

SOUNDING FORTH THE SEVENTH AND LAST TRUMPET

Vol. 46 October 2016 No. 10



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?"

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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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# August 2016 Camp Meeting Report

Sunday morning, July 31, 2016,  
the saints gathered into the  
tabernacle at God's Acres for  
another wonderful camp meeting.  
Little did we know at that time  
what all God had in store for His  
people during those next eight  
days. After Pastor Roger Decker  
greeted and welcomed the saints,  
he then asked Brother Joe Brewer  
to pray the opening prayer. The  
first song of the camp meeting  
began, "Once again we come to the  
house of God to unite in songs of  
praise. . . ." Together the saints  
sang and offered up praise and  
thanksgiving to God. Our souls  
were blessed and encouraged as the  
Holy Spirit warmed our hearts  
during each service of the meeting.

In Psalm 84:1-2 we read: "How  
amiable are thy tabernacles, O  
LORD of hosts! My soul longeth,  
yea, even fainteth for the courts of  
the LORD." Here the Psalmist ex-  
claimed how pleasant it was to be  
in God's house and expressed his  
regret when he was unable to be  
there. Later, in verse 10 he re-  
vealed that one day in God's courts  
was better and more delightful  
than being surrounded by the  
wicked for a thousand days. We can  
surely agree, because it was a  
wonderful time as God's sheep were  
ushered into the presence of such a  
heavenly atmosphere. We thor-  
oughly enjoyed the fellowship that  
flowed from heart to heart. Feeling  
and seeing the spirit of love and  
unity was a highlight that pre-  
vailed throughout the meeting. It is  
most difficult to put into words how  
the Lord can so bless and refresh  
the souls of His people.

After breakfast each morning,  
many saints gathered in the prayer  
room at 8:30 to pray for the  
services. The morning prayer  
services, in addition with the many  
other prayers during the day,  
caused the meeting to be a great  
success. It is through prayer that  
His divine leadership takes control  
of the services and lost souls can  
feel the convicting hand of God.

Burdens were expressed regarding  
physical or spiritual needs for  
themselves or their loved ones. It is  
through earnest prayer that God  
provides an answer to every need.  
On Thursday morning after prayer,  
the Lord blessed as several saints  
gave testimony in praise or song.

Brother David Stegmeier began  
the meeting by preaching a stirring  
message on the subject of "A Goodly  
Heritage." Then Sunday evening he  
delivered an encouraging sermon  
entitled "Hope Thou in God." Pastor  
Decker felt the burden to  
preach Monday and Tuesday  
mornings on doctrinal issues. His  
messages centered on the topics of  
"The Birth of the Church  
(Pentecost)," and 1 Corinthians  
concerning "The Manifestation of  
the Spirit."

Brother Larry Dishman was the  
evening evangelist Monday through  
Thursday. His messages dealt with  
the following topics: "Twelve  
Undeniable Facts About the King-  
dom," "Where Are the Laborers?"  
"I'm Going Through," and "You  
Cannot Straddle the Fence." Sun-  
day night he preached on "Consider  
Your Latter End." Friday and  
Saturday nights the Lord moved in  
a magnificent way through the  
singing. As the Holy Ghost began  
convicting souls, the contrite souls  
moved to the altar of prayer  
seeking salvation. It was a beauti-  
ful sight to see as young and old  
alike humbled themselves before  
God in repentance.

Brother Calvin Foster brought  
a sermon on "I Am Nothing" on  
Wednesday, Brother Michael Wilks  
preached a message entitled "The  
Ark" on Thursday, Friday Brother  
Garrett Haylock preached, "He  
Grew the Tree," Saturday Brother  
Leamon Whitehead preached a  
message entitled "The Three Days  
Most People Struggle With.  
Sunday morning Brother Richard  
Talbot preached about "Patience  
With a Prefix." Each of the  
brethren expounded the Word  
[continued on page 7]

*Ruth 1:1 Now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Beth-lehem-judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons.*

*2 And the name of the man was Elimelech, and the name of his wife Naomi, and the name of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion, Ephrathites of Beth-lehem-judah. And they came into the country of Moab, and continued there.*

*3 And Elimelech Naomi's husband died; and she was left, and her two sons.*

*4 And they took them wives of the women of Moab; the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth: and they dwelled there about ten years.*

*5 And Mahlon and Chilion died also both of them; and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband.*

*6 Then she arose with her daughters in law, that she might return from the country of Moab: for she had heard in the country of Moab how that the LORD had*

*visited his people in giving them bread.*

*7 Wherefore she went forth out of the place where she was, and her two daughters in law with her; and they went on the way to return unto the land of Judah.*

*8 And Naomi said unto her two daughters in law, Go, return each to her mother's house: the LORD deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me.*

*9 The LORD grant you that ye may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them; and they lifted up their voice, and wept.*

*10 And they said unto her, Surely we will return with thee unto thy people.*

*11 And Naomi said, Turn again, my daughters: why will ye go with me? are there yet any more sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands?*

*12 Turn again, my daughters, go your way; for I am too old to have an husband. If I should say, I have hope, if I should have an husband also to night, and should also bear sons;*

*13 Would ye tarry for them till they were grown? would ye stay for them from having husbands? nay, my daughters; for it grieveth me much for your sakes that the hand of the LORD is gone out against me.*

*14 And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother in law; but Ruth clave unto her.*

*15 And she said, Behold, thy sister in law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods: return thou after thy sister in law.*

*16 And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God:*

*17 Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me.*

# Just Hold Steady



**Brother Roger L. Decker**

## Hope Turned to Sadness

The Book of Ruth is one of the most inspiring books of the Bible. It has such a sad beginning but a very

happy and joyous ending. It is like the ending of a good book, where everything turns out well. I want you to consider what took place in the verses of our Scripture lesson.

Verse 1 says, "Now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Beth-lehem-judah went to sojourn in the

country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons." The word *sojourn* lets us know that Elimelech was merely going there temporarily. He had no intentions of staying there, only until he could hear that the famine was over. The sojourning of this family, from Bethlehem into the country of Moab, which was on the other side of Jordan, was only for subsistence. This whole family went there because of the famine.

At the time, it seemed there was plenty in the country of Moab, but there was a scarcity of bread in the land of Israel. I read that eight to ten great famines struck the land of Canaan, and this was one of them.

It was a mistake for Elimelech and his family to leave Bethlehem. God would have sent them bread had they remained there. The path they traveled became darker and darker; the more they journeyed into Moab, the darker things became. The two sons were named Mahlon, which means "pining," and Chilion, which means "consumption." While in Moab, Naomi's husband died, and then her two sons married Moabite women, not Israelites; in other words, they married pagans.

Our Scripture text says in verse 4, "And they took them wives of the women of Moab; the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth: and they dwelled there about ten years." Next, Naomi's two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, died, so Naomi had three graves in a strange land; the three Israelites were buried in Moab. All the hope that Naomi had turned to sadness. Therefore, Naomi set out to return to Bethlehem-judah.

Naomi began traveling with her two daughters-in-law because no men were left in the family to help direct and carry out the journey. No doubt, it seemed that Naomi's whole world had fallen apart. She was suffering with a broken heart because of the wrong move. Naomi thought of her homeland, and no doubt, her mind went back to how she was raised. Perhaps she thought, "If we had only stayed in Canaan, God would have taken care of us."

She was going home brokenhearted, with no husband and no sons. She thought it only fair to tell her daughters-in-law to return to their mothers' homes and marry there, so they could have security in having homes. Naomi probably figured there was no security in following her. They both refused to leave her.

Verses 10-14 of our Scripture lesson read: "And they said unto her, Surely we will return with thee unto thy people. And Naomi said, Turn again, my daughters: why will ye go with me? are there yet any more sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands [she was saying that she was too old to have any more children, and if she could have more, they would not want to wait until her sons would be old enough to marry]?"

"Turn again, my daughters, go your way; for I am too old to have an husband. If I should say, I have hope, if I should have an husband also to night, and should also bear sons; Would ye tarry for them till they were grown? would ye stay for them from having husbands? nay, my daughters; for it grieveth me much for your sakes that the hand of the LORD is gone out against me [she knew that God had sent the afflictions on the family, and she was telling her daughters-in-law that she was sorry about what had happened, that they had lost their husbands].

"And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother in law; but Ruth clave unto her." Orpah departed and went back to her people, but Ruth stayed and desired to be with her mother-in-law. She was a young woman who was born in a pagan land and knew little about God, except what Naomi had taught her.

### **Comfort in the Midst of Brokenness**

Ruth said something that ought to encourage every heart. What did she say? Verses 16-17 tell us: "And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave

thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge [she had never been in Canaan, and she had not worshiped the true God, but she was taking a stand for what was right, even though she was raised as a pagan]: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God [she did not know the true God; she was raised with pagan gods]: Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me." In other words, Ruth was going to stay with Naomi until they parted in death.

Verses 16-17 from the Amplified Bible read: "And Ruth said, Urge me not to leave you or to turn back from following you; for where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there will I be buried. The LORD do so to me, and more also, if anything but death parts me from you." Ruth was saying that she was going to stay with her mother-in-law and that only death could separate them. That was quite a commitment coming from the lips of a pagan. Remember, she was not an Israelite; she had not been raised around the worship of the true God as Naomi was.

The Scripture says in Ruth 1:22, "So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter in law, with her, which returned out of the country of Moab: and they came to Bethlehem in the beginning of barley harvest."

In verse 21 Naomi said, "I went out full, and the LORD hath brought me home again empty [that is usually how people come back when they leave the confines of the blessings of God]: why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the LORD hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me." This was the testimony of one who had been blessed of God, but she was taken to a pagan land by her husband because of a hardship that came upon the family.

## **An Unwise Decision**

Naomi left her homeland full when she had her husband and her two sons and she was worshipping the true God. Much of the fullness of her comfort in this world rose from agreeable relations, but then she went home empty; she went home as a widow and childless. She probably had to sell her goods, her property, and all the effects that she took with her. It looks as though she returned with no more than the clothes on her back.

We have no reason to believe that Elimelech and his family were poor or that they were beggars of any sort. I would much rather believe that he owned property and, no doubt, he had quite a few goods that God had blessed him with.

Naomi went home penniless. She had lived under the blessings of God, but then she returned broken and void of her husband and her two sons. That would have been quite a shock to lose a husband and then her two sons.

It is very dangerous for someone to leave a congregation because of a hardship or a trial. Matthew 5:45 says, "That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." We do not live in a perfect world. Adversities, tragedies, heartaches, deaths, trials, afflictions, and other things will come upon the believers as well as the unbelievers. That is the kind of world in which we live.

