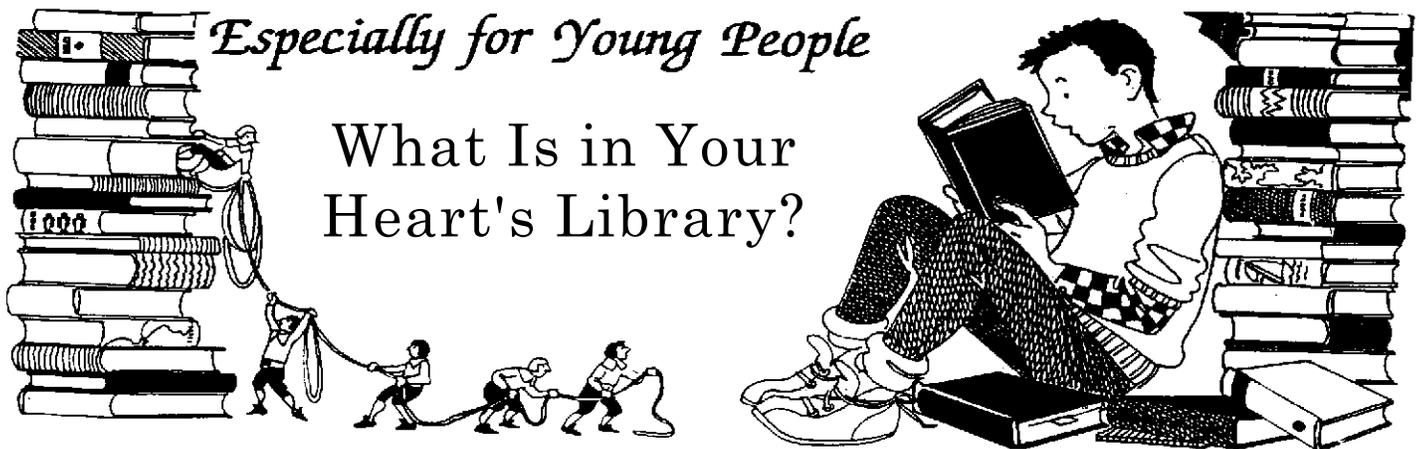
This same condition can and has fallen on mankind today. Some people grumble over the way God chooses to lead them. They dislike the way God requires them to live and conduct themselves. They reject His standard and His man. This is dangerous! What happened to the Israelites can happen to us yet today. God wants a willing and obedient people to serve Him. If you will do things God's way, you will be blessed and will prosper in your soul. In Isaiah 1:19-20 we read, "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it."

Friend, if you allow an evil heart of unbelief to take hold of you and remain, you will end up departing from the Lord, even as old Israel did. It would be well for you to take heed to the Word of God and believe it. That which has been sent to be a blessing and a guide

through this life can become a curse that destroys if disbelieved. You must overcome all doubts and unbelief through faith. Also, you must reject any thought of ever turning away from God and going back to the old life. Do not allow Satan to entertain you with the thought that you had it better when you were living in sin. The Christian life is the best life to live here and the only one that will assure your entrance into Heaven. Regardless of the trials, persecutions, upsets, misfortunes, afflictions, and frustrations that come your way, living a Christ-filled life is by far the best and only way for man to live. There is really nothing to go back to!

Selected

**We must feed  
on the bread of  
life ourselves  
before we can  
serve it to others.**



## What Is in Your Heart's Library?

When I was growing up, I enjoyed going to the library. I remember thinking that if I ever got caught out somewhere during a blizzard, I hoped it would be the local library. It seemed like I never had enough books to read. I would read the ones I had over and over; they never grew old.

Whenever I dreamed about what my future home would look like, I wanted an entire room full of books, my own personal library. I began to collect a variety of books that I hoped to one day put in my dream library. I had classics, like Nancy Drew books and Little House on the Prairie books. As a teenager, I purchased an entire set of encyclopedias, one volume at a time from the local grocery store. I collected a large number of old comic books, and I had many devotional books. Along with several Bibles, I also began collecting old books that had good Bible teachings.

Once I began high school, the library became an even more important place to me. Those were the days before the Internet, the days of the library card catalog. Finding information for term papers took much longer then. For the first time, I went to the basement of the library where archived magazines and reference materials were stored. I spent hours doing research using those books and magazines.

As I grew older, I learned the importance of being selective concerning the materials I had collected. I learned that you cannot trust

a book by its cover. Often the most colorful, eye-catching covers do not contain good quality stories, so those had to be thrown away. More than once I re-evaluated my collection of books, asking myself whether the book was helpful, whether it had anything questionable in it, and whether it was something I would one day want my children to read.

Today, although I do not have an entire room full of books, I do have many bookcases throughout my home with the books that I have kept. These are the ones I felt were valuable enough to save all these years, books that I have shared with my children, family, and friends.

Psalm 119:11 speaks of hiding God's Word in our hearts. Did you know that you have a heart library? Each of us is storing up what we read and learn in this unseen library. What are you putting on the shelves of your heart's library? It is important that you are selective when it comes to determining its contents. Who you are is determined by what you allow to be placed here.

What would you think if you visited your public library or school library and found its shelves full of junk mail or blank papers or trash? Would it be a valuable resource? What if the shelves were filled with only useless games and videos? Would you consider it a place to gain knowledge or a place to waste time?

Whether a library is useful and reliable depends on what people have chosen to place inside it. Likewise, the usefulness and reliability of

your heart's library is determined by what you are placing on its shelves.

What resources are vitally important for a heart library? First, you must memorize Bible Scriptures. You cannot place a literal Bible on the shelves of your heart's library. The only way to get the Scriptures into your heart is through your eyes and ears (reading and hearing). There might be times when you cannot open a Bible and read it or share it with someone, but if it has been stored in your heart's library, it is always accessible.

