

The Gospel Trumpeter

JUSTIFICATION

SANCTIFICATION

UNITY & TRUTH

**So will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. Eze. 34:12 Jer. 32:39

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

SOUNDING FORTH THE SEVENTH AND LAST TRUMPET

Vol. 50 April 2020 No. 4



Church of God Tabernacle in Newark, Ohio

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

Psalm 122:1

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

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

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Vol. 50 April 2020 No. 4

ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT for The Gospel Trumpeter

"The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it."

Psalm 68:11

"Declare ye in Judah, and publish in Jerusalem; and say, Blow ye the trumpet in the land: cry, gather together, and say, Assemble yourselves, and let us go into the defenced cities."

Jeremiah 4:5

This periodical goes into areas and homes throughout the United States and foreign countries. It is finding needy hearts in ways that we may never otherwise be able to reach. It has been a tool that the Lord has successfully used to expose souls with the Gospel message, for which we are deeply grateful. Over the years, we have received many encouraging letters from readers that have been touched. Through the printed page, lives have been enriched by what they have read. *The Gospel Trumpeter* is a source that God is using to enlighten men and women to a deeper degree of light and understanding. Many people have written to tell of their conversion because of coming in contact with this religious journal.

Many messages that Pastor Roger Decker has preached are printed in *The Gospel Trumpeter*. Also, various ministers in the Newark congregation and those who have preached during camp meetings and revivals are used. It is our desire to continue to present Biblically sound evangelistic and doctrinal sermons that will enhance your Christian experience. We strive to faithfully present the Truth in a clear manner that will enlighten our readers. We want to help souls find the Lord and gain an experience of salvation. It is also important that souls grow strong and mature spiritually. Wholesome doctrinal instruction will help challenge God's people to press onward in the good fight of faith.

It is time again to share with you our annual financial report. Each year we print a summary of the past year's expenditures for you to view. The purpose for printing this report is to show our readers the costs involved in printing this religious periodical.

As you all know, inflation is and has been on the upsurge for many years. Unfortunately, *The Gospel Trumpeter* is not immune to these increasing costs. You will find a breakdown of the expenses by the different categories on page 22. The figures show what was paid out, as well as the amount that is received through your contributions.

Although this periodical is being mailed under a second-class permit, the postage rates continue to rise each year. We realize *The* [continued on page 22]

Ezekiel 43:10 Thou son of man, shew the house to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities: and let them measure the pattern.

11 And if they be ashamed of all

that they have done, shew them the form of the house, and the fashion thereof, and the goings out thereof, and the comings in thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and all the forms

thereof, and all the laws thereof: and write it in their sight, that they may keep the whole form thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and do them.

The Real Israel



Brother Roger L. Decker

The Necessity of Doctrine

I was saved in 1967 in the old church building, and salvation and doctrine were preached in practically every message. Although I did not know what being born again meant, I wanted to go to church and learn. I met an individual who invited me to the Church of God, and I heard doctrinal messages that pointed out the true church. If the messages had been only evangelistic messages, I never would have seen the church.

After a while, I got away from God, but I never went to any other church but the Church of God. I was invited to another

church, but I said, "I know where the true church is." How did I know that? I knew that because of the doctrinal messages that I had heard.

Isaiah 28:9-10 reads: "Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts. For precept [or commandment] must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little." Repetition of the commandments and doctrines are necessary. This repetition and knowledge brings souls from a newborn baby state to a state of

spiritual maturity.

A pastor cannot raise up a Church of God congregation to maturity by only feeding the saints milk. First Peter 2:2 states, "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." Newborns need milk to grow, but a mother would say that something was wrong with her child if he refused to take in other foods eventually. Likewise, a pastor gets concerned when he sees someone not taking hold and not growing spiritually as he ought to be.

I want to bring a doctrinal message, and it is necessary to learn these things. When Brother Emerson Wilson used to preach

on doctrinal messages, I was thrilled. As a newborn babe in Christ, I wanted to hear everything at once, but I found that I had to study these doctrines gradually.

What is doctrine? According to *Vine's Expository Dictionary*, doctrine gives instruction to the hearer so that a person can discern between Truth and error and between the true church and Babylon.