No doubt, because of the hard place Elimelech and his family were in due to the famine, he thought it best to go into a pagan land temporarily. However, to leave the place where God was and where God was blessing was not a wise decision. Yes, a famine was going on in Israel, but God has always taken care of His people. What drew Elimelech to Moab? He sought for food and supplies for his family.

Now, it was great that he thought about his family, but it was unwise that he took a path away

from true worship. It was also likely that Elimelech took considerable property with him. I read that most of the people did that when they moved to another land. No doubt, Naomi existed on that, and perhaps she sold some of her belongings as she needed to. Her husband had passed away, so he could no longer support her; and then her two sons died, so they could not support her either. She had to support herself with what she had, and she might have spent it all, because the Bible says she went back empty. Naomi acknowledged the hand of God in it, and she did not seem to murmur about it. She submitted to the hand of God quietly and bore it patiently.

## **Ruth Is Rewarded**

I want you to turn your attention to Ruth the Moabitess. What Ruth did had to have great value in the eyes of the Lord. Many Israelites would not have made that kind of commitment, so I believe that she got God's attention. Ruth left early associations and friendships, which could have kept her in Moab. The appeal of Naomi for her daughters-in-law to return to their own people set Ruth perfectly free to do so if she had been willing. Naomi told Ruth and Orpah they could go back to their own families and marry and have sons. They were free to go, and there would not have been any hard feelings.

Orpah went back to her people. No doubt, that would have had some pull on Ruth, but she decided to stay with Naomi. Orpah wept and kissed her mother-in-law goodbye and went back. Something else that could have attracted Ruth back to her own family was the religion of her childhood. She was not raised an Israelite; she was raised worshipping pagan gods.

Could Ruth leave behind the temples of the deities, the observance of her childhood days? Yes, she decided to go with Naomi. To Ruth, it was an unknown route. She decided to dwell with Naomi in an unknown home and said she would

die with Naomi, though she would be buried in an unknown grave. All these things must have worked on her.

In the providence of God, Ruth was rewarded with an honorable position and a very happy life. I am not going to go into the story of Boaz, but if you will read the Book of Ruth, you will find out what happened. Boaz was a kin to Naomi. He was not the closest kin, but he was a very wealthy man. It just so happened that Naomi and Ruth returned during the barley and wheat harvest. When Ruth married Boaz, she married into wealth. She was given a husband who was very honorable, very rich, very generous, and very kind.

Ruth was in the lineage of David and in the same lineage of Jesus Christ. She had a son whom she named Obed, and he was the father of Jesse, who was the father of David. Also, Ruth is mentioned in the New Testament. Matthew 1:5-6 states: "And Salmon begat Booz of Rahab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse; And Jesse begat David the king."

## **"Let Us Not Be Weary in Well Doing"**

Oh, how God wants to bless, protect, and comfort His people! People need to hang around long enough to see some of those blessings, but today people seem to be anxious in spirit. If something does not happen right away, they become antsy. When they come to God and He does not put their home back together or if He does not supply them with a job or line up in their thoughts, they are gone. They do not even stick around long enough to put the good seed in the ground to have the harvest.

God wants you to stay under His shadow. Psalm 17:8 reads, "Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings." Zechariah 2:8 states, "For thus saith the LORD of hosts; After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that touch-

eth you toucheth the apple of his eye." As a child of God, anybody who touches you is touching the apple of God's eye.

Speaking in Matthew 23:37, Jesus said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" The Jews would not submit to Jesus Christ.

Psalms 23:4 reads, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff [the Word and the Spirit] they comfort me." God knows all the dangers that defile. He knows all the crooked paths, the hidden pits, and the abrupt cliffs, and He will guide you around them or through them. Serving God is wonderful. We are faced with so many things from day to day, and some people fail to stay focused on serving God. The cares of life press them down, and they become weary of living right.

Some people get weary in well doing. They want to serve God, but they want to bring in just a little of something else. They slide a little of something else in, and the next thing they know, that something else begins to take priority and the things of God begin to slip. Paul warned in Galatians 6:9, "And let us not be weary in well doing [or in living right]: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." God wants His church to reap good things in life. He has good things for you if you will just hold steady and stay put.

Throughout the Word of God, you can read that if you do such-and-such, God will bless you, but if you do not, you will be under a curse. Deuteronomy 7:11-14 says: "Thou shalt therefore keep the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which I command thee this day, to do them. Wherefore it shall come to pass, if ye hearken to these judgments, and keep, and do them, that the LORD thy God shall keep unto thee the covenant and the mercy which he swore unto thy

fathers: And he will love thee, and bless thee, and multiply thee: he will also bless the fruit of thy womb, and the fruit of thy land, thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep, in the land which he swore unto thy fathers to give thee. Thou shalt be blessed above all people: there shall not be male or female barren among you, or among your cattle."

Amidst all the adversities and the trials, God's people are blessed above all others. What a privilege to raise children in the Church of God! That does not mean they are shielded against everything, but it does mean they know the right way. It does mean they know how to get on the right way and how to stay on the right way. So many times Israel forced God's hand through disobedience, by going into Egypt, by worshiping strange gods, and by breaking His commandments. Many times God had no choice but to send chastisement.

### **God Is No Respector of Persons**

As I mentioned earlier, Naomi had a kinsman on her husband's side of the family who was a wealthy individual. Ruth went into his fields during the harvest of barley and wheat, and she gathered up what the reapers had left. According to the Bible, the reapers were to leave a portion unharvested, so poorer people could come in and glean what was left by the reapers.

God brought Ruth and Boaz together, and Boaz was good to her. Boaz was not only wealthy but also very kind, generous, and giving. Ruth was a young woman who had lost her father-in-law and her husband. She was in a strange land, but God blessed her because of the choices she had made. Think of that! Because she chose the God of Israel, God poured out blessings upon her. She was blessed with a good husband, with wealth, and with a son.

Ruth was not a Jew, just as most of us are not Jews. God does not

look at a person's nationality. He looks at the heart. Where you come from, the color of your skin, and your nationality are not important to God. What is important is the condition of the heart. Revelation 7:9 reads, "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands."

God is no respecter of persons. He loves all people and will save all people if they meet Bible conditions. The conditions that God asks you to meet are not difficult. You do not have to study and study to become a Christian. God made salvation so simple that anyone could understand it. Salvation will take in the least intelligent to the smartest. God will take in all who will meet Bible conditions. He is not asking you to do something difficult. He is asking you to repent. What does the Bible say? It says to confess and forsake your sins, and God will have mercy. I will take mercy over judgment any day of the week.

Psalms 32:1-4 reads: "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not [or does not charge him with] iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile. When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long [that conviction was roaring at him all day long]. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer."

### **Acknowledging Your Sin**

Have you ever had God really lay something on you that you had done wrong? God may bring something to your mind, and if you do not take care of that right away, what will happen? His hand will get heavier upon you. He will not let that thing slip away from you. He will just keep pressing the matter until finally you say, "All right, I will take care of it." This is what

was happening with the psalmist.

Psalm 32:5 reads, "I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; [What happened? God forgave him.] and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah." Regardless of who you are or what the nature of your sin is, God will forgive you, and He will have mercy upon you if you let Him do the covering of your sins. Do not try to cover your own sins. It still takes the blood of Jesus Christ to eradicate sin.

Naomi said in Ruth 1:21, "I went out full, and the LORD hath brought me home again empty: why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the Lord hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?" In other words, she went out with a husband, land, and money, but then she came home empty. Her husband

died, her property was gone, her sons died, and no doubt, she was very lean financially. That was the cost of leaving the blessings of God and going into a strange land with strange gods.

When I first started serving God, I had some troubles and got away from God. A man with whom I worked at Rockwell invited me to go with him to another church. He said: "Why don't you come on over? We are having a revival."

I did not know much Truth, but I knew where I could hear Truth. I said, "No, if I ever get this life of mine straightened out, it will be at the Church of God." That is exactly where I got straightened out.

How can people sit under the message of Truth and then go someplace else? Do you know how that happens? God sends them a strong delusion. When God sends a person

a strong delusion, that is real deceit.

Naomi paid dearly for leaving the blessings of God and going into a strange land with strange gods. At the same time, God was merciful and willing to forgive. He restored Naomi and blessed her and gave her a new family. In this story we can see what God wants to do for His children.

Dear one, God wants to bless you and give you good things in life. Yes, Naomi and her husband made a costly mistake, but God restored her to the good things in life. As I mentioned earlier in the message, it is amazing how Ruth is in the lineage from which we had the birth of Jesus Christ. There are great blessings in serving God if you stay where those blessings are.

*(Compact Disc TR-1668)*

## If thou wouldst live long, live well, for folly and wickedness shorten life.

[Camp Mtg. Report—continued from p. 2] of God wonderfully. Their anointed messages were sent to bring greater light and understanding on how to press onward for the Lord. God is striving to encourage His saints to hold fast to the promises that He has given.

The congregational singing and the adult choir singing was very good and added much to the success of each service. It is spiritual singing that helps in preparing a good foundation for the preaching of the Gospel. The young people's choir also sang and added much to the services. Their voices blended harmoniously together, creating a spiritually sweet sound that uplifted our hearts. One evening during the meeting, the Church of God orchestra played the songs of Zion.

Saturday morning the camp

meeting children took part in the main service. Hearing those young hearts sing the praises of God brought a great blessing to the congregation. The children's choir sang an uplifting song entitled "That's All Right." Some children sang specials and others played instruments.

Another highlight of the meeting occurred each afternoon as Sister Natalie Bremer conducted a series of lectures on the church's 100-year anniversary. She searched and compiled many events regarding the history on the Church of God here in Newark, Ohio. She presented slides of the first building at 6<sup>th</sup> and Locust Streets with many of the older saints. She included in the presentation pictures of the tabernacle where we now worship while it was under construction.

Next, she covered the church

website and the benefits of its function, as well as The Gospel Trumpeter and the process involved in the printing of a monthly periodical. Then she spoke of the radio ministry, and Saturday she conducted a tour showing various sites of interest. This tour covered going by the old church building in town, Brother and Sister Emerson A. Wilson's home and gravesite where they were buried, Brother and Sister William A. Wilson's home and gravesite where they were buried. The history was very inspiring.

This camp meeting had excellent preaching and singing, and many souls received help. God desires that men and women live holy lives and leave a strong, influential heritage for those who are following.

*Luke 17:20 And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he*

*answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation:*

*21 Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.*

# The Kingdom Without Observation



*Brother C. H. Dickerson*

## **A Spiritual Kingdom**

When Jesus said, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation," He was saying that you cannot see it with the natural eyes. We are living in a day when people are like Thomas was. He would not believe that Christ had risen from the dead until he saw proof of it. The Bible teaches only one kingdom. The religious world teaches about the

Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of Heaven, and the Kingdom of Christ; but they are all one and the same.