Another reason you need Bible verses in your library is also found in Psalm 119:11, which says, ". . . that I might not sin against thee." Right in the middle of a temptation to do wrong, God will reach down into your heart's library and pull out a verse you have memorized to help you to resist that temptation. When Jesus was tempted by the devil, He said, "It is written. . . ." Jesus was able to overcome temptation because He knew what the Word of God says.

Have you ever read your Bible and not understood what a verse meant? You can store that in your heart's library. In God's time He will give you understanding. Later, you might be reading somewhere else in the Bible, and God will bring that hard-to-understand verse to your memory; then it will make sense.

Bible verses can be like a spiritual global positioning system (GPS). My personal library has an atlas (collection of maps) as part of

the encyclopedia set. Although it is now somewhat outdated, it has provided basic directions for our travels on several occasions. What reference materials are you storing in your heart's library that will provide spiritual guidance for your life? There are going to be times when you have no idea what decision to make or which way to go.

Jeremiah 30:21 promises, "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." If you have been storing God's Word in your heart, you will recognize His voice. God gives direction through His Word.

Another important reason you should have Scriptures stored in your heart's library is to help you when you have an opportunity to witness. Do you wonder what you will say if someone asks you about God or why you believe the way you do? You can store God's Word in your heart. When the time comes to witness, God will show you exactly what reference material you should use. He will help you to know what to say. If you have placed very few Scriptures on your heart's library shelves, what will God have to choose from?

What else should a heart library contain? Just as a literal library would be incomplete without books of knowledge (such as encyclopedias), your heart's library needs spiritual knowledge as well. Paul wrote to Timothy that he was "not ashamed" because he said, "I know whom I have believed" (2 Timothy 1:12).

The years of your youth are a vital time to begin to build your core beliefs. Why do you believe as you do? Why do you do certain things and not do others? Are you convinced that lying, cheating, and stealing are wrong? Do you believe in God? Who is God? Who is God to you? Do you know how to lead a sinner to Christ? If you never selectively chose materials that will build your core beliefs, spiritual junk mail

and trash might fill your shelves instead.

Where might you find good materials to build your core beliefs? Again, the Bible is a great place to start. Also, family devotions, Sunday school, youth group, and church services are other great opportunities. You should be sure to attend and pay attention. You need to ask questions when you do not understand. You must allow your library to expand with spiritual knowledge.

You would be surprised to visit a literal library and not find books about history. Yet, too many heart libraries are missing this vital section. Do you know the stories of the Bible? There are so many life lessons to be learned from these seemingly basic stories. Sadly, many of today's young people know very few Bible stories. We read in 1 Corinthians 10:11 that these were written for examples, and John 20:31 tells us another reason they were written: "But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."

What other history materials would be helpful to include in your heart's library? Do you know how God's church (the Church of God) began? Who purchased it and how? How does one become a member? Do you know the stories of how God's people have faced persecution and even death, especially during the Dark Ages? What about the local congregation where you attend worship services? Do you know the story about its beginnings?

Do you know the story of how your parents or grandparents received Christ? Did they face persecution or obstacles when they were first saved? Are there stories of God working out hard circumstances in their lives or stories of divine healing? Do you know your family's spiritual history?

Why is knowing history so important? It will give you a greater appreciation for the godly heritage your family is endeavoring to pass to you. You can also learn from history

and not repeat the mistakes of others. You should talk to your family members who are saved and ask them questions. You can store those stories of spiritual history in your heart's library.

No library is complete without a media section. What is in the media section of your heart's library? Do you have music stored there? If so, what kind of music are you placing on its shelves? Many people have found great comfort during difficult places in their lives by remembering songs of encouragement. Job 35:10 tells us that God gives "songs in the night." Paul and Silas experienced this when they were in the inner prison. Acts 16:25 tells us that at midnight they prayed and sang praises to God.

If you are storing songs of encouragement and songs of praise in your heart's library, God will bring those to your memory in the darkest times of your life. However, if those shelves have very few good songs, you might miss out on the encouragement you need.

Failing to selectively choose the right material for your heart's library does not mean the shelves will be empty. You have an enemy who is doing his best to make sure that you have all the wrong materials stored there. You are hearing words and songs every day, many of which have no business in the Christian heart's library. Many times you cannot help what you hear. For instance, suppose someone swears and you hear it. Now what that person said will try to take up residence on a shelf in your heart's library. What should you do?

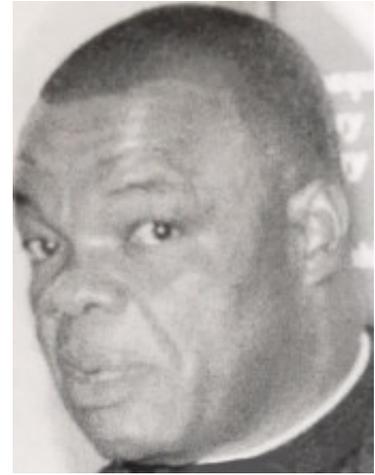
For years there was a free box of books and other materials at our local library. These were old or worn out or for some reason no longer used. By taking regular inventory of all their materials, libraries are able to determine what needs to be replaced, repaired, or removed.

Regular inventory of your heart's library is a must if you want to make

*[continued on page 23]*

# In Loving Memory of Brother Esau Brooks

April 26, 1933 - August 18, 2015



Pastor Esau R. Brooks was born in Roatan, Honduras on April 26, 1933, and started preaching when he was just seventeen years of age. He arrived in the Cayman Islands for the first time in December 1951, having been invited by a church to preach the Gospel there.

Brother Brooks met his wife Elizabeth "Queenie" Powell-Brooks in Cayman in February 1952, and they were married in January 1955. After the wedding, Pastor Brooks and his wife initially resided in Roatan. When their children became of school age, they moved back to the Cayman Islands. God blessed Brother and Sister Brooks with three girls and two boys.

As a missionary, Pastor Brooks and his wife traveled extensively and regularly went to Honduras and the United States to attend and preach at revivals and camp meetings.