The Church of God is in the top of the mountains. Now, I know people get upset about this, but there is only one church. It is the only one that you will find in the Bible. You do not find the Baptists or the Pentecostals mentioned in the Word of God. You find the Day of Pentecost, but that was a day, not a church. You do not find the Presbyterians, the Methodists, or any other denominations mentioned in the Bible, but you can read about the Church of God.

Israel of Old

Isaiah 2:2 tells us, "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it." Second Timothy 3:16 states, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."

The Word of God has much to say about doctrine. The Book of Job says it is pure. Job 11:4 tells us, "For thou hast said, My doctrine is pure, and I am clean in thine eyes." The Proverb writer said in Proverbs 4:2, "For I give you good doctrine, forsake ye not my law."

Speaking of the Day of Pentecost, Acts 2:41-42 reads: "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the

same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." This tells of the birth of the church. They had to have instruction and knowledge, and they continued in doctrine.

Israel is often in the news. It is quite common to read about Israel and Palestine fussing and fighting. You need to look at the real Israel today and look at what the Bible says about Israel. People think when others fight against literal Israel today, they are fighting against God, but that is not so. It seems like Israel and Palestine have been engaged in battle after battle. We have not seen signs of either side giving in for years. Because of the false impressions that have come across the pulpits of our land, many people feel that when others get into combat and Israel is involved, God is involved, but that is not so.

Jeremiah 3:15 reads, "And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding." Paul, writing to Timothy, said in 1 Timothy, Chapter 2, that prayer should be made for all men. It is God's will that all men be saved and come to the knowledge of the Truth. He wrote in 1 Timothy 2:4, "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."

In studying this lesson, first I want you to consider Israel of old. The first time "Israel" was mentioned in the Bible was in Genesis 32:28, which reads, "And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed." Have you read the story of how Jacob wrestled with the angel and prevailed? This was when Jacob's name was changed to Israel. From that time on, he

was a changed man. He had twelve sons, and they became the twelve tribes of Israel.

When Jacob was old and failing, he called in his sons one by one and blessed them. To each of his sons, he gave a name and a blessing. Judah was considered to be as a lion, which simply means praise. Out of the lineage of the tribe of Judah came Jesus Christ. Benjamin was called a wolf, which is the son of the right hand, and the Apostle Paul came out of that tribe.

The tribe of Levi was chosen for the priesthood. There was a reason that God chose that tribe for the priesthood. The tribe of Levi was the only tribe that stood with Moses against the golden calf. Exodus 32:25-29 reads: "And when Moses saw that the people were naked; (for Aaron had made them naked unto their shame among their enemies;) Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the LORD'S side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him.

"And he said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour. And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men. For Moses had said, Consecrate yourselves to day to the LORD, even every man upon his son, and upon his brother; that he may bestow upon you a blessing this day."

Of the twelve sons that Jacob had, only two were born of Rachael: Joseph and Benjamin. Now, it is true that Israel of old was God's people throughout the Old Testament. No one can deny that. Israel was made up of Old

Testament Jews who were directed by God's ordinances and laws and God's chosen leaders and prophets.

Solomon's Great Sin

Coming up to Solomon's day, we find that idolatry wound up getting into the heart of Solomon, who knew better. Solomon committed a terrible sin against God, and it caused severe division. First Kings 11:1-8 states: "But king Solomon loved many strange women, [It surely pays to marry in the Lord. Solomon married women out of the will of God; He married enemies of God.] together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites; Of the nations concerning which the LORD said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, [Solomon committed sin. He was the leader of Israel, and he went in to strange women. Also, Solomon was very wealthy, yet he raised taxes on the children of Israel. He had about anything he wanted, including extreme luxuries. He married many heathen women.] neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love.

"And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart. For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: [Solomon was a leader of Israel, the son of David, yet he allowed his heart to be turned away from God by his wives, and he went after their false gods. Can you imagine that? God had blessed him with much wisdom and many other things, yet he went after other gods.] and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was

the heart of David his father. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites.