The Scripture text plainly teaches that the Kingdom of God comes not with observation. It also teaches that the Kingdom of God is not in one geographical location. Jesus said it is within you. The world is sitting back and looking for God to set up His kingdom on earth. Many believe that Jesus is going

to come back and go to Jerusalem in Palestine to set up His kingdom and rule the world. Jerusalem is a city with a population of more than eight hundred thousand people. The Scripture lets us know that the Kingdom of God is countless. It is like the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered. The idea that Jesus is going to come back and set up a kingdom in a city of about eight hundred thousand people does not

even make sense.

Many people are missing the real kingdom today. While the saints of God are enjoying the Kingdom of God, many others are looking for a kingdom to come. Christ is ruling over the lives of His people right now. The Scripture plainly teaches that no one has seen God at any time, because He is a Spirit. He is ruling over His kingdom now. It is a spiritual kingdom, and He is ruling over every saint of God. Not a Scripture in the Word of God teaches that Jesus' feet will ever touch the earth again.

Someone may say, "Well, Zechariah 14:4 says, 'And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives.'" You have to keep in mind that this prophecy was written approximately five hundred eighty-five years before Christ died on the Cross of Calvary. Not one Scripture since then even hints that His feet will ever touch the earth again, because there is not going to be any earth after He splits the clouds and all the dead in Christ arise and we that are alive and remain are caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air.

As we consider this text of Scripture, I want you to realize that in many works that God does, He does them through Christ, but most of them are not with observation. Certainly, the results can be seen, and as we see these results, we know the work has been done. Jesus said in John 3:8, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." Jesus tried to tell people that they could feel the wind and see the results of it, but they could not see the wind itself. This is the thought God is trying to get to us as far as the kingdom is concerned.

### **How to Enter God's Kingdom**

Paul stated in 2 Corinthians 5:17, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old

things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." In other words, my friend, when God saves you, you will have a new heart, a new spirit, new desires, new friends, and a new walk. Also, you are going to look different and act different.

If you have God's Spirit, you will like the things that God likes and hate the things that God hates. You will seek His Word, love, obey, and cherish it, and love to be with the saints of God. You will want to hear the Gospel preached. You will not want to hear it watered down. God has not changed. His kingdom is still the same, my friend. God said in Ezekiel 36:27, "And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." I want you to see that when God saves you, you become a brand-new creation. God recreates you and gives you new desires, new ears, new eyes, and a new heart.

When David was made king, the Scripture lets us know it took place with observation. The Word of God tells us there was great pomp that took place; in other words, there was a brilliant display. When Solomon's temple was built, the Scripture tells us in 2 Chronicles 5:13-14: "It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the LORD, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever: that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the LORD; So that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of God."

This happened with observation; in other words, the people saw this. God's kingdom is different from all others: it is not observable. In other words, you do not literally see God sitting on His throne. When you meet God's conditions and ask God to move into your heart, He moves

in. When He moves in, you will be changed from the top of your head to the soles of your feet. God only makes one thing out of you, and that is a new creation who follows the Word of God and does what He tells you to do. My friend, being born again will make you a part of the Church of the Living God.

The Kingdom of God can only be visible, as the Scripture tells us, to those who have been born again. John wrote in John 3:3, "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." The reason that more people do not see the Kingdom of God is that they have not been born again. When people put this kingdom out in the future, saying that Jesus is going to return and set up an earthly kingdom in Jerusalem, there cannot be a word of truth in it. Again, Jerusalem is a city of more than eight hundred thousand, and the Word of God tells us that the saints are so great in number that they are like the sand of the sea. How could He crowd them all into that city? It does not even make sense. I repeat, the reason they do not see the Kingdom of God is that they have not been born again. If they get born again, God will open their eyes and they will see that a change has taken place.

### **The Focus of God's People**

When one is truly born again, he will change his own ways to God's way and align himself with God's Eternal Truth. Preachers who are born again will preach a good, old-fashioned Church of God message that will separate the church from the world, or the saints from the world. I want you to understand that when God saves you, a change will take place. The saints of God are in the world but not of the world. Friend, the saints of God are entirely different from the world.

John 3:5 states, "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and

of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Jesus made it very clear that if you enter into the Kingdom of God and if you are going to see the Kingdom of God, you have to be born again. Being born again does not mean that a person is born of his mother again, but he is born of the Spirit of God. One who is born again allows the Spirit of God to take over his life, he follows the Spirit of God, and he does what God tells him to do.

Today most religious people are focused on external things, the things they can see. They are more concerned about having great buildings. They take more pride in their buildings than they do in seeing the souls of mankind saved and seeing God make something beautiful out of people's lives.

The church is not the building. The building is a convenient place for the church to meet. The church is made up of saints of God, the people who live for God. John wrote in Revelation 21:2 that he saw the great city, the church, coming down from God out of Heaven. He stated, "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." He did not see a literal city being lowered down on the earth, but he was simply talking about the church.

When you let God rule over you and do things His way, then you remain a part of the church. If you get to the place where you shut yourself off from any one thing that God's Word gives you light on, you are no longer a part of the church. In order to be a part of the church, you must walk in every bit of light that God has shown you. You must let God sit on the throne of your heart. When the man of God preaches a message that is contrary to what you have been taught, but it is in the Word of God, you are duty bound to obey it.

When you hear the Word of God, it ought to bring forth some praise, my friend. When they built Solomon's temple and it was so

beautiful, the preacher got up to preach, but there was so much praise that he could not even speak. Today when God saves a soul and turns a life around and makes that person a new creature, the saints of God ought to shout the praises of God. Why? Another soldier has joined the Lord's army. We have another to walk with us and to be shoulder to shoulder in battle against the devil. We need to praise God for this from the depths of our hearts.

### **The Change That Salvation Brings**

The kingdom is not a pledge to man, and you can only gain entrance by being saved from sin. Matthew 1:21 reads, "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins." I want you to notice that this verse does not say *in* their sins. God will give you power so that you do not have to sin. He will save you *from* sin. The same temptations will be there, the same tests will be there, and the same tribulations will be there, but God will give you power to walk away from those things and to turn your back on sin. You do not have to do wrong.

Jesus came to save you from your sins. When He does that, He said in the Book of Psalms that the Lord Himself writes your name in the Book of Life. Man has nothing to do with it. God does not write your name down on a church book somewhere, but up in Heaven, where the moths and the thieves cannot get to it and no man can take your name out of it. When God writes your name in the Book of Life, no preacher anywhere can take your name out of it. The only one who can cause your name to be removed is you. People may try to smear your name, try to ruin your name, and try to corrupt your influence; but thank God, they cannot touch your name in the Book of Life. Jesus put your name there, and no one can touch it. I thank God for

that!

The church is a called-out assembly, and its perceptibility to the world is only by the Christian's actions, by his spirit, and by his attitude. This is the only way that the world can see the church. God changes all these areas of our lives, and as the world goes by, they say, "There is the church."

There are a lot of self-righteous people out in the world, but no matter how self-righteous they are, if God saves them, they will be changed. Some people are like I was. I was as rotten as I could be, but when God saved me, He changed me. After He saved me, I had a different attitude and a different spirit. I was entirely different all the way through.

My friend, if you are a sinner, your attitude is against the things of God, but if you will allow God to save you, you will have an attitude that is for the things of God, and you will back the man of God who preaches the Truth. You will be behind him 100 percent. This has nothing to do with personality. Maybe you do not like the preacher's personality, but you had better love the Truth he preaches and stand behind the message.

Too many people have a problem with someone's personality, so they do not want to hear him preach. Others have a problem with someone because he does not wear his necktie the same color as somebody else does, because someone does not wear a white shirt, or because someone's suit is not pressed the way they think it should be. Therefore, they do not want anything to do with him. I am going to tell you, my friend, you had better look past that and look at the spirit that man has, the attitude that man has, and the message that man has. If he preaches the Truth, and the Truth is there, you had better back him 100 percent. Also, if anybody tries to tear him down, you ought to stand against anyone who does.

You should not let people shove just anything down your throat, so to

speaking. If you do, you are going to regret it. Many years ago a woman said to me, "I can go anywhere to church because I know when I eat a piece of fish and get a bone." Today others may say, "I know what the Truth is, so I can go anywhere, and I'll be all right." Yes, and you are going to lose your soul in hell, because God lets you know in His Word that if you mess around with false things, He will turn you over to a reprobate mind and let you believe a lie and be damned; then your soul will go to a lost hell. If you sit in Babylon's pews when you know the Truth, my friend, it is just a polite way to go to hell.

### Letting Your Light Shine

As Jesus began to preach the Sermon on the Mount, in Matthew 5:13-15 He said: "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour [or if it has lost its ability to season], wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house."

Now, I want you to understand what He was saying. As Christians, we are the light of the world. We are as a city set on a hill that cannot be hid. We do not want to be hid. We have a message to preach and a message to live. We have something to show the world. I am not ashamed of the message that I preach, and I am not ashamed of the Church of God or the Holy Spirit. I am not ashamed to tell people, "We don't do this and that."

I heard of an individual who stopped going to church when the preacher told him that he should not go to a prom where they dance. Somebody came to me and said, "Do you preach against the proms?"

I said, "No, I don't preach against going to a dance hall either,

but the saints of God know better than to go to a dance hall." I do not have to preach against attending a prom, because when a person gets saved, he or she does not even think about going to a dance hall or a prom. A prom has the same atmosphere as a dance hall.

In Matthew 5:16 Jesus said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and [when they see your good works, they will] glorify your Father which is in heaven." If you let your light shine, through your spirit and your attitude, and let the Word of God shine through your life, people will glorify God in Heaven. First Peter 2:12 says, "Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation."

The Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 3:15, "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God [because somebody is watching you], which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." People might not understand the Word of God, but when the preacher gets up and reads a text of Scripture, they will look around at the people. Either you are going to make them feel this is it or you will turn them against it, all because of what they see in your life.

Paul said we need to learn how to behave ourselves at the house of God, which is the Church of the Living God. Every saint of God is a pillar. A *pillar* supports something; it upholds something. My friend, the saints of God are upholding, or supporting, the Truth, so let us not knock down any pillars.

### Walking in Obedience by Faith

Today folks are working hard to be politically correct, but they fail to be righteous. They fail to be morally and spiritually correct. Paul said in Colossians 4:6, "Let your speech be

always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man." People can see what you are and where you stand. Paul said, "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt." You see, salt is a pledge; it is a perpetual covenant. When you tell a brother that you love him, you ought to love him and show him that you love him. In other words, you need to back up your words by your actions. This old thing of telling somebody you love him or her and then going around and stabbing that person in the back is nothing more than the work of the devil! It was hatched out in hell, and it is of the devil.