During his visits to Honduras, Pastor Brooks was involved in many civic and community projects and was instrumental in setting up the first bilingual school there. At the present time, they have more than five hundred children in attendance at the school.

Brother Brooks passed away on Tuesday, August 18, 2015, at his home in Breakers, Grand Cayman. Brother Brooks was 82 years of age when he passed away.

Brother Brooks established twelve congregations in Honduras, one in Miami, Florida, and one in Grand

Cayman.

The ministry of Brother Esau Brooks took him to many locations in the United States. He was a gifted evangelist, preaching at numerous camp meetings and holding many revival services.

## **Tribute to Brother Brooks**

*A soldier for the cause of Christ,  
With many battle scars,  
Fighting for the Truth and Right,  
Relentlessly inspired.*

*Battles fought and victories won,  
A faithful man was he,  
Adhering to the Lord's command,  
Marched on triumphantly.*

*Perils of the wind and sea,  
Many threats endured,  
To spread the Gospel through the  
land,  
Tho' Satan's darts were hurled.*

*A shining light to island souls,  
He walked from shore to shore,  
Fearing not to struggle on  
In spite of Satan's roar.*

*A passion for the souls of men,  
Was evident in him,  
Courageous, strong, and powerful,  
The driving force within.  
He answered many calls,*

*To herald Truth from sea to sea.  
His strong, unwavering faith in  
God,  
A true example thus to be.*

*America did profit abundantly,  
From this great man of God.  
Pointing sinners to the Cross,  
Proclaiming God's true Word.*

*His godly wife supported him,  
So faithfully at home,  
With love and prayers and  
fervency,  
Obeying God alone.*

*His work is done—His crown is  
won.  
Yet, still his ministry lives on.  
The seeds he sowed—the prayers  
he prayed.  
The harvest is not o'er.*

*"Well done, my good and faithful  
son,"  
God calls from Heaven's shore.  
"Come, spend eternity with Me,  
And live forevermore."*

*May we remember through our  
lives,  
The burden he did bear,  
And serve our Savior faithfully,  
Heaven's joys to someday share.*

—by Sister Millie Stegmeier  
(written on August 19, 2015)

1 Kings 19:1 And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword.

2 Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to morrow about this time.

3 And when he saw that, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beersheba, which belongeth to Judah, and left his servant there.

4 But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers.

5 And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat.

6 And he looked, and, behold,

there was a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again.

7 And the angel of the LORD came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee.

8 And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God.

# The Valley of Elijah



*Brother Paul Prinkey*

## Israel's Deplorable Condition

In our Scripture text we are breaking in here in the middle of the circumstances of Elijah's life, so I want to recap a little of what took place. Elijah was certainly in a valley. In our Scripture text we find that he was in a very low place. Our lives today are much the same, but in a

different time, of course. We all have valleys that we have to go through. We all have battles that we experience.

James had something to say that is very revealing about the life of Elijah. We read in James 5:17-18: "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it

rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit."

I want you to notice that Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are. He was a human being. If you will back up to Chapter 17 of 1 Kings, you will find in verse 1 that

Elijah came on the scene with a big brush, you might say. Mighty events took place whenever he came on the scene. We find that Israel was in an apostasy; they were falling away from truth.

King Ahab had married an ungodly woman named Jezebel. When she became queen of Israel, she tried to purge out everyone who believed in God. She wanted to stamp out everyone who served and worshiped the one true God. She was building up idols and temples of worship to the god Baal.

First Kings 17:1-3 says: "And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word. And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan."

When Elijah came on the scene, he wanted to do what he could by the hand of the Lord to wake up Israel, so that a revival might start in Israel. He was having a tough time of it. It took three and a half years before he was finally able to make his next move. As you look at this woman Jezebel and see what she was doing in Israel, you can see that she was an ungodly woman by all accounts. You cannot read about anyone in the Bible who was worse than she was. This woman took the prophets of God and killed them.

Obadiah was a young man of God who hid away the prophets by fifties in caves out in the wilderness. He took food to them to keep them alive. If Jezebel could have found them, she would have killed them too.

Jezebel was an ungodly woman to the degree that she was not only disrespectful to God and God's people but also irreverent. Many times I think we mistake the two as being one. Sometimes we say that a person is disrespectful when it comes to God and worshipping God. People acting out is more than just being

disrespectful; it is irreverent. They take it to a new level, because they are not just fooling around with people whenever they are being irreverent; they are fooling around with God. God takes a personal interest in His people and in His work. Whenever He sees irreverence in somebody's life, He is going to move. It might take time, as it did with Jezebel, but God always has the final say.

Jezebel was a mouthy woman. She said anything she felt like saying. She was an ungodly wife and was disobedient to her husband. Ahab was a coward; he was not a man. She caused him to cower down, and she made him tow the line to her. She laid down the rules for the home. She dictated where they went to worship and who they were going to worship. She told Ahab how he was going to do his job as the king. Her mouth and her deeds got her into trouble. God had had it with her.

### **Elijah's Prophecy**

God told Elijah, in so many words, "You go and speak the words of My mouth to King Ahab." When Elijah walked in and said what he had to say, he turned around and left. Now, anyone who knows the Old Testament and the rules of the kings in that day knows that normally a person did not walk into a king's presence unbidden. One had to be invited. If that person was not invited and walked in on business, and the king did not reach out his scepter in his direction (we find this true when we look at the story of Mordecai and Queen Esther), that person was taken out and killed.

Elijah did not wait for an invitation, and I do not believe that King Ahab would have invited him anyway. Elijah walked in on business, interrupted Ahab's day, and told him what the word of the Lord was. No doubt, Elijah reminded Ahab that the Lord God of Israel was in charge, not Baal. Elijah said in 1 Kings 17:1, "As the LORD God of

Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word." Then Elijah turned around and left. Elijah caught the king off guard. He probably said: "Who is that man? Who does he think he is to walk in here that way? Go chase him down!" However, they could not find him because God hid him. God told him where to go, and wherever he went, God fed him and took care of him. The king's men searched for him, but they could not find him.