"And Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and went not fully after the LORD, as did David his father. Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem [that was getting very bold], and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon. And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods."

Solomon offered all the right kinds of sacrifices with the dedication of the temple, but when his heart was turned away from God, he allowed sacrifices to be made to other gods. That ought to be a warning. Solomon was anointed of God, and God came down and blessed him with such tremendous gifts. He had anything he wanted, and still he was not satisfied. He turned to heathen women, and just as God had warned him, they drew him away to their gods. Therefore, God got stirred with Solomon.

Verses 9-13 continue: "And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the LORD God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice, [Think of that. God spoke to Solomon twice and let him know that he was wrong, but he ignored the warnings. God was angry with Solomon, and He could have taken the kingdom from him, but for his father David's sake, the Lord did not do that. He allowed the kingdom to go on until Solomon passed away.] And had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods: but he kept not that which the LORD commanded.

"Wherefore the LORD said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not

kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant. Notwithstanding in thy days I will not do it for David thy father's sake: but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son. Howbeit I will not rend away all the kingdom; but will give one tribe to thy son for David my servant's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake which I have chosen."

God's Promise and Warning to Solomon

God had appeared to Solomon at the dedication of the temple. That was a great thing. Now I want you to read a few verses in 2 Chronicles, Chapter 7. I want to show you how God came down and blessed Solomon. Solomon had the choosing of anything that he wanted. Verses 12-22 state: "And the LORD appeared to Solomon by night, and said unto him, I have heard thy prayer, and have chosen this place to myself for an house of sacrifice. If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people; If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

"Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attent unto the prayer that is made in this place. For now have I chosen and sanctified this house, that my name may be there for ever: and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually. And as for thee, if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, and do according to all that I have commanded thee, and shalt observe my statutes and my judgments; Then will I stablish the throne of thy kingdom,

according as I have covenanted with David thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee a man to be ruler in Israel.

"But if ye turn away, and forsake my statutes and my commandments, which I have set before you, and shall go and serve other gods, and worship them; Then will I pluck them up by the roots out of my land which I have given them; and this house, which I have sanctified for my name, will I cast out of my sight, and will make it to be a proverb and a byword among all nations. And this house, which is high, shall be an astonishment to every one that passeth by it; so that he shall say, Why hath the LORD done thus unto this land, and unto this house? And it shall be answered, Because they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, which brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, and laid hold on other gods, and worshipped them, and served them: therefore hath he brought all this evil upon them."

In the first part of that chapter, when Solomon prayed and made an end of the prayer, God sent down fire from heaven and consumed the sacrifices and the burnt offerings. What does that show you? God was well pleased. When He came down and consumed the sacrifices, the glory of the Lord filled the house. God was pleased with Solomon. Solomon knew what it meant to be in the presence of God, but he also had knowledge that if he went into idolatry and worshipped strange gods, God's anger would be kindled against him. It makes no difference whether you are a pastor, a king, or whoever you are, if you overstep the Word of God, you will stir up God's anger.

God did what He told Solomon He would do. He did not rend the kingdom while Solomon was alive, but He divided it

from Solomon's son. The kingdom was split into a northern kingdom and a southern kingdom. The northern kingdom was known as Israel, and the southern kingdom was known as Judah. The northern kingdom lasted about two hundred years and was overthrown and taken captive by the Syrians. The southern kingdom lasted about three hundred years and was overtaken by the Babylonians under King Nebuchadnezzar. There was a remnant of the southern kingdom that was allowed to return and rebuild the walls of Jerusalem in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah, when the Persians under Cyrus the Great overthrew Babylon.

Israel in the Days of Jesus

Let us come up to the days of Jesus Christ. At the time of Jesus Christ, the kingdom was still divided. There were the Samaritans, the Gentiles, the Greeks, and the Orthodox Jews, which were divided into groups, such as the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The Pharisees were the Orthodox Jews who claimed to be the pure lineage of Judah. The Samaritans were half-breeds. They got away from the Orthodox teachings of the Pharisees and their commandments and married people outside the Jewish nation, so their offspring became half-breeds. What happened? Factions arose, and not one of those factions had anything to do with one another.