The Scripture places great emphasis on faith. You cannot have faith without total obedience to the law governing that unit. Friend, one of the big things wrong with some people concerning faith is that they cannot exercise it. The reason is, they are not totally obedient to the law that is governing that faith.

Whether it is a motor in an automobile or an air conditioning unit in a building, it is not going to work unless it is hooked up as it is supposed to be to govern that unit. I have watched electricians hook up wires, and they say, "If you turn on that switch, the light will work." I flipped it, and it worked. Why? The electrician hooked it up according to the law that governs electricity, so he knew it was going to work. Today if the saints of God will do everything that they know to do, walk in all the light they know, let God move upon them and set up a kingdom in their hearts, and let the Spirit motivate their lives, they are going to get rid of lots of doubts. They will not be saying, "I wonder if God can do this." They will know He can do it. God has never changed. If you will do your part and wait on the Lord, He will be there for you. You must walk by faith and not by sight.

In the Bible we are warned against people who try to lead us to another Gospel. There is no other. Church of God, if somebody comes

around and tries to lead you to another Gospel, you had better get some backbone and stand, because there is not another one.

The Bible tells us there are false christs, and it also talks about those who mind earthly things, or put earthly things ahead of godly things. Paul made it quite clear that when people put earthly things ahead of godly things, they will end up in total destruction. Our vision must be set on the things which are not seen. In 2 Corinthians 4:18 Paul said, "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

Too much time is being placed on the temporal things and not enough time is spent on eternal things. There are one hundred sixty-eight hours in a week. I would like for you to do a little test to see how you spend your time. You can carry a pad of paper and a pencil with you and write down how many hours you work, how many hours you sleep, how many hours you work at home, how many hours you spend for recreation, how much time you spend for eating, how much time you spend on business, hygiene, and accidentals; then see how much time you have left that you have actually spent for the Lord. You might be surprised.

Jeremiah tells us in Jeremiah 50:5, "They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, saying, Come, and let us join ourselves to the LORD in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten." He was saying, "Let us join ourselves to a perpetual covenant; let us make a covenant with God, an everlasting covenant, so that God is number one in our lives." We must put God first and serve Him. We must do what God would have us to do. There is a demand for faith, and it can only come by obedience. Faith calls for a man's total and complete commitment. In other words, we must let God rule our lives.

## **Christ's Second Coming**

Paul wrote in Romans 14:17, "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Verse 21 of our text of Scripture reads, "Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you." I cannot see how anybody can mistakenly think that Jesus is going to come back and set up the Kingdom of God, because He made it quite clear that it is not a geographical location, but it is within you. How can anybody get twisted around to think He is going to waste all these years, letting people try to guide their own lives when God wants to guide their lives? God has one thing in mind: just as the Law led people to Christ, if they minded the Law, if you will let the Spirit of God lead you, it will take you to Heaven.

Christ's coming is going to be seen. John said in Revelation 1:7, "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen." Jesus' coming is going to be literal. The Scripture lets us know that when He comes, He will descend from Heaven with a shout and the trumpet of the Lord will sound. Until His coming, we must contact Him by faith. For the present time, He is retained in Heaven, but He is coming to deliver up the kingdom, or the church.

Jesus said in Matthew 24:27, "For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." He let us know that He is coming back for one thing, and that is to gather up the kingdom and deliver it to the Father. My friend, if you are going to make Heaven your home, you have to be in the Kingdom of God right on this earth. When I talk about being in the Kingdom of God, I am talking about letting God set up His kingdom in your heart so that you do what God

says.

The saints are hid with Christ, or concealed by the Word of God. The ungodly are seeking a hiding place from Him. The Scriptures let us know that God is real. No matter how wicked people are or how religious they are, when a man of God preaches God's Eternal Truth, if people are not right with God, they are going to be miserable. It is going to cause them to shake a little. What are they doing? In essence, they are calling for the rocks and the mountains of Babylon to fall on them, to hide them from the face of Him so they can think they are getting by with the way they are living. Some say, "I belong to Such-and-Such Church, but I go here and there." Even if they go to all of them, without God they are lost. Without God ruling their lives they cannot be in the kingdom. Friend, this kingdom does not come with observation, but we can see the results of it.

Some people claim to be children of God, yet you see them standing around puffing on cigarettes and using language that is not right. I have talked to such people, and they said to me, "Where do you work?"

I replied, "I am a minister."

Immediately, they became so religious and said, "We go over here and there, and we do all these things for the church." It did not make any difference where they went or what they said. The reason they were puffing on cigarettes was that they were bound by them. When God saves you, He breaks that habit and sets you free. Also, He sets you free from foul talk, X-rated movies, and whatever else you are doing that is not right. He will even set you free so that you will not look at ungodly things on the computer.

## **Looking Forward to Jesus' Return**

God's people are looking forward to Jesus' return. They rejoice in their salvation here because they have the privilege of being saved.

My friend, when the body has been racked with pain and God delivers or when the burdens are so heavy and God says, "Peace, be still," oh, how good it is to serve God! How good it is for God to be on the throne! How good it is to be in the Kingdom of God! How good it is to be a child of God! Christian friend, how many times have those old waves out in the world felt as though they were going to wash you away, but you lifted up your voice to God, and He told those waves to be still, and a peace came over your soul? It is worth it all to serve God!

When God sees you going through a hard place (and saints of God do go through hard places), He will deliver you. When the three Hebrew children were going through the fire, God was right in there with them. When they got out, they did not even smell of smoke, and not a hair on their heads was singed. The people of God are going through the fire today, but God is going with them. He is walking right with us day by day. God will take care of us.

When we look upon His face, the One who loved us so much that He died in our stead, what a day that will be! I have seen people who have not seen one another for maybe three or four years or even longer than that, and when they see that loved one and look upon his or her face, what joy there is! When we were lost, down in the very pits of

sin, we could hardly go any lower. Jesus died on the Cross of Calvary to set us free and to turn our lives around and make us new creatures. One of these days, what a reunion it will be to look on the face of One who delivered us from this lost and dying world and who suffered and died in our stead!

Young person, you might think that you have a life ahead of you and that you have plenty of time, but I want you to realize that you need Christ. Older person, you may say, "I feel mighty good, and I feel that I am going to live a long time." You still need God. You cannot direct your own steps. You cannot guide your own life. How many people have let hatred get into their hearts to the degree that they have done something drastic, and when they finally came to themselves, they realized what they had done?

Friend, I want you to realize that you need God to direct you. You need to walk with Him and allow Him to guide your life. We are living in a wicked world. It is hardly safe to go out the door at night anymore. Sometimes people even break in the door of a house and come in and do damage, so we need God.

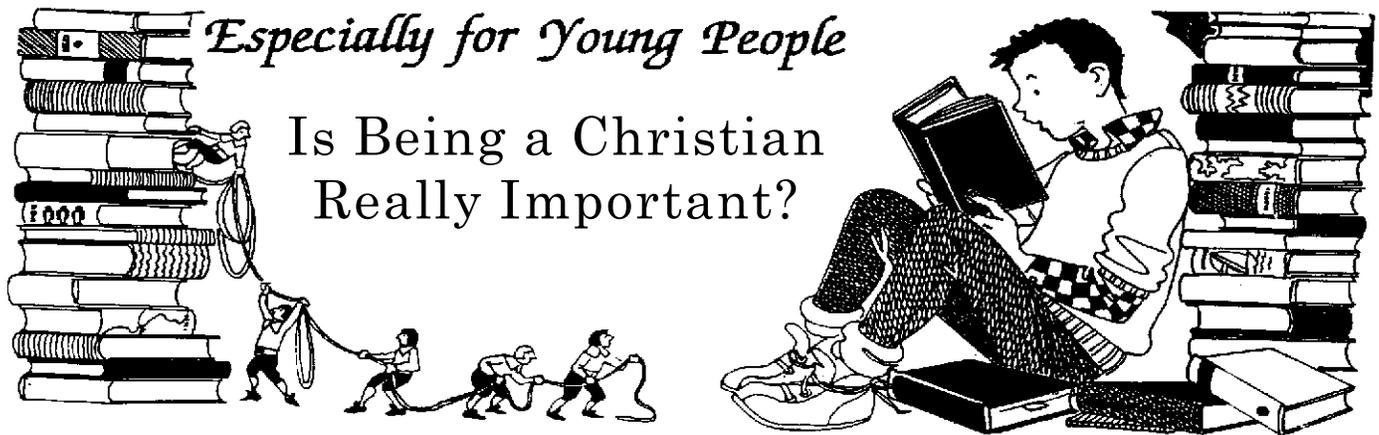
Do you know God personally? Young person, have you turned your life over to God to direct your life or are you trying to direct your own steps? Older person, do you have the

idea, "I'm going to get saved soon"? Every day that you live in sin, you are heaping up things that you will have to straighten out. You are getting further and further away from God. You are getting closer to the point of no return every day that you live in sin.

Friend, are you letting God direct your life? You may ask, "Why should I be so concerned about the kingdom?" The most important reason that you should be concerned about the kingdom is, that is all He is coming back to deliver up. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:24, speaking of when Jesus is coming back to deliver up the kingdom, "Then cometh the end." Jesus might split the clouds today. We do not know when He will come, but the only question you need to ask yourself is, "Am I ready?" If you are not, you ought to get ready. You need to pay attention to what the Word of God says and obey it, and then you can be born into the Kingdom of God. You will know that you have been changed. When that happens, you will know that something has happened because you will take your hands off your life and start letting God direct your steps. When God directs your steps, He will guide you to one place, and that is the Truth. May God help you.

*(Cassette C-4670M)*

**You shall pass this way but once;  
any good that you can do,  
any kindness that you can show,  
you need to do it now,  
for you shall not pass this way again.**



*Especially for Young People*

## Is Being a Christian Really Important?

Young Christians are sometimes sorely tempted to give up their Christian experience and go back into the world with the idea that it is not worthwhile to put forth the effort to be a Christian. The idea of turning back to the world is suggested by the enemy even to older Christians. So it is important that we look into the matter of living the Christian life to see if it is worth the effort.

If there is anyone who knows the importance of Christian living, it seems that Jesus should know. When we study His life and words, we find Him making some rather unusual deductions about the importance of being in harmony with the Heavenly Father.

One instance of this is commonly referred to as Christ's temptation in the wilderness. After a long period of fasting, Jesus was hungry, and the devil suggested that He provide Himself with food by turning the stones that lay about Him into bread. This Jesus flatly refused to do, saying by His actions that it is better to be right with God, though hungry, than to have a full stomach and be out of touch with God. This sort of thinking runs contrary to the ordinary concept of the world, yet it gives us a clear idea of how Jesus felt about the matter of having right relations with God.

At this time Satan offered Jesus the applause of the masses if he would jump from the top of the temple and the rulership of the world if Jesus would fall down and worship Satan. Jesus turned down both of these offers. By His actions, Jesus

said: "Better never to have a friend if it costs the fellowship of the Heavenly Father. Better never to have dominion or leadership over a single person if it means forfeiting friendship with God."