When Elijah ran out of water by the brook, God sent him to a widow woman. She took care of him for about a year and a half and fed him, and God kept his location a secret. After about three and a half years, Elijah appeared, and the king had two search parties out looking for him. Obadiah was heading up the one, and Ahab was heading up the other.

Elijah revealed himself to Obadiah and said, "Go tell King Ahab that I am waiting for him right here." In essence, Obadiah said: "No way! You are not doing that to me. Others said they found you, and whenever the king's men went to look for you, you had disappeared. You were not there where they said they found you. You will get me killed, because I will leave you and tell Ahab, but when he gets here you will not be found here. Then King Ahab will become angry with me and kill me. I am a God-fearing man. I have taken the prophets by fifties and hid them in caves and fed them, but I will not do this thing."

Elijah said: "I promise you that I will be here when the king comes. The time is at hand for me to meet Ahab." So Obadiah fearfully went and found King Ahab and told him what Elijah had said. Sure enough, Ahab showed up, and Elijah was there. When Elijah met Ahab, Ahab was angry. For three and one-half years, it had not rained and things were very dry. The drought was getting to the point that they were going to have to start killing the animals because they did not have

enough water for them and the people.

Ahab said, "Are you the one who is troubling Israel?" Elijah did not bow down to him. He stood right up and pointed his finger at him and said: "It is not I who is troubling Israel. You and your ungodly wife and Baal worship are troubling Israel. It is time to settle this thing. You get all the prophets of Baal and meet me on Mount Carmel, and bring two bulls. We are going to offer up sacrifices, and the one who answers by fire, let him be God."

### **Elijah's Overwhelming Victory**

All the people of Israel gathered on the mountain, along with King Ahab and the prophets of Baal. Elijah asked the people: "How long are you going to halt between two opinions? If God is God, then worship Him and serve Him. If Baal is god, then worship him, but make your choice today." When he asked that question, no one would answer because they were afraid. Why were they afraid? Jezebel had them all cowering down. The prophets of Baal tried to call down fire upon their altar to consume their sacrifice, but nothing happened.

About the time of the evening sacrifice, they gave up and it was Elijah's turn. This was not anything new for him. He knew what church history was. He knew how God worked with the congregation of Israel. He did not even have to light a fire. He was not allowed to make a fire or kindle a fire on their own. (Aaron's two sons tried that and God smote them dead.) First, Elijah rebuilt the altar, dug a trench around it, and put the wood on it. Then he laid the animal on top of it. Next, Elijah had them dump barrels of water on top of the sacrifice, and he told them to do it a second time and a third time.

The water filled up the trench and soaked the altar and the sacrifice; then Elijah prayed. When he finished praying, God answered by fire and consumed the sacrifice, the

wood, the stones, and all the water in the trench. With overwhelming proof God proved that He was the God of Israel.

After Elijah was done, the people of Israel answered him, "The LORD, he is the God; the LORD, he is the God" (1 Kings 18:39). After the people had seen the proof that God was the true God, Elijah told them to take the prophets of Baal down by the brook, and he killed them there. They could not get away. They had cut themselves with knives to the point that they had bled and had become weak. Also, they were weak from jumping up and down on top of the altar, trying to call down fire from a god that did not exist.

After Elijah went to the top of the mountain to pray, he told his servant to go and tell King Ahab to get off the mountain, because there was going to be an abundance of rain. When they took off for the city, Elijah outran Ahab's chariot. It had been a long, tiresome day for Elijah. After he had just finished outrunning Ahab's horse and chariot down to the city, he waited by the city gate to see what the result would be of the victory that God had given him on Mount Carmel.

As Elijah waited by the gate, a messenger came and handed him a note. It was a message from Queen Jezebel, and it said, "So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to morrow about this time" (1 Kings 19:2). Can you imagine how devastated he was? He had just laid out three and one half years of his life for the single purpose of calling Israel back to God, trying to get people moved back toward the Lord. An overwhelming victory happened at Mount Carmel. He proved that God was God and that He was the One whom they should worship.

### **Elijah Runs for His Life**

Elijah was waiting by the gate for some positive results, and what did he get? He received a note that said Jezebel was going to kill him by

the next afternoon, just as her prophets of Baal had been killed. What a mouthy woman! God did not think much of her. You can read about that later. It was all a lie, but Elijah was not in the condition to be able to resist it. How do we know it was a lie? That is the way the devil works. He lies to you, and if you put one ounce of faith in his lies, he will get you to go on the run, just as he got Elijah to run.

Elijah wanted to get out of there because he thought he was going to be killed. Did it happen? No, it did not happen. The next day at that time, he was still living, but he was not in a condition to resist the devil and win because he was discouraged and depressed. He was in a valley, crushed because he thought that was going to be the turning point for Israel to return to God, but it did not happen that way.

The Bible says in verse 3 of our Scripture text, "And when he saw that, he arose, and went for his life." He took off on the run, and he could not get far enough away. Elijah was already tired. He had labored all day, offered up a sacrifice, helped kill all the false prophets of Baal, and run back to the city; he was worn out. That is when the devil will take advantage of a person. He tries to get his foot in the door when you get worn down physically, mentally, or spiritually. That is what he did with Elijah. Elijah ran into the wilderness and got under a juniper tree.

Elijah was lying under that juniper tree crying out to God, but he was not praying the right prayer. The Bible says in our Scripture text in verse 4, "But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers."

Elijah had just done God's work, but now the devil had him on the run. He needed help. You can get yourself into a similar situation. Sometimes right on the eve of your

biggest victory, the devil will take advantage of you, right when you are at your highest. Sometimes it seems that everything is going right, but things can go so terribly wrong in a hurry. Whenever they do, you will start asking questions and saying: "Where did this come from? How did this happen? Why me? I don't understand. I didn't do anything to deserve this. I have only done God's will, so why would I be having all these problems?"