The Sadducees, the Pharisees, and the Essenes broke off into smaller groups called the Herodians, the Galileans, and the Therapeutes. How was God going to bring all those groups together when they did not have anything to do with one another? Was He going to go down and say, "Let's have a meeting and talk this thing out"? The hatred was so severe between the

groups that to talk to the leaders was completely out of the question. It was all under the name of religion, and all of them claimed to be God's people. The exact same thing is going on today, yet no one can unchristianize people. What do they say? "That is your opinion." All of them claim to be getting their direction and their anointing from God.

The Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 1:19-29: "For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

"Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence."

Romans 11:33 reads, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judg-

ments, and his ways past finding out!" There was not any way for God to get all those groups together until first there was a sacrifice for sin. The Cross comes into this. There was no way men could just call the groups together. I have read that if a Samaritan woman was having a child and needed help, the hatred between the groups was so profound that an Orthodox Jew would not assist her.

In John, Chapter 4, you can read about the woman at the well. What did she say to Jesus? Verse 9 tells us, "How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans." That was the gap that Jesus had to bridge between the groups.

The New Israel

Let us go to the Day of Pentecost. Some of the Jews on the Day of Pentecost no doubt were some of the same people who stood in Pilate's judgment hall and hollered, "Crucify Him!" Something happened on the Day of Pentecost that had never happened before. The Spirit was poured out upon *all* flesh. Various people were inspired in the Old Testament, but this says "all flesh." This meant that every man and woman, whether one was a prophet or not, could have access to the Spirit of God.

The Scripture says when the Day of Pentecost came, they were filled with the Holy Spirit. What does that tell you? They did not have the Holy Spirit before the Day of Pentecost. How do we know? They were born under the Law. Jesus was born under the Law. Why were they not filled with the Holy Spirit? They had to get rid of sin first. Everybody who gets to Heaven must travel the same path to holiness.

There were Old Testament prophets and leaders who were

inspired by the Holy Spirit, but they were not filled with the Holy Spirit. Today every man has access to God. A common layman has access to the Spirit of God.

God was not going to have several different groups. What did He do? He was going to make one new man, not divided men. How was He going to do it? Ephesians 2:1 tells us, "And you hath he quickened [or made alive], who were dead in trespasses and sins."

Verses 10-15 read: "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them [Paul was talking to Gentiles]. Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off [that was the Gentiles] are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

"For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us [the Jews and the Gentiles]; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace."

That is how God made peace. He did not sit them down and say: "We must have some backing up, and then we are going to have peace. You have to back off this and try that." He made one new man, making peace. The only way God could accomplish this was through men having a change of heart, not a change of thought about another group. He

changed the whole man.

This is still the need today. I know it is hard to think that people, even ministers, can get out of the will of God, but they can. To be Church of God, you have to be Church of God in the heart, not just have a sign over the door of the building. If they did that in the days of Jesus, why could they not do it yet today? There has to be a heart change before men and women can get along together in one body. When problems arise in a congregation, it is usually because someone is a little lean in his soul.

God was going to make a new Israel. If you have been born again, you are a Jew, spiritually speaking. If people could see that God's people are the spiritual Israel today, then they could see there is no need of a tribulation, a millennium, a rapture, or an antichrist. Why? Every one of those teachings is centered on Israel of old, not the new Israel. When you look at those teachings, what do they tell you? Many people still feel that Israel of old (or literal Israel) is still God's chosen people, so they bring in millenniums, tribulations, the rapture, or an antichrist.

The Jews' Rejection of Jesus Christ

When you go back to the seventy weeks of Daniel, some people feel that God's time clock stopped after week sixty-nine. If God's time clock stopped, then all those things that Daniel mentioned would not have taken place, but they have taken place. Righteousness has come in. When was that going to happen? It happened in the seventieth week.

If anyone had a burden for the Israelites and his countrymen, it was the Apostle Paul. He was a part of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the He-

brews. He never forgot the Hebrew tongue, and he never wandered away from the teachings of the Hebrews, a strict sect of the Pharisees.

Let us read what Paul had to say in Romans 9:1-6: "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen. Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel."