Endeavoring to show the importance of being a Christian, Jesus used various parts of the human body in His illustration. Mark 9:43-48 says: "And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

"And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

This illustration comes to us with considerable weight since our hands and feet and eyes play such an important part in our lives. Jesus does not say we have to lose these important organs in order to be Christians, but rather He is trying to show the great importance of knowing God and being in right relationship with Him. Jesus says it is more important to be a Christian than to have two eyes, two feet, or two hands. He thus gives us,

in a rather startling way, His conception of the value of being right with God.

The story of Jesus' visit to the country of the Gadarenes, where He cast devils out of two men and where those devils entered into a herd of swine, causing them to run off a cliff into the lake and be drowned, gives further insight into how important Jesus considered a right relationship with God to be. Jesus, by His action on this occasion, seems to say: "What does a herd of hogs matter, even though they are many, when the soul of a man is at stake? Deliver the man regardless of the cost."

Perhaps the crowning teaching of Jesus, relative to the importance of being saved and living the Christian life, comes in His teaching as recorded in Matthew 16:26, which reads, "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Here in one brief statement, Jesus marks off all the values of earth as *nothing in comparison to knowing God*. What are houses and lands if I must forfeit my soul in order to get them? What are stocks and bonds if to gain them I must lose my soul? What value will all the gold and silver on earth bring me if I must die and be lost forever to possess it here for a brief period? The greatest blessing life affords is to know God and to live with His peace filling the heart day by day.

Selected

*Romans 1:18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;*

*19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them.*

*20 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:*

*21 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.*

*22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,*

*23 And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image*

*made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.*

*24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:*

*25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.*

*26 For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature:*

*27 And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recom-*

*pence of their error which was meet.*

*28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;*

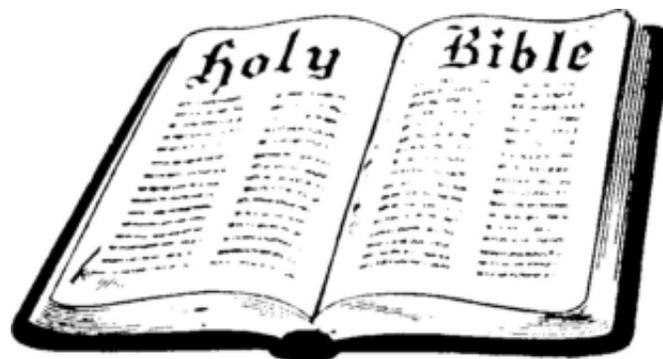
*29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers,*

*30 Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,*

*31 Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful:*

*32 Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.*

# The Sin of Sodomy and Same-Sex Marriage



**Brother Larry Dishman**

## **Caving in to Social Pressures**

First, I want to say that I do not have a spirit in me to hurt people, but I preach to help people. If you

need help along these lines, let me tell you that I love you, God loves you, and He wants to help you.

Discussions of sodomy have been occupying prominent places in

the news media. Many argue that the rights of those practicing sodomite relationships need to be protected. You will notice throughout this message that I do my best to call this

sodomy. I try not to refer to these people as gays, lesbians, or homosexuals because that is not what the Bible calls them. I believe we ought to stay with what the Word of God says. The Word of God is not cruel. We need the Word of God. I do not think we ought to say, "So-and-So had an affair" when the Bible calls it adultery. We need to stick with the Bible terms.

Some argue that sodomite relationships are normal and should be taught in the public schools as an acceptable alternative. It is being taught in some schools. It is certainly being taught in the colleges, and it is portrayed on television and in the news. Those involved in this lifestyle are trying to cram it down our throats, so to speak. Since it is on the news, in the colleges, and in the schools, I believe it is time that we, as the Church of God, speak out on this subject. We ought not to be sympathetic toward this sin. I love the people, but I will not be sympathetic toward the sin.

I believe that the first step to becoming a sodomite is to begin to sympathize with that spirit. The practice of sodomy and its acceptance as an alternate lifestyle is becoming more and more prevalent in the day and time in which we are living. I was raised in the Midwest, and I did not know of one person who claimed to be a sodomite, but this thing has been turned loose today.

Nearly every day we read or hear of things that indicate more and more people are accepting sodomy as normal behavior. For example, ordinances are being passed that grant sodomites equal rights to practice and promote their lifestyles. The formation of sodomite churches and even the ordination of sodomite priests and ministers in mainstream protestant denominations is becoming common. Cities like San Francisco, California, and Key West, Florida, appear to cater to the open display of sodomite behavior.

It is astounding that so many

churches are going along with the sin of sodomy and same-sex marriage. Friend, the claim by some of these denominations that the Spirit of God has led them to accept sodomy as an acceptable alternative lifestyle is without scriptural basis. It is definitely not the Spirit of God that is revealing this modern belief, but rather human spirits seeking to accommodate themselves to social pressures.

### **The Real Source of Truth**

We cannot allow this thing to move us from the Truth of God's Eternal Word. God's Word is the final authority on any subject that might come up. Friend, to know the truth about sodomy, one must first determine the real source of Truth.

Some people question if there is really a source of Truth. Can you really know what is right and what is wrong? Can you know what should govern the things considered in this lesson? Most people believe there is an authority, but they believe it comes from the research of scientists. The problem with scientific research is that the testing, the evaluating, and the interpretation of the evidence is often flawed by the personal agenda of the scientists involved. Maintaining total objectivity is rarely done, especially among scientists who try to be politically correct in order to receive the government grants they need to conduct their research. The only way they can come up with the money to do the research is if they come up with the answers that the government wants them to have.

As the disciples of Jesus (those who are saved are the disciples of Jesus Christ), we believe the truth concerning this subject is found in Him. Jesus said in John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." The realm of truth is found in Jesus, and it covers many areas, especially that of sexual behavior. The Truth in Jesus has much to say about what constitutes righteousness

and true holiness. One may ask, "Why should I accept Jesus over the scientific experts of today?" Because, my friend, every true Christian is convinced that God has furnished the Truth and that Jesus is the true Judge regarding what is right and what is wrong. Every bit of the Word of God is true, not just 99 percent of it. Therefore, whatever the Bible teaches about sodomy and same-sex marriage must be the final word on this subject.

Now, though I need to present what God's Word teaches on this subject, I will do so by speaking in love. That is what Ephesians 4:15 says to do. We who profess to be Christians should remember the admonition of the Apostle Paul when it comes to sharing God's Word with those who may differ with us. We should always be ready to assist those who desire to be saved and who desire to overcome sodomy. Jesus was quick to receive sinners who were tired of sin and wanted to be saved and to lead them in the way of righteousness and life everlasting.

### **The Sanctity of Marriage**

I want to begin by saying that all sex outside of marriage is sin; it is wrong. Hebrews 13:4 says, "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." All sodomite relationships take place outside of marriage. Though there is an active attempt to redefine marriage civilly to include sodomites, God's definition still stands.

My friend, neither the President, the Congress, nor the Senate can redefine marriage. God told us what marriage is, and we must believe the Word of God. As far as God is concerned, there is no marriage in the sodomite community. God does not recognize it. The President and lots of other folks might recognize it, but God does not.

The sodomite community has different ideas about adultery than those who are saved. A relationship

with multiple partners is not condemned in the sodomite community; they look upon it as a potentially positive experience. A survey was made among sodomites involved with lifetime partners. I want you to notice that 57 percent reported having sex with thirty or more people, and 35 percent reported having sex with more than one hundred people. This tells us that 92 percent of them have a large number of sex partners in a lifetime.

What does the Bible say? Genesis 1:26-27 says: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."

After God created man, God said it was not good for him to be alone, and then He created the female. The Bible says in Genesis 2:18, "And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him." Her name was Eve, not Steve. God did not make Adam a buddy, or another man to be his helpmeet. No, He made him a woman, and that is still God's plan today.

Genesis 2:22-24 reads: "And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."

A man leaves his parents to marry a wife (a woman). No provision is made in the Word of God for a man to marry a man or for a woman to marry a woman. Marriage is a divine institution and not merely a civil institution. It is still God who determines what a proper marriage

is, not man. It is not up to man to determine this. God has already put it in His Word. One songwriter penned the words, "*God said it and I believe it, and that settles it for me.*" God said it, and it is already settled whether anyone believes it or not. God said it and, therefore, it is settled.

Marriage, according to the Bible, has always been between a man and a woman. There is no mention in the Bible of same-sex marriage. Same-sex marriage is totally foreign to the Bible and to the doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ. The only marriage approved of God is between a male and a female. *All same-sex relationships in the Bible are highly condemned.* Friend, the sanctity of marriage has too long been under attack. Same-sex marriage threatens the moral fiber of society. The Word of God lets us know in Proverbs 14:34 that "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people." The sin of sodomy, along with many other sins that I could mention, is a reproach to this nation.

### God's Plan

God intended for children to be raised in a loving family with emotional security and nurture provided by a loving father and a loving mother. Same-sex marriage destroys what God intended to be good and wholesome. It should be the desire, the prayer, and the goal of every Christian that the laws governing marriage be consistent with divine revelation, not secular humanism. That being the case, how could you vote for someone who is for same-sex marriage? God is against same-sex marriage, and we ought to be against it too.

First Corinthians 7:2 reads, "Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband." That is God's plan. To avoid fornication, God did not tell a man you go get another man or tell a woman to go get another woman.

He said that a man should marry a woman and a woman should marry a man. I repeat, every reference to sodomy is condemned in the Word of God.

Jesus said in Matthew 19:4-5: "Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?"

A man becoming one flesh with another man or a woman becoming one flesh with another woman is highly condemned in the Scriptures. The Word of God condemns it. I am just reporting what God said about it thousands of years ago. Do not come to me and say, "You are judging these people." No, I am not judging them, friend. The Word of God has already judged them. God is the One who said it. There is a difference between judging and reporting. I am reporting to you what God's Word has to say about this subject. God finds it to be an abomination.

Going back to the Old Testament, Leviticus 18:22 reads, "Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination." Can the Scriptures be more clear than that? Sodomite conduct is an abomination to the Lord. Without question sodomy was clearly a grave offense worthy of death in the Old Testament. It carried the death penalty under the old law. Leviticus 20:13 tells us, "If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them."

Our Scripture text says in verses 26-27: "For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: [It is a vile affection when men and women change their natural use. Let us do away with the thought that God made people this way.] for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving

the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet."

Do you realize that the average sodomite only lives to be about forty-two years of age? That is the statistics that I read a few years ago. Those who contract AIDS have an average life span of thirty-six years. You may ask, "Why does this happen?" Verse 21 of our Scripture text tells us, "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God." Verse 26 states, "For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections."