Sometimes you may feel that something is an injustice against you, thinking, "Everything is against me," when just a while before everything was going well for you. No doubt, Elijah felt that way when he cried out for God to take him on to be with his fathers. Have you ever felt that way? I have felt that way before. At times I have thought: "I am tired of this. I have endured this long enough. I am not doing anybody any good by hanging around. I might as well go on to my eternal reward." Sometimes we think that is the easy way out, and it might be, but is it God's will?

### **God's Divine Touch**

It was not God's will for Elijah to die yet, because God was not done with him. I want you to take notice of something that God did for Elijah. While he was lying under that tree, he was so tired and worn out that he was ready to die. He fell asleep, and while he was sleeping God sent an angel and touched him. He woke up, and, my, what a wonder! It is a wonderful thing when God sends you a touch.

When the angel of the Lord came, the angel did not rebuke Elijah for running. The angel did not tell him that he should not have done that and to get back there and get in the battle. No, he came and touched him and said, "You need to arise." He was there to help him. Sometimes you need a touch from the Lord. When you are down at your lowest point, discouraged in a low valley, you may not feel that you can get back up and go again. You need God

to come along and uplift you. I still believe in the Bible, and my Bible tells me there is a lifting up in the Lord. The Bible says that a righteous man may fall six or seven times, yet the Lord will raise him up. The Lord is uplifting.

If you are in a low place, I can guarantee you that if you will just hold on a little longer, God will come along and touch you with His hand and give you strength to rise up and get out of the valley. I appreciate how God is able to raise us up. God will not leave you or forsake you. He said He will be with you always, even to the end of the world. I thank God for that!

Elijah was a man who experienced a great victory, but even after that great victory, he went into the deepest valley. Yet, God was there to lift him up. God sent a remedy for his situation, and He has a remedy for yours. If you are in a low place and discouraged, God can lift you up. The angel came to Elijah and told him, "You need to arise, Elijah, and eat." Why? He was weak; he had not had anything to eat all day. He had been going on the strength of the Lord, and he had run a great distance.

After Elijah had run a great distance and had gotten to the city, he received a death threat from Jezebel; so he traveled a distance and left his servant behind. He was hungry, worn out, and discouraged. These things will work on you. Sometimes you cannot help it when a situation comes on you. In hindsight you may look back and say, "I should have done this" or "I should have done that" or "If I would have done this, I would have avoided all of that," but that is hindsight. You cannot fix that. You are in the situation now, so what are you going to do about it? You need a touch from the Lord.

### **Responding to God's Touch**

When God comes along and touches you and says, "Arise and eat," He has some food for you—

angel food. This food that God sent for Elijah was not food that a normal person needed; it was food that a man who was in a deep valley like Elijah needed. God made sure He sustained Elijah's life. After he sustained his life, He allowed him to get a little more sleep. Elijah arose and ate from that food. What a wonderful thing! He did not even have to fix it. God had it prepared for him, and then Elijah laid down and went back to sleep. Then the angel of the Lord came again and told him to arise and eat, because the journey was too great for him.

Verse 7 of our Scripture text reads, "And the angel of the LORD came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee." Elijah had already received a gift from God the first time that sustained his life, but there was something more that Elijah needed. We are the same way today. We do not just need our lives sustained; sometimes we need our souls sustained. That was the food that God sent Elijah the second time. God knew there was going to be a long period of time when he was going to have to go without any food, but the food that God gave was enough to sustain him. God upheld him by the right hand of His righteousness.

God is still able to do the same for us today. The valleys are real. Sometimes when you get in a valley, you cannot see the light at the end of the tunnel, so to speak. In my own experience, that light was not always there for me. Sometimes it looked very dark and I could not see a way out. There were times that I was discouraged, and nobody around me could encourage me, but they tried. Sometimes they prayed for me, and it still did not lift me up. It took God to come along and touch me. We need the touch of God. I do not know what problem you might be going through, but God will sustain you in your spiritual needs. No need is too great for God.

The Apostle Paul spoke to the Philippian church in Philippians 4:19

and said, "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." God does not make any exclusions. If there is something that you need, God can supply it. The touch that you need from the Lord is very important. You have to have it, and you need to respond to it. Many times God uses different ways to touch you in your life. Sometimes He will use somebody to touch you with a situation he has been through. Sometimes God will use a church service to touch you. Sometimes God will just come along with the Holy Spirit and touch you. You can read God's Word, and God will touch you through His Word. God has different ways that He can touch you, but you need to respond to that touch.

I am reminded of what Brother Larry Dishman preached concerning the eagles, how sometimes they get down in the valley. He said those eagles are down there in what they call a moping period. Other eagles will fly over and drop meat down to that eagle because he is not strong enough to get meat on his own. However, it is up to the eagle in the valley to respond and get the meat and eat it and get strength enough to be able to get back up out of the valley. That is the way it is when God touches you.

It is precious when the Lord touches you. I appreciate the times when God has come to me in my troubles and touched me, because it was the only thing that sustained me. Without it I would have perished spiritually. I needed the touch from the Lord. God is just that kind of God.

### **The Faithfulness of God**

Elijah had already received what he needed from the angel to be able to sustain his life, but now he needed greater strength because the journey was great. God was not through with him. Sometimes a person may feel that his life's work is over and he cannot be of any use to the church anymore. That is not so. God still has

something that you can do.

There are no people who are retired from the work of God in the church. You might be retired from your job, but you are not retired from church work. Nobody is on unemployment, and nobody is without a job. We each have a job in the church. Each member is an active member. God has something for every one of us to do, and we need God's strength to be able to fulfill that calling. God places the members as it pleases Him. He gives each of us a special place.