Just as not all people are Church of God who attend a Church of God congregation, they are not all Israel which are of Israel. Why is that? Because not all Israel accepted Jesus Christ. A few did, but not all Israel. Israel is in the same condition today as people in many congregations. Not all the people in congregations of the Church of God are Church of God. The difference is, not all accept Jesus Christ.

In 2 Corinthians 3:12-18 the Apostle Paul wrote: "Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: And not as Moses, which put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which veil is done away in Christ.

"But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon

their heart. Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away. Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

What caused their minds to be blinded? What caused the veil to be on their hearts? Why is Israel not all Israel? The answer is very simple. Their rejection of Jesus Christ is what caused that. What removes the veil and opens the understanding? When is the veil lifted? Again, 2 Corinthians 3:16 tells us, "Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away." In other words, understanding will come when a person turns to the Lord.

The New Testament Jew

Speaking to the Gentiles, Paul explained this in Romans 11:16-27: "For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches. And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear: For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee.

"Behold [Even in the New Testament, the Jews thought they were God's people and that God put the Gentiles here to stoke the fires of hell. That is how intense the hatred was between the Gentiles and the Jews.] therefore the

goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again. For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?

"For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved [many people stop there, but you have to read the rest of it]: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins."

Many people only read part of verse 26, but they need to read the entire verse to get the full meaning. When shall Israel be saved? When the Deliverer comes and saves them from their sins; then they change from old Israel to spiritual Israel. Under the new covenant, those who are saved are God's people; they are spiritual Israel. Today Israel represents the Kingdom of God. You have to turn to the Lord to be an Israelite. You have to be saved to be a New Testament Jew.

When John returned to Ephesus after he came off the Isle of Patmos, he used such plainness of speech that even a sinner can understand First, Second, and Third John. He let people know who is in and who is out, where the devil is, those who have the devil, and how Christ came to destroy the works of the devil.

We read in Romans 2:28-29:

"For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God."

Spiritual Israel

Galatians 6:15-16 states: "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God." No where in the Bible do we find that God has anything for literal Israel in the future. If God did that, that would make Him a respecter of persons. The literal Jew has to enter in the Kingdom of God the same way that everyone else does. When he does, there is a change that comes from literal Israel to spiritual Israel.

A man came to Jesus whose name was Nicodemus. He was a ruler of the Jews. No doubt, Nicodemus was a member of the Sanhedrin, but he was interested in the teachings of this Jesus. He came by night, for whatever reason, but he did come to Him. However, the statement he received is the way everyone gains access to the Kingdom of God. You must be born again, but that is not possible if you do not believe in the Messiah. You cannot be saved if you do not believe in Jesus Christ. When you come to Christ, you have to come through the door: Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ was rejected by the Jewish nation as a whole in His First Advent. However, that did not stop God's plan. God's time clock did not stop and have to be rewound. Unbelief does not stop God. Those who have had the veil of blindness lifted had it lifted because they turned to the

Lord. God did not have two or three different ways to get Israel to turn. The way of the kingdom in the days of Jesus Christ is the same way that is laid out today. Israel had an advantage that many in that day did not have. When Jesus came, the Jews had the Scriptures that they studied. In John 1:11 John said, "He came unto his own, and his own received him not."

Romans 3:1-2 reads: "What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles [or the commandments] of God."

Israel has no more right to the Kingdom of God than the vilest sinners. If you are born again, you are an Israelite and a Jew. God is not going to perform a great work in the future for those who are in unbelief any more than He did for you when you were in unbelief. God did not change things around when you did not believe. He did not make some other way into the kingdom. He did not say, "Out in the future I am going to give you several choices." No, either you accept Christ or you do not accept Him.

To get saved, first you have

to come to Jesus Christ, have godly sorrow for your sins, and repent. Then there is something else that you have to do: you must forsake all sin. God looks at the heart. That is the reason God did not choose Eliab, one of the sons of Jesse, to lead the kingdom. Why? Eliab was a coward. He was David's oldest brother, and he was angry with David and scolded him when he heard David talking with the soldiers. Eliab was afraid of Goliath.