### "Be Not Deceived"

First Corinthians 6:9-10 reads: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." What does the word *effeminate* mean? *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* says, "A male who submits his body to unnatural ludeness." What does the Scripture mean when it says "abusers of themselves with mankind"? It is speaking of a man who lies with a male as a female—a sodomite.

Genesis 18:20 reads, "And the LORD said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous." The Bible says their sin is very grievous. Young person, I want you to heed my words. This spirit is nothing to play around with. Do not hang around such individuals. You need to stay away from anybody that would try to make a move on you, no matter who it is. If someone tries, you ought to go to your mother and father, the police, or your pastor and let them know what is going on. This is something very grievous.

Genesis 19:4-7 states: "But before they lay down, the men of the city, even the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter: And they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where are the men which came in to thee this night? bring them out unto us, that we may know them. And Lot went out at the door unto them, and shut the door after him, And said, I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly." People who believe that it is all right to be a sodomite say that God was not upset with Sodom and Gomorrah because of the sin of sodomy, but that He was upset because the people were not tolerant toward the sodomites. Friend, that is the farthest thing from the truth that I have ever heard in my life.

Jude, verse 7 reads, "Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." Going after strange flesh is not a normal sexual relationship. It is referring to other types of sexual relations; it is speaking of sodomy.

Friend, do not come to me and say, "I think God made me this way; therefore, you cannot condemn me." The Bible says in Ecclesiastes 7:29, "Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions." I believe what the Word of God says. God made men upright. They are the ones who sought out many evil inventions.

### God's Judgment

No scientific study has yet proved that one is born a sodomite. Again, in Genesis 19:4-5 we read: "But before they lay down, the men of the city, even the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter [I want you to notice that the people from the city were seeking to participate in whatever

sin this was]: And they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where are the men which came in to thee this night? bring them out unto us, that we may know them." The word "know" as used here is often used in referring to a sexual relationship. That is exactly what the men were talking about.

Lot's reaction to the crowd certainly suggests that is how he understood their request. Verses 6-7 read: "And Lot went out at the door unto them, and shut the door after him, And said, I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly." It is apparent that Lot understood their intentions. Lot's next statement is hard for me to understand how he could have said such a thing. Verse 8 states, "Behold now, I have two daughters which have not known man; let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as is good in your eyes: only unto these men do nothing; for therefore came they under the shadow of my roof." Lot's astonishing offer of his two daughters confirms that he understood the crowd's intentions. Lot viewed this sin very, very grievous when he actually offered his virgin daughters to these vile men to keep this sin from taking place.

What was the crowd's response? Verse 9 says, "And they said, Stand back. And they said again, This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge: now will we deal worse with thee, than with them. And they pressed sore upon the man, even Lot, and came near to break the door." Their reaction is similar to that of many today toward those who would dare to point out this sinful conduct. When someone does point it out, they are quick to say, "Who are you to judge?" Friend, we are not judging. People say that to avoid the condemnation of the message by condemning the messenger. Sodomy was a grievous sin to which Lot referred in Genesis, Chapter 19.

Second Peter 2:6 reads, "And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned

them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly." The Apostle Peter explained that this severe judgment upon these two cities was to serve as an example. Why was Sodom and Gomorrah chosen to be an example of God's ultimate judgment upon the ungodly? What were they doing that made them so different from other ungodly cities? There were other ungodly cities besides Sodom and Gomorrah at that time. Abraham was told in Genesis 18:20, "And the LORD said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous." Oh, young person, this is something that is *very* grievous. You should never give in to this sin.

### **The Righteous Indignation of God**

Now, I want to talk to you about the danger of deception. Again, 1 Corinthians 6:9 reads, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived." A lot of people are deceived on this thought. There is a deception, according to Romans, Chapter 1, that goes along with this. Romans refers to it as someone having a reprobate mind. A person can go so far that he can become a reprobate; in other words, one having a mind void of understanding.

Paul's warning of "be not deceived" is very proper today. The Bible says the effeminate and the abusers of themselves with mankind absolutely will not inherit the Kingdom of God. Along with all the other sins mentioned, he said they that do such things will not inherit the Kingdom of God. Therefore, they do not need somebody to come along and pat them on the back and say: "Oh, you will be all right. Just do the best you can." No, friend, people need to be told the truth about this subject.

Rather than mentioning the Judgment Day in our Scripture text or striking down with a bolt of light-

ning out of the sky, God expressed His righteous indignation by giving them up to moral uncleanness. In other words, people who are not willing to honor God as God are simply allowed to degenerate into moral decay. The righteous indignation of God is directed toward those who reject the clear evidence of God's existence and power as revealed in nature. God makes them into an image of their own choosing.

Today most people are too sophisticated to think that God is likened to a graven image. There is a tendency, however, to recreate God in one's own image, and to assume that He thinks and acts the same way you do. If that is your thinking, you need to read Isaiah 55:8-9, which states: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD: For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

How does God express His righteous indignation? Short of bringing about the Judgment Day, Paul let us know in our Scripture text that a strong delusion takes place when women cease to appreciate their bodies, which are naturally designed for men and for procreation. They think of their bodies solely as instruments of vile passions for one another. In regards to men, the Bible says God has given them up to uncleanness. In a similar fashion, men who have been given up by God to uncleanness eventually leave the natural use of the woman and turn to other men to fulfill lustful desires.

One thing that causes people to go down this path is their resistance to the Truth, or turning away from Truth. That is what Romans says causes this to happen in some cases. Three times—in Romans 1:24, 26, and 28—God gave them up. The point is clear: when people choose to reject God, or recreate Him in their own image, God gives them up to their own way. Unrestrained by God in any way, they gravitate into

the increasing levels of immorality, going further and further away from what God designed for man and woman.

### **Is There Hope for the One Who Is Bound?**

Romans 1:27 says, "And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet." I believe that one of the consequences of the sin of sodomy is AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. Those who follow God's Word are far less likely to have these diseases that the world has. Isaiah 3:9 says, "The shew of their countenance doth witness against them; and they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not. Woe unto their soul! for they have rewarded evil unto themselves." Sodomy rewards one with evil.

This brings us to the question, Is there hope for someone bound by this sin? Of course, those who believe that sodomy is something that you are born with will take great issue with the idea that it is possible to change or to overcome it. Again, 1 Corinthians 6:9 reads, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind."

Verse 11 says, "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." This passage gives hope for people trapped in the sin of sodomy. This should give great hope to those who are willing to believe that it is possible to overcome sodomy. Through the blood of Jesus Christ and through the power of the Holy Spirit, it is possible for a sodomite to be forgiven, to be sanctified, to be set apart for a holy purpose. He did not

say it would be easy, but it can happen.

Romans 8:11-14 reads: "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Friend, it is by the Spirit of the Living God that one is able to put to death the deeds of the body. It is through the Spirit of God that God strengthens the inner man. Ephesians 3:16 says "to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man."

Everybody battles with something. Sometimes sinners are so bound by the habits of life, whether it is alcohol, drugs, lust, pornography, or whatever, that they feel they cannot find deliverance. Some will not bow at an altar and pray because they feel there is no hope for them. Friend, with God's divine help you can do whatever the will of God calls you to do. It does not matter what sin you are bound by, there is power in the blood of Jesus to set you free and to give you victory over all sin.

Paul wrote in Philippians 2:13, "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." That is the reason you can have the victory. When God comes on the scene, He will work in you, both to will and to do His good pleasure. When you really get saved, no matter what you have been bound by, you can stand with God's help.

### **Be Strengthened Through Christ**

The Apostle Paul wrote in Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." You do not have to pick up a bottle of alcohol anymore. You can do all things through Christ which

strengthens you. You do not have to take drugs or smoke cigarettes or chew tobacco anymore. You can do all things through Christ which strengthens you. You do not have to be a sodomite anymore. You can do all things through Christ which strengthens you. You do not have to commit fornication or adultery anymore. You can do all things through Christ which strengthens you.

When you are truly saved and submit yourself to Jesus Christ, you are not alone in your struggles against sin and the temptations that you face in the flesh. Through the Spirit of God, you can receive the strength that Christ has provided for the people of God, but such ability does not come automatically. To receive this help from God, He requires that you walk in the Spirit. Galatians 5:16 states, "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." Do not listen to a preacher who tells you that you have to live after the flesh. Whether the lust of the flesh you are fighting involves fornication, adultery, sodomy, drinking, or drugs, you can overcome it as you walk in the Spirit.

How does a Christian walk in the Spirit? The answer is found in Paul's epistle to the Romans in Romans 8:5, which reads, "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit." You must live according to the Spirit after you are saved. You must set your mind on the things of the Spirit. A person whose mind is in the gutter will soon live accordingly. If you allow your mind to dwell in the gutter, soon you are going to be living in the gutter.

If you will set your mind on spiritual things, your life will not be in the gutter. You will soon be living according to God's Eternal Word. You must set your mind on the good things taught in the Word of God. David said in Psalm 119:11, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." You, too, can do the same thing. You can

hide the Word of God in your heart. It will keep you from sinning against God.

My friend, you need to restrict what comes into your mind. The same can be said for sodomites. Jesus said in Matthew 5:28, "But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." Therefore, a person who is serious in his efforts to overcome any sexual sin must be careful about what he allows his mind to dwell on. This is where the victory is gained. If a person is going to be truly transformed, it will occur when the mind is renewed.

The Apostle Paul said in Romans 12:1-2: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." A person's mind cannot be renewed if he allows himself to dwell on thoughts that will prompt lustful desires. That is what gets people in trouble along all these lines. They allow their minds to dwell on lustful desires.

Someone may ask, "What am I supposed to think about?" Philippians 4:8 says, "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." When I was a young Christian, I heard Brother Emerson Wilson say something that I never forgot, and it has been a big help to me. He said, "If you are not planning to go there, then do not turn down that street." That will help you if you will apply it to your life.

Romans 13:14 says, "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make

not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." Whatever you are battling, do not provide an opportunity for the flesh to be tempted to give in to unlawful desires. If you want victory, avoid the friends and the hangouts that will tempt you.

### **The Path to Victory**

First Corinthians 15:33 reads, "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners." Friends can be a wonderful blessing, but the wrong kinds of friends can be disastrous. Often young people get in trouble because of the friends they choose. You ought to avoid like the plague those who entice you to go back into sin. You must avoid all environments where the opportunity for temptations are great. I am sure you know those places that are tempting to you.

My friend, believe in God for an

unlimited future. Paul wrote in Ephesians 3:20, "Now unto him that is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think." I want you to think about the words *abundantly, above, and exceedingly*. That is how much God is able to help you. Also, you need to pray without ceasing to overcome sinful desires.