Elijah's work was not done. When he came up out of his valley, he had a lot that God wanted him to do. He had to call another prophet and anoint another king. He had to pronounce judgment on King Ahab. There were so many things that God needed him to do. The angel called Elijah to arise and eat because the journey was too great for him. Likewise, we need God's touch. It is a supernatural power that God gives. It is not something that we rely on in our own strength, but it is something that God gives us.

The Bible says that Elijah went on the strength of the meat that the angel of the Lord gave him for forty days and forty nights, until he got to Mount Horeb, the mount of God. Elijah traveled approximately two hundred miles, and God gave him the strength for every step of the journey. He did not have a car to travel in or a horse to ride. He walked, and God gave him the strength to be able to make that journey. Elijah was a man who trusted in God. He believed that the Lord was able to take care of his needs. When God hid Elijah, Elijah trusted God to keep him hid. When Elijah needed food, he trusted in God to feed him.

Whenever a hard place came and Elijah got discouraged, God was still faithful to him. I am thankful that we still serve a faithful God. The Apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 10:13, "But God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the tempta-

tion also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." God is able to provide a way of escape for you. I want to encourage you to believe that God is able to help you. He is able to touch you. When it feels like all hope is gone and you are unable to get out of your valley, if you will trust in God, He will come and touch you, and He will raise you up. God will not let you down.

There are two things about God that we know for sure. One is, He cannot fail; and two, He cannot lie. We know that all the promises that God has given us are true. There are more than three thousand promises that God has given us in His Word, and they are all ours. How do I know that? Because Paul said so. He said they are all yea and amen for those who are in Christ Jesus. So when the time comes that you are discouraged and down in the valley, if you will put your faith and trust in God, He will lift you up. God will give you strength to come out of the valley with victory. There is no valley too deep that God cannot reach down and lift you up.

I told some people while I was going through the hardship that I was in with my legs broken, "For me to get any lower, somebody would have to toss me a shovel." That was the way I felt. I felt that I was as low as I could get, but in those low times God came along and touched me and lifted me up. I am alive to tell about it today. I am alive, not just physically but spiritually, to be able to tell what God can do for you if you will put your trust in Him. God will not fail you, and He will not leave you. He will be right there to give you strength.

I want to give you encouragement, by the help of the Lord. If you are going through a problem, a valley, a place of depression, God will strengthen you and lift you up. If you will put your faith in Him and put your hand in His hand, God will lead you through.

*(Compact Disc TR-1332E)*

# My Personal Testimony

## "Nothing Just Happens"

Brother Garrett Haylock preached a message entitled "Nothing Just Happens" that prompted the writing of this testimony.

My husband, Bill Corder, and I were visiting family in New Mexico and decided to go to the Grand Canyon. While at the Grand Canyon, Bill complained of shortness of breath, but we attributed it to the higher altitude. There was a place where Bill stepped off the path and took a picture straight down into the canyon. No railings were at that spot, and I have often wondered what would have happened if his heart attack had occurred then! We would never have gotten him out of there in time, but nothing just happens.

When we left the Grand Canyon, we took Route 191 North through Utah. We stopped for the night in Blanding, Utah. The next morning while loading the car, Bill had the first pain in his back. We thought he had put his back out of place when lifting the heavy suitcases. We had prayer, and God eased the pain. Bill drove on to his sister and brother-in-law's house in Loveland, Colorado.

When I researched medical care in the Blanding, Utah, area, I discovered a hospital just two blocks away. However, in their advertisement they said they could diagnose heart attacks but would transport patients to another facility two hours away. Nothing just happens!

Looking for relief from the back pain, Bill's sister and I went into town with him to a chiropractor; then he drove us back home. He said he had a headache and was going to lie down for a while in the bedroom at the back of the house. Instead of lying down, he walked back to within ten feet of where his sister and I were when he dropped to the floor. His face was purple, and he was convulsing by the time I got to him. Nothing just happens!

Bill's sister called 911, and the squad arrived within three minutes. When the emergency medical team arrived, Bill was in full cardiac arrest. As they took over, I sat down on the couch and prayed. It was not a long prayer, but it was certainly aloud and earnest. A cardiologist was walking through the emergency department when the call came that the squad was bringing him. By the time his sister and I arrived at the hospital, Bill was already prepped and ready for surgery.

The cardiologist told me, "We will do all we can to fix his heart, but what happens with his brain is up to him." When I last saw Bill, he was totally incapable of *anything*. I knew that whatever happened with his brain was in God's hands, but nothing just happens! Within sixty-one minutes, he had four stents placed in the main artery down the left side of his heart. Three blockages were in the artery: one of them was 100 per-

cent, the other two were significantly blocked. We truly appreciate all that the medical professionals did. Everyone was very kind to us and did their best to help us.

With this type of heart attack, known as the "widow maker," only approximately 5 percent of the patients live. Of that 5 percent, only 2 percent live a reasonably normal life. Our niece, who is a nurse, said if a person who had this kind of attack can stand alone, he has had a good day. The community hospital where Bill was taken said this was the worst case they would take. He would have had to have been transported to another facility if he needed open heart surgery, which would have taken more time. Nothing just happens!

As soon as the stents were in place (through catheterization), they began what is known as "cool down." They reduced the body temperature to approximately 91°F (33°C). They held that temperature for several hours; then they brought it slowly back to normal. This was to help brain function and to allow all the systems of the body to re-synchronize with one another. This took twenty-four hours, during which time he looked dead, felt dead, and acted dead.

It was during this time that I began to mentally sort through all that had happened. From noon to midnight had been a blur of activity.

After wrestling with God for a while, I was finally able to say, "God, he is in Your hands, and I trust You." The peace that came with that surrender was beyond my ability to explain. It was certainly peace that passes all understanding. After that, I was able to sleep.

I still did not know what was going to happen. In looking back, somehow I knew when Bill left the house he was going to live, but I did not know how well. I just knew I would take care of him and God would give us the grace for whatever we had to face each day.