When it came time to anoint someone to take King Saul's place, the Prophet Samuel jumped to the conclusion that, because Eliab was head and shoulders taller than everybody else, he was the one that God wanted. However, God said, in essence: "Hold it now. You look on the outward appearance, but I see his heart." What was in his heart? He was a coward. Who was the brave one? David had courage and faith in God.

Dear one, you have to be sorry for your sins. If you are not sorry for your sins, you will have to keep them and add to them. God is not going to take them until you have godly sorrow.

(Compact Disc TR-2204)

God Is Omnipresent

One morning an instructor in a school was sharing a seat with a boy on a shuttle train. The boy was holding a Sunday school lesson paper in his hands.

"Do you go to Sunday school?" asked the man in a friendly way.

"Yes, sir."

"Tell me, son," continued the man, thinking to have some fun with the boy, "tell me where God is, and I'll give you an apple."

The boy looked at the man and promptly replied, "I will give you a whole bushel of apples if you will tell me where He is not."

John 18:15 And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple: that disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest.

16 But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the high priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter.

17 Then saith the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also one of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not.

18 And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals; for it was cold: and they warmed themselves: and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself.

25 And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. They said therefore

unto him, Art not thou also one of his disciples? He denied it, and said, I am not.

26 One of the servants of the high priest, being his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him?

27 Peter then denied again: and immediately the cock crew.

Our Identity With Christ



Brother Richard Talbot

Having a Living Reality

All the Gospels record basically the same thing about Peter, but as we look at John's record, there is one distinct fact to consider: Peter was following another disciple who was unnamed. Peter was walking along with him, and when they got to the gate of the palace of the high priest, that disciple had connections inside. So he went in, but in essence, Peter said, "This is far enough for me." The other disci-

ple did not understand why Peter was holding back; therefore, he went to the keeper of the gate and told a maid to go tell that man to come in, so she did.

The only thing Peter could do to save face was to go in, but that was when his trouble began. He balked when he should have kept on walking. Had he gone in at the first, perhaps none of this would have happened. Peter was not prepared to go in with Jesus. So when he went to the gate, he did not like the idea of going in.

Once he was inside, the maid turned around and said, "Are you not one of His disciples?" That was a very direct question. What if I were to walk up to you and say, "Are you truly a Christian?" Some people would probably respond, "Do you think something is wrong with me?" Perhaps they would not want to be questioned about what is going on down inside their hearts.

Peter got himself into a situation where he thought he needed to hide his identity. He

did not want to identify with Jesus Christ. Things were going bad for the Savior, and Peter was a coward at this time. He could not stand the idea of going through what Jesus was going through, especially after he drew his sword. His defense in the garden was his own power. He sliced off the high priest's servant's ear. Jesus told Peter to put up his sword. It was not a time for that. Peter did not like that because it was his defense. There at the temple, he was without his sword, so he felt powerless. All he had was himself. Sometimes that is all we are going to have. Sometimes it is just you and your relationship with God that is going to prove you true and carry you through.

In every situation and circumstance, you must identify with Christ if you are a Christian. If I were to ask you if you profess to be a true Christian, would you be able to say, "Yes, I am"?

The world is full of people who profess Christianity, but do they identify with Christ? You see, you can have a name, but you need to have a living reality. Peter was more concerned about identifying himself according to his circumstances, not according to what was right. Many professed Christians adjust to the circumstances of life rather than living consistently with what they know. They should live up to being called a Christian. There are some things that you can do and some things that you cannot do. There are things you can think and feel, but there are other things you cannot allow your mind to dwell on. There are some things that you have no right to feel.

Being a Godly Example

Identifying with Christ will cause you to live a godly life and to have a godly testimony. You ought to be a godly example in

all circumstances of life. In the heat of the moment, under pressures on the job, in the midst of family troubles, or under circumstances that go completely against you, if you have Christ in you, you can identify with Christ.

Christ came to save you, not only from sin but also from yourself. He came to put Himself within you. In other words, He came to move His kingdom upon the throne of your heart to rule in your life and to be Lord of your life on a daily basis, step by step, hour by hour, day by day, week by week. Christ wants to be the Lord of your life and to reign upon the throne of your heart. In society today many so-called Christians identify with sodomy, abortion, tobacco, and alcohol. Many professed Christians identify with their immediate surroundings and circumstances. They are not really concerned about truly identifying themselves with Christ.