God's basic principles of righteousness have remained constant throughout the different periods of history. For example, adultery has always been condemned by God. Likewise, sodomy has always been condemned by God. It was a grievous sin in the times of the patriarchs. It was an abomination in the Law of Moses. It is due to a shameful, debased mind, and contrary to sound doctrine, according to the glorious Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our world is morally adrift and is plunging deeper and deeper into

sin. Jesus is still the light, He is still the way, and He is still the Truth. May you who are disciples of Christ never renege in your responsibility concerning the sins that are becoming more and more acceptable in our society. It is my humble prayer that this message will be used to bring light and understanding and expose sodomy for what it really is. There is hope for those who are bound by sin. Jesus Christ can set you free. Whatever sin you are battling, there is help in Jesus Christ. God can give you the help that you stand in need of. There is nothing too hard for Him to do. He can do exceedingly, abundantly above all that you can ask or think. You can have victory in Jesus Christ.

*(Compact Disc TR-1001E)*

## Bring the Need

There was once a man that went into a chemist's shop. He was a poor, untidy man, and he said, "If you please, mister, can you give me something for a bad cold?"

The chemist said, "Have you brought a prescription with you?"

The man answered, "No, I ain't got no prescription with me, but I've brought my cold with me to be cured."

How often sinners seeking a cure for sin try to bring their prescription to God! However, He seeks for nothing, save that the sinner should say, "Just as I am, without one plea, but that Thy blood was shed for me."

*Genesis 19:15 And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city.*

*16 And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the LORD being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city.*

*17 And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the*

*mountain, lest thou be consumed.*

*18 And Lot said unto them, Oh, not so, my Lord:*

*19 Behold now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou hast shewed unto me in saving my life; and I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me, and I die:*

*20 Behold now, this city is near to flee unto, and it is a little one: Oh, let me escape thither, (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live.*

*21 And he said unto him, See, I have accepted thee concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow this city, for the which thou hast*

*spoken.*

*22 Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither. Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar.*

*23 The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar.*

*24 Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven;*

*25 And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground.*

*26 But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.*

# Hindrances to Spiritual Progress



**Brother Allen Borders**

## **Worldly Entanglements and Procrastination**

A hindrance is something that provides resistance, delay, or obstruction to something or someone. Synonyms for the word hindrance are impediment, obstacle, barrier, obstruction, hurdle, restraint, limitation, delay, setback, and difficulties. Those are things that many of us face in the Christian life. Sometimes

you can allow things to get in your own way. As a Christian, you can let fear or procrastination get in your way and become a hindrance to you. The devil would like to get you bound with unforgiveness, unbelief, and pride.

Sometimes family or friends can be a hindrance to your spiritual progress. At times, you may let your own convenience get in your way when you put other things first, be-

cause serving God may not always seem convenient. Sometimes you can hinder yourself by looking back on the old life. Worldly entanglements can wrap you up and hinder your progress. If you know what these hindrances are, it will help you spiritually.

Procrastination is one big hindrance that some people face. They procrastinate when it comes to getting to church on time, reading the

Bible, praying, and inviting others to church. Procrastination can be a big hindrance to spiritual progress. Genesis, Chapter 19, tells the story of Lot. Angels paid a special visit to Lot. They were sent from the Lord to warn him, but he let procrastination get in his way. If he had left the city of Sodom immediately, he might have been able to save his entire family.

Lot was the nephew of Abraham, and he was very wealthy. Lot and Abraham had to part ways because they both had large flocks and many herds. Lot's wife and daughters did not want to leave all their possessions behind. When Lot was led out of Sodom by the angels, we do not read that he took a caravan of his earthly riches. His sons-in-law did not go with him. They laughed and thought what he said was a joke.

Some ties can become a hindrance to you in doing what God says to do. You might have to step out on faith, not fully understanding what God wants you to do. God may tell you to leave behind what you have worked hard for. As a child growing up, my dad was a pastor, and sometimes we had to leave some things behind for the work of God.

Verse 26 of our Scripture text lets us know that worldly allurements caused Lot's wife to look back. Her heart was not set on looking forward, and it was a hindrance to her. Unfortunately you can stumble over a hindrance that you have allowed in your life, and it could be fatal. With Lot's wife it was fatal.

### **Learning to Keep Your Eyes on Christ**

Perceived family responsibilities can become a hindrance to your spiritual progress. Luke 9:59-60 says: "And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God." When I was younger, I thought this was

kind of calloused. I thought this man's father had died and he just wanted to go to his father's funeral. As I studied into it, I learned that was not the case. He was wanting to stay and wait for his father's death so that he could carry on the family tradition. Usually it was the first-born's responsibility to stay in the home and make sure the father was taken care of and to carry on the family's name. Those traditions became a hindrance to him. In essence, Jesus said, "Let the dead bury the dead. I want you to go out and do what I say."

Luke 9:61 states, "And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house." He wanted to wait until his children were raised and then serve God. Verse 62 says, "And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." This is the truth.

When you let other things take control of your life, they will become a hindrance to you, and you will not be fit for the kingdom. If you say you are serving the Lord, yet you are constantly looking back, thinking about your past life—what fun you had and what you left behind to serve the Lord—that will be a hindrance to you.

I remember one year we had the opportunity to put in a garden. A brother let us use part of his garden space. He showed us how to garden, because I really had no idea. He said, "Take this plow and head it in a straight line." I was all over the place. So he told me to pay attention to what I was doing. Sometimes as I was pushing along, I would look back to see how I was doing, to see if the furrow was straight.

Finally, he said: "There's a stake at the end of this row. I want you to keep your eyes on that stake. Now take that plow and put in a straight furrow all the way down the garden. If you keep your eyes where you need to keep them, it will be straight. Keep your eyes on the goal.

This will help you to plow a straight line." That advice has been so helpful to me. I learned many things that summer. It seemed that every time we went out to the garden, he would give me another spiritual lesson. When you look at the things in the world, they can pull you down. You have to keep your eyes on Christ, and you will be able to plow a straight line.

### **Allowing Unbelief or Convenience to Hinder You**

Another hindrance to spiritual progress is unbelief. Sometimes you may look at a situation and feel that the problem is just too much to deal with. Have you ever been there? At times, I have wondered how I was going to fix a certain problem. I had to let faith take hold. Jesus spoke of having faith as a grain of mustard seed. That is a very small seed, so He was not saying that you need to have a lot of faith. You just need enough.

Unbelief can be a huge hurdle that can tie God's hands. Acts 17:32-33 reads: "And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter." Paul departed from among them." Paul was an amazing evangelist and Apostle. He was able to do mighty things through the power of God. You would think that anything Paul put his hand to, he could do, but even Paul could not handle these people who had unbelief in their hearts.

Matthew 13:58 says, "And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief." Unbelief will hinder you. If you choose to allow unbelief to work in your life, Christ is not going to overstep your choice. You have a choice to make. If you choose not to believe, unbelief will get into your heart and tie God's hands.

In Acts, Chapter 24, you can read of Paul talking to Felix and witnessing to him. Felix's personal convenience did not quite line up

with the Word of God. He had an opportunity to serve the Lord, but it was not convenient for him. Acts 24:25 says, "And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee."

Being a Christian and doing what the Lord wants you to do will not always be the most convenient thing to do, but the reward is great. The Scriptures do not say that Felix ever had a second chance. You need to be careful that you do not allow your own personal convenience to hinder your spiritual progress. It is not always convenient to do what the Lord wants you to do.

Is it always convenient to be in every church service? Sometimes the flesh does not want to get out of bed on Sunday morning. The devil knows that you are going to receive help when you go to the house of God. Therefore, you need to bring your body into subjection to the will of God. Whenever I have a headache, a backache, or some other ache and feel like staying home, the Lord chastises me and says, "Is your pastor going to be there?" Sometimes after you have worked all week, you may not feel that you can make it, but you must put Christ first no matter what. You need to have it settled that God is first and you are not going to let the flesh hinder you.

My father taught me many things growing up that have stuck with me. Once his boss told him, "It is either this job or your church."

He replied: "Hold on, I made that decision years ago. Church will be first." His decision has helped me a lot. I enjoy hearing other saints tell about situations they have gone through and how they handled them. They have helped me.

### **Obstacles That Must Be Removed**

Along the line of hindrances, we each need to be careful of what we

say. As saints, we do not want to hinder one another. We should not want to say anything to discourage anyone. The Scripture says someone who has been offended is harder to win than a strong city. We need to be careful that we do not hinder those around us.

Obstacles need to be moved out of the way, and by faith any hindrance can be overcome. In Matthew 21:21-22 we read: "Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done. And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."

A lot of times the lack of faith is a big hindrance. Circumstances may cause you to feel as though they are overtaking you, but this Scripture lets you know that when situations appear as a big mountain in front of you, if you have faith, God can take that mountain and wipe it out completely. All you have to do is ask. Again, verse 22 reads, "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." God is looking out for your best interest, and He will do everything He can to help you to make it. You still have a choice regarding things that could be a hindrance in your life.

Another hindrance that you may face as a Christian is fear. Romans 8:15 says, "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." Your Heavenly Father is right there to take care of your situation. You do not have to worry or to be fearful. The fear that the devil puts on you can be a hindrance to you. The Scripture lets you know that you have Someone who has adopted you. You can cry out to Him, and He will answer your prayers.

Luke 12:7 shows you how much

God cares for you, saying: "But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows." You do not need to be afraid. God is going to look out for you. Luke 12:32 reads, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." God wants what is best for you, and He is not going to shirk His promises. You need to follow His leading, but you must not allow fear to hinder you.

Another hindrance to spiritual progress is unforgiveness. This is one that the devil will really use to work on you. Someone may say, "I will forgive you, but I can't forget it." It seems that some people say they forgive, but they never really get past it. If you have a true spirit of forgiveness, you do not have this hindrance in your life. Unforgiveness can be a huge obstacle. When someone gets saved, his or her past should be forgiven and forgotten. No one should bring it up again or hold it against him or her.

Matthew 6:14-15 reads: "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." You may go on and say you are serving the Lord, but if you have unforgiveness in your heart, it will hinder your spiritual progress, so you must take care of it. You need to forgive a person, even though that individual has never asked for forgiveness. Again, Matthew 6:15 says, "But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

We read in Matthew 18:21-22: "Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven." That is a lot of forgiveness, but if you are counting, then you have not forgiven the first time. Unforgiveness can be a huge obstacle.

## Removing the Stumbling Blocks

A big stumbling block for many people is pride. We all need to be careful that we do not let pride get in the way. Proverbs 8:13 says, "The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate." When a person is so concerned with self that he is uncaring for others, God hates it. Proverbs 11:2 states, "When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom." I would much rather have wisdom than to be shamed because of pride. Pride can be a huge hindrance.