Our children drove twenty-two hours to be with us. They arrived as they were beginning the warm-up process. Our daughter slipped her hand in Bill's, and our son was on the other side of the bed. He squeezed her hand; this was the first sign of life. We were told that the warm-up process would take five to eight hours, so our son and his wife went to rest and get cleaned up. Almost as soon as they began lowering the

dosage of the sedative, Bill started fighting the breathing tube, so they took it out. He opened his eyes, and he started looking around. Next, he started recognizing people in the room and started asking questions: "Where am I? Why am I here? Why are the kids here? What happened?" He was talking and trying hard to reason it all out. When our son and his wife returned to the hospital two hours later and he recognized them, they were amazed and delighted. Nothing just happens!

The emergency medical team that transported Bill to the hospital stopped to visit and told our son and those with him that Bill was very lucky to be alive. They also said they do not get to see many positive results from their efforts, and that was the reason for their visit. I know I could never thank them enough for their quick response and the way they worked so efficiently to help save Bill's life.

Bill continued to improve and soon began walking around the

room. He had the attack around 12:30 p.m. on Thursday and was dismissed from the hospital to go back to his sister's house on Monday. One week after he was dismissed from hospital, he was released by the doctor to go home (approximately 1,450 miles). He drove the whole way!

Normal heart function is 50 to 70 percent. Right after the surgery, Bill's heart function was approximately 25 percent. He was at 40 to 45 percent when he was dismissed. Nothing just happens!

Bill has returned to his normal life at home, doing everything he was doing before the heart attack. We believe it was a miracle, and we thank God for His goodness and mercy to us. *Many* prayers were going up to God in our behalf, and we thank everyone who showed love and concern for us. Nothing just happens! God has everything under control.

Sister Joyce Corder

*It is not success that God rewards, but  
always the faithfulness of doing His will.*

*[Spec. for Young People—contin. from p. 15]*  
sure there are good quality materials on its shelves. You will need help with this, because the devil knows how to hide things in your library. You should ask God to search your heart. David wrote in Psalm 139:23, "Search me, O God, and know my heart." Is there anything that should not be there? Is there anything missing from your heart's library?

You should not be deceived into thinking that because others cannot see your heart's library, they will never know what is on its shelves.

Matthew 12:34 warns us that "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." If something is in your heart, in time it will come out. If you have allowed the devil to fill your heart with trash, do not be surprised when it slips out through your words or your actions.

You should be selective when choosing the contents of your heart's library, but do not procrastinate. Studies have shown that memorization is easier when a person is young. You need to store Scriptures in your heart. You need to fill it full of Bible

stories, spiritual truths, godly songs, and stories of encouragement. Just as you are what you eat physically, so you are what you take in spiritually.

As God looks on the shelves of your heart's library, what does He see? Do you need to take an inventory of its contents? Are you lacking spiritual reference materials? You ought to let God help you to create a heart library that is pleasing to Him.

Sister Sheri Strelecky

*James 1:12 Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.*

*13 Let no man say when he is*

*tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:*

*14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.*

*15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.*

*16 Do not err, my beloved brethren.*

# Do Not Err



*Brother Jeff Wells*

## **Doing the Master's Work**

The message that the Lord laid on my heart deals with our minds and overcoming life's battles as Christians. Since you are saved, what are your goals? What is your purpose? This is called a mission statement. A basic mission statement has three points to keep you focused on your goals: First, you must have a purpose and a mission in life. Second, you should view mistakes and failures positively. Third, you need to examine your values.

According to our Scripture text in verse 12, our goal is to receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love Him. You must love the Lord, do His will, and live as He directs.

The flesh will always contend, or struggle in opposition. Your love for the Lord has to be very strong, other-

wise you will return to following the flesh, and then you will go back into sin. I want to listen to the Lord and grow in His purpose and His mission for me.

John 12:26 reads, "If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour." If you have made your commitment to serve Christ, this is a good mission verse to keep you on track for your goal. To serve God, we must do the will of the Master. To follow Him means that you allow Him to lead you, and you are to be where He is. For example, being in the house of God to attend church and Sunday school is one of those places.

Isaiah 45:20 says, "Assemble yourselves and come; draw near together, ye that are escaped of the nations: they have no knowledge that

set up the wood of their graven image, and pray unto a god that cannot save." Do you remember when you escaped? I do, praise the Lord! Christ has set many examples for us to reach out and teach others the message of salvation. Our purpose is to bring the Gospel to the world.

Mark 16:15 tells us, "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Do you feel that you could talk to and direct a person to give his or her life to the Lord? Would you feel inadequate at this? God gives the increase. With that thought you need to ask the Lord for a place where you can visit others.

Nursing homes are excellent places to visit. Remember, God has a lot of disciples, so you could stay in one place. The reason for this is to get to know the staff. They have souls, and most of the time when

they hear the messages, they will understand them. They will learn to trust you, and once that happens they will tell you about other people that you can visit, especially those who never have a visitor. You may spend many hours and never see a change or a desire in a person. Remember, this is not about you. You are a servant doing your Master's work.

### **What About Mistakes and Failures?**

You should never look at mistakes and failures in a negative way. Negativity brings depression, and Satan will use depression against you. Often lessons come from mistakes and failures. You need to pick yourself up, dust off your pride, and go to the One who never fails and say, "Lord, I need Your help on this matter." This is a positive approach to a failure or a mistake. God will always be ready to take care of the problem for you. He will be there to comfort you. What a Savior we have!

How can you examine your values? You have to examine yourself. Have you set your goal? Are you still on track? These values will show you who you are and what you are. Why is it that some families seem to cope with the worst things that life dishes out while others seem to unravel at the first sign of trouble? In a word the answer is resilience. Resilience refers to internal strength and durability.

Two major components of resilience are cohesiveness and hope. Those who have families with high cohesiveness count on one another to give meaningful support and encouragement, and even rebuke when appropriate. In other words, there is an assumed unspoken level of trust and commitment to one another that seems to defy logic. During tough times, cohesive families communicate a constant message: I am here for you.