Verses 26-27 of our Scripture text read: "One of the servants of the high priest, being his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him? Peter then denied again: and immediately the cock crew." Matthew 26:74 states, "Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew." In order to break his identity with Christ and identify with his surroundings, Peter had to act, talk, and behave as his surroundings dictated. Too many times some Christians lose the power of their testimony because they react according to their circumstances or their surroundings instead of identifying with Christ consistently in all aspects of their lives.

I have worked in factories and other places and have had lots of experiences. Sometimes things can get heated on the job. There are times of great pressure. When the factory is wanting to

produce more and you are not putting out exactly what they want, the boss and the superintendent may gather around your area and lecture you. They may look at you as if you are the cause of the problem. There is a tendency to fire back. As a true Christian, if you let your flesh get out of control, you are going to have to prove your identity with Christ by going back and saying: "I was wrong. Forgive me for acting as I did. I am sorry. I am a child of God, so I shouldn't have acted that way." I have had to do that, so I know what I am talking about. That was harder and caused more pressure than if I had kept my mouth shut to start with.

You may want to let people know where you stand, but there is a right way and a wrong way to do that. If you allow the flesh to get out of hand, you are going to get yourself into trouble, just as Peter did. His flesh was out of control because he did not have the power of God in his life at that time. After the Day of Pentecost, we do not read of anything like this ever happening to Peter again. Maybe you profess to have the power of God, but if you are not careful, you will not live any higher than the world around you. God wants you to identify with Him and openly show the world around you that you have Christ. That takes a lot of prayer, living close to God, and consecration. It takes focusing upon the good things of God. You cannot stay true to God in a weakened condition.

Walking Uprightly

In Psalm 15:1-3 the Psalmist David wrote: "LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness [he labors at being righteous before God in all aspects of life], and speaketh

the truth in his heart. He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour." You cannot cut corners with Truth in your heart. Some neighbors can really put you to the test. Some can be difficult to get along with. If you have good neighbors around you, that is wonderful, but some people are poor neighbors.

We read in Acts 11:26 that the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch. Actually it was as a mockery, because they so lived in identity with Christ; therefore, the world around them began calling them Christians. That is a good thing. We should want the world around us to be able to say, "There goes a Christian." You should not be ashamed of being Christlike. You should not feel intimidated by the wickedness of the world. Jesus wants your light to shine brightly so that others may see your good works and glorify your Father in Heaven. You cannot do that unless you identify with Christ under all circumstances and conditions of life.

Is there enough vibrancy, zeal, and love for God within you so that if you were on trial for being a Christian, a judge could find enough evidence to convict you of being a Christian? A judge might ask, "You say that you are a Christian, so what book do you go by?"

You would probably say, "The Holy Bible."

He might say, "All right, tell me some things about the Holy Bible, such as some of your favorite verses of Scripture."

"Oh, I know a lot of them, but I cannot think of any right now." That would not be very impressive, would it?

How familiar are you with the Word of God? Are you endeavoring to read the Bible or do you get stuck on the Internet? Do you really get into the things of

God? The judge might ask: "How often during a day's time do you think about your God? How often do you really pray? I do not mean just saying words as you are driving down the road. I am talking about having prayer in your secret closet. You claim to be a Christian. How often do you really get in earnest with God?" The judge might turn to the lawyers and say: "I don't find enough evidence in this man to call him a Christian. Case dismissed."

The world needs to see more than what they hear from your mouth. They need to see your life lived as a Christian. We always teach that marriage is between one man and one woman. They prove that they are married by how they act and how they live. They do not need any outward identification to say they are married. When you are a married individual, you should act like you are married.