Proverbs 13:10 reads, "Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom." Contention is arguing, fighting, and fussing. If any of these are present, pride is usually involved. If every one of us stays humble, there will be no contention. Pride is the number one culprit every time. If pride is out of the way, the contention is gone. Sometimes we have to take the humble route. May God help each of us.

Proverbs 16:5 says, "Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD: though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished." You cannot put on a false

front before God. You cannot pretend that everything is good when God knows it is not good. Pride is an abomination, and it will be a hindrance to your spiritual life.

We are living in the days that Paul spoke about in 2 Timothy, Chapter 3. In verses 1-7 he wrote: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.

"Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."

You may attend every service and do your part at all times, but if you have pride in your life, you can become a stumbling block. The Scripture says in verse 7 that some are "Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." You can sit in every service and be faithful, but if you are not right in

your heart, you will not be able to come to a knowledge of the Truth.

Jude said this is a common salvation. The devil tempts all of us, and he has been doing this job for a long time. He is good at it. Solomon wrote in Ecclesiastes 1:9, "There is no new thing under the sun." The devil knows what he is doing, he has had lots of practice. He brings the same things all the time, and he harasses us. Some people wonder why. Well, that is his job. Nevertheless, you can be more than a conqueror if you have faith and put Christ first. You do not have to let these hindrances be your downfall.

God can take care of you. He can do anything. One of my favorite Scriptures is 1 Corinthians 10:13, and it says that God will not put on you more than you can bear, but will with the temptation make a way of escape. God is not standing over you with a big club waiting for you to make a mistake. He is a loving God, and He is there to help you. If you have any hindrances in your life, you need to turn them over to God. He will work out those things for you. God would love to have you live a consistent, faithful, fruitful life for Him.

*(Compact Disc TR-1601)*

## Always Thankful

Matthew Henry, the famous Bible scholar, was once accosted by thieves and robbed of his purse. He wrote these words in his diary:

*"Let me be thankful first because I was never robbed before; second, because, although they took my purse, they did not take my life; third, because, although they took my all, it was not much; and fourth, because, it was I who was robbed and not I who robbed."*

# August 2016 Camp Meeting Recordings

Recrd. No.	Date	Message Title	Minister
TR-1748	7-31-2016	A Goodly Heritage	Bro. David Stegmeier
TR-1749		Hope Thou in God	Bro. David Stegmeier
TR-1750	8-01-2016	The Birth of the Church	Bro. Roger L. Decker
TR-1751		Twelve Undeniable Facts About the Kingdom	Bro. Larry Dishman
TR-1752	8-02-2016	The Manifestation of the Spirit	Bro. Roger L. Decker
TR-1753		Where Are the Laborers?	Bro. Larry Dishman
TR-1754	8-03-2016	I Am Nothing	Bro. Calvin Foster
TR-1755		I'm Going Through	Bro. Larry Dishman
TR-1756	8-04-2016	The Ark	Bro. Michael Wilks
TR-1757		You Cannot Straddle the Fence	Bro. Larry Dishman
TR-1758	8-05-2016	He Grew the Tree	Bro. Garrett Haylock
TR-1759		The Three Days That Most People Struggle With	Bro. Leamon Whitehead
TR-1760	8-06-2016	Patience With a Prefix	Bro. Richard Talbot
TR-1761		Consider Your Latter End	Bro. Larry Dishman
TM-376	2016	Camp Meeting Songs #1	
TM-377		Camp Meeting Songs #2	
TM-378		Camp Meeting Songs #3	
TM-379		Camp Meeting Songs #4	
TM-380		Camp Meeting Songs #5	
	2016	Camp Meeting Choir Songs # 1	
	2016	All Morning & Evening Messages in <b>MP3</b> Format (1 CD)	
		All Songs <b>MP3</b> Format (1 CD)	

**All messages and music recordings are available only on regular CD's or MP3 format. (Cassette tapes are no longer available.) The suggested donation for regular CD's is \$3.00 each and for DVD's is \$5.00 each. DVD's are not available for the teaching services. The suggested donation for MP3's is \$10.00 each. The postage is \$3.00 for one CD or MP3 and \$0 .35 for each additional. Recordings may be ordered by writing *The Gospel Trumpeter*, CD Ministry, 675 N. Cedar St., Newark, Ohio 43055, or by calling (740) 345-1312, the Print Shop. Please make check or money order in U.S. funds payable to *The Gospel Trumpeter*.**

## All-Day Meeting Postponed

Out of respect to our pastor, Brother Decker, and his family,  
the previously announced All-Day Meeting is temporarily postponed.

# Announcements

- Newton, KS**  
October 3-9  
**Revival:** The Church of God, 400 N. Meridian, KS 67114  
Evangelist: Bro. Larry Dishman, Hurley, Mississippi  
For more information contact: Pastor Sandy Killfoil. Telephone: 316-587-5275
- Summersville, WV**  
October 3-9  
**Revival:** The Church of God, 74 Armstrong Road, Summersville, WV 26651  
Evangelist: Brother Leamon Whitehead, Minerva, Ohio  
Service times: Monday-Friday 7:00 p.m., Saturday 6:00 p.m.,  
Sunday 10:30 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.  
For more information contact: Pastor Earl R. Borders. Telephone: 304-872-4047  
Visit our website: [www.ChurchofGodSummersvilleWV.com](http://www.ChurchofGodSummersvilleWV.com)
- Newark, OH**  
October 15  
**POSTPONED**  
**All-Day Meeting:** The Church of God, 675 N. Cedar Street, Newark, OH 43055  
Special speakers, food, and fellowship.  
Service time: 10:00 a.m. Lodging will be available.  
For reservations contact: Brother or Sis. Dave Bush at 740-345-1213  
For more information contact: Pastor Roger L. Decker. Telephone: 740-344-2543
- New Castle, IN**  
October 31-  
November 6  
**REVIVAL:** 9<sup>th</sup> Street Church of God, 125 South 9<sup>th</sup> Street, New Castle, Indiana 47362  
Evangelist: Brother Larry Dishman, Hurley, Mississippi  
Service times: Monday-Friday 7:00 p.m.; Sunday 10:30 a.m. & 5:00 p.m.  
For additional information contact: Pastor Allen Polston. Telephone: 765-524-1776
- Brighton, AL**  
November 14-20  
**Revival:** The Church of God, 1111 India Street, Brighton, AL  
Evangelist: Brother Larry Dishman, Hurley, Mississippi  
For more information contact: Pastor Karl Wilson. Telephone: 205-422-5917
- Canby, OR**  
November 22-27  
**Revival:** The Church of God, 522 N. W. 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, Canby, OR 97013  
Evangelist: Brother Larry Dishman, Hurley, Mississippi  
For more information contact: Pastor David Stegmeier. Telephone: 503-313-0227

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## 2017 Camp Meeting Dates

June 18-25  
July 30 - August 6  
December 27 - 31

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*We hope you will plan your vacation time so that you  
can join us for these old-fashioned camp meetings.*

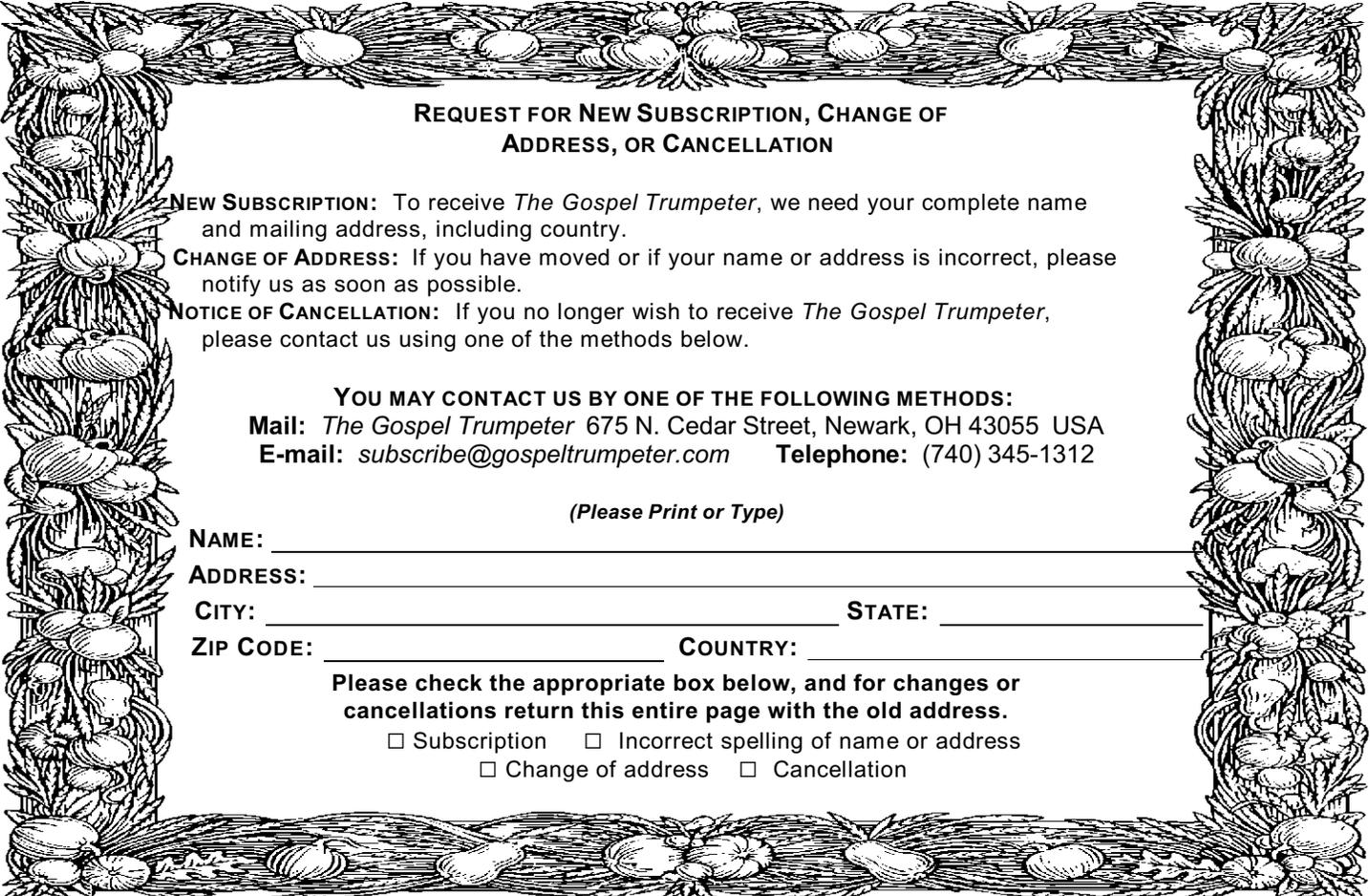
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