Studies have consistently shown that women who have their husband or another loved one present during the delivery of a child report less

distress and need less pain management than those women who are alone. Knowing that someone cares that you are hurting can make all the difference in the world.

Losing hope during hard times often signals the beginning of the end. When hope is lost, a person tends to throw in the towel, so to speak. Resilient families are known for their sense of hope and for continuing to hope when others would have given up. One reason is that they always find things that they can control when other things are tilting out of control.

We are living in a time when Satan's battle ground is in the mind. I pray that this message will help you to defeat Satan's attacks against you. The devil is out to destroy all congregations that stand for Truth. He has tried in the past, and he will continue to do so in the future. The devil will try to destroy your influence and credibility as a child of God. If he can get a seed planted between brethren or sisters, this seed can be the start of division and could attack the church.

### **Manifold Temptations**

Our Scripture text states in verse 12, ". . . when he is tried." We are tried right in the pews. We need to pray and leave things with the Lord. There may be things that go on in a service that you may find not to your standard or thinking. The Lord requires us to assemble to worship even with such differences. This way we can learn how to set aside fleshly opinions and worship God in Spirit and in Truth. John 4:23 reads, "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him."

Saint, we are in a battle, and the battle ground does not stop at the church door. We are the family of God. Our resilience and internal strength come from God, and it enables us to overcome differences. As children of God, we are to be a

family of high cohesiveness and meaningful support. I am here for you.

First Peter 1:6 says, "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations." Temptation comes in many forms. At the present time, you may be rejoicing in your salvation and all the wonderful things that God has given you and has done for you; then for a season, or for a short time, you might have to endure multiple temptations in heaviness.

I read a statement by Matthew Henry: "The foresight of a temptation gives us great advantage in our resistance of it; for, being forewarned, we should be fore armed. While we are here, Satan may continually come against us, and therefore, we must always be on our guard."

Some might have manifold temptations. God wants you to be aware of your brothers' and sisters' trials so that you can be ready to give support and hope in the time of need. Trials and temptations come in everyone's walk of life. When it comes to your house, you will appreciate the family of God's support. Satan knows that you can control your hope through prayer. A family that prays together is a family that stays together.

James 1:14 says, "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed." Satan knows that he has to use the flesh to draw you away from God. Some have never seen the dark side of sin, and curiosity is one weapon that Satan will use. He needs your senses and your members to experience the things of this world. Once he has them in your head, he will use them repeatedly whenever he wants to do so. He never tires; he will continually pull and drag you down to his pit of bondage.

### **The Path of the Wicked**

Proverbs 4:14-15 states: "Enter not into the path of the wicked, and

go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away." You must remember that the devil is a master of disguises. Once he gets you used to borderline worldly places, your next stop could be a local hot spot, and the enticement could draw you away by your own lust for the world's wonders. Please take my advice and stay out of pubs, bars, and clubs.

Exodus 34:12 reads, "Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest, lest it be for a snare in the midst of thee." Scars are not pleasant to carry for the rest of your life. Some of your temptations may come from past scars, things you have seen and have done. You may say, "God delivered me from my sins," but do not forget that you have to reap what you have sown.

Satan will cause you to go back over past sins and temptations to draw you back to him. There is pleasure in sin, and when you have tasted it, the devil will use it on you, sometimes with a little twist. He will tell you that you know where you went wrong, but this time you will not get addicted because now you are "street smart." When I say addicted, I do not necessarily mean drugs and alcohol. I am speaking of anything that draws you away from God.

I looked up the word *addiction*, and it means, "A person having a habit so strong that he cannot easily give it up." One example of this is how many people are addicted to watching television. I remember when God dealt with me about television. It was a year after I was saved, and I really contended with Him over it. I thought I had a good reason for holding on to it. I am a news buff, and I watched all the news channels for hours. Also, there was a show called "How It Was Made" on the history channel.

I had my defense all locked up, but the Lord laid it on me hard with this thought: What about the commercials? My defense went down to defeat because I know what is on those commercials. They are selling

something, so to get your attention the bottom line is, sex sells, and skimpily clad young women get a man's attention. I do not want anything to separate me from Christ, so I gave my television away. I told the person why I was getting rid of it, and his answer was, "You are right, there is a lot of trash on it." His next statement surprised me. He said, "I wondered how long it would be before you got rid of it." I had been praying for this person's soul, and my life was being watched.

### Be Diligent

What will happen at the Judgment? I will be held accountable if I do not listen to God. If you are a backslider, that temptation has already turned into reality. You need to heed this warning in 2 Peter 2:20-22: "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." You need to heed the warning, my friend.

The next temptation is called a lure of ambition. It is found in Mark 10:35-37: "And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come unto him, saying, Master, we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire. And he said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you? They said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory."

Where were the brothers' thoughts on the Lord's will and other people around them? They had only their own desire for the best seats in the house, one on the right and one

on the left. If you are in the highest seats, you will be seen. There was no humility in their request. The thought is, a prayer warrior is unseen. Picking and choosing your position is not an option with God.

Temptations and trials are going to be a part of our lives as Christians. Daniel 1:8 reads, "But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself." Daniel purposed this before the trial, before the temptation. You need to purpose in your heart and have your goal set in your mind. Second Peter 3:14 states, "Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless." You can ride the fence rail, so to speak, if you want to; that is your choice. Whether or not you are without spot will be a judgment call by God.

When I think of hell, my mind goes to the story of the rich man and Lazarus. We read in Luke 16:22-24: "And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame."

The flame is a terrible torment in this Scripture. What you need to see is that the rich man had a desire for water, something from his life on earth—something soothing, something cool. That means your senses are going to follow you into the place of fire—hell. You need to check yourself for just a spot. You would not want to be this close and lose out with God over one spot. If you have left Christ, God loves you, and He knows the problems in your life. He is waiting to help and comfort you. Peace can be found only in the comfort of Jesus Christ.

(Compact Disc TR-1239)

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