Identifying Characteristics

As a Christian, you profess to be a godly man or woman. It is expected that you should conduct yourself in a godly way. You prove your relationship with Christ by how you live each and every day. Another meaning of the word *identity* is, "the distinct personality of an individual regarded as a persisting entity or real existence." There is no time to waste being a superficial Christian. If you have an empty profession, you need to throw it away and get a genuine experience with God. You should not want just the name with no reality. You should want something that is real, living, and vibrant in your soul. Just professing to be a Christian will not get you into Heaven. The name Christian will not pass you through. You must have the life of Christ truly in existence in your soul.

We make identities with most

everything in life. Most people are stereotyped. The world is speaking against stereotyping people quite a bit now, but people still do it. One day when we were traveling, we were in a rest area and saw a woman dressed very modestly with long hair. Her children were dressed like she was, so I went over to them and said, "I believe you folks must know something about holiness." Their faces lit up, and she said, "We surely do, sir; we live holy."

I said, "It was an obvious thing when I looked at you."

Those people had a glow to their countenances. They were good-looking people. I stereotyped them because they looked like godly people should look. In my mind they identified with Christ. I did not know what was inside their hearts or anything about them, but I am talking about what they identified with. You identify with many things by how you dress, how you look, your countenance, and your behavior.

When I was a young man starting out in the ministry, we were taught that a man's hair should be kept off the ears and off the shirt collar. That was during the days of the hippy movement, when there were a lot of long-haired hippies around. Some young men started to let their hair grow a little longer than they had been, and it was causing confusion. They were no longer identifying with what they had done in the past.

About that same time, a woman movie star began to layer cut her hair, and that hair style quickly became popular among young women. The world seems to affect some people more than others. They do not want to fully identify with the old-fashioned Church of God Christian look. God said He would beautify the meek with salvation. He will make the men handsome with

salvation.

It is no great surprise that the world has identifying characteristics. God's people have things that identify them as well. His Spirit within them identifies with Him. Christ, by means of the Holy Spirit, dwells in the hearts of His people. We are identified by our dress, by our conduct, by showing respect, by our piety, and by the fact that we do not conform to the things of this world.

Revelation 19:7-8 says: "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." This righteous robe, pure and white, is an identifying characteristic of a child of God.

Are you identifying with Christ? Is your life one that stands out, not as a nominal Christian or just a churchgoer, but as a genuine, true, child of God? Have you been born again? Does the Holy Spirit of God dwell in your soul? Do you know, without a doubt, that your name is recorded in the Lamb's Book of Life?

Being Born Again Is Essential

There are many things to identify us. We profess a new birth. Jesus told Nicodemus that he must be born again. As Christians, we need to get that same message out to those who are in false Christianity, to the nominal

Christian, and to the superficial Christian.

Friend, you must be born again. This is something that has been so watered down by false religion. Many people profess to be Christians, but so many of them do not identify with Christ. I have read of movie stars, people in prison for various crimes, and sports figures who professed to be born again, but their lives have never changed. Are you truly born again? Has your life been made new in Christ Jesus? This is essential and important to identify with Jesus Christ. This born-again experience makes the heart of man upright before God. It qualifies you to stand in God's presence through Jesus Christ our Savior.

Is your heart really right with God? I am not asking you if it is right in your own thinking, but is your heart truly right with God? The bare essentials of being identified as a Christian is to have your heart right with God. The song, "Is Thy Heart Right With God" by Elisha Hoffman reads:

*Have thy affections been nailed
to the cross?*

Is thy heart right with God?

*Dost thou count all things for
Jesus but loss?*

Is thy heart right with God?

*Hast thou dominion o'er self
and o'er sin?*

Is thy heart right with God?

*Over all evil without and
within?*

Is thy heart right with God?

*Is there no more condemnation
for sin?*

Is thy heart right with God?

*Does Jesus rule in the temple
within?*

Is thy heart right with God?

*Are all thy pow'rs under Jesus'
control?*

Is thy heart right with God?

*Does He each moment abide
in thy soul?*

Is thy heart right with God?

*Art thou now walking in
Heaven's pure light?*

Is thy heart right with God?

*Is thy soul wearing the garment
of white?*

Is thy heart right with God?

*Is thy heart right with God,
Washed in the crimson flood,*

*Cleansed and made holy,
humble and lowly,*

Right in the sight of God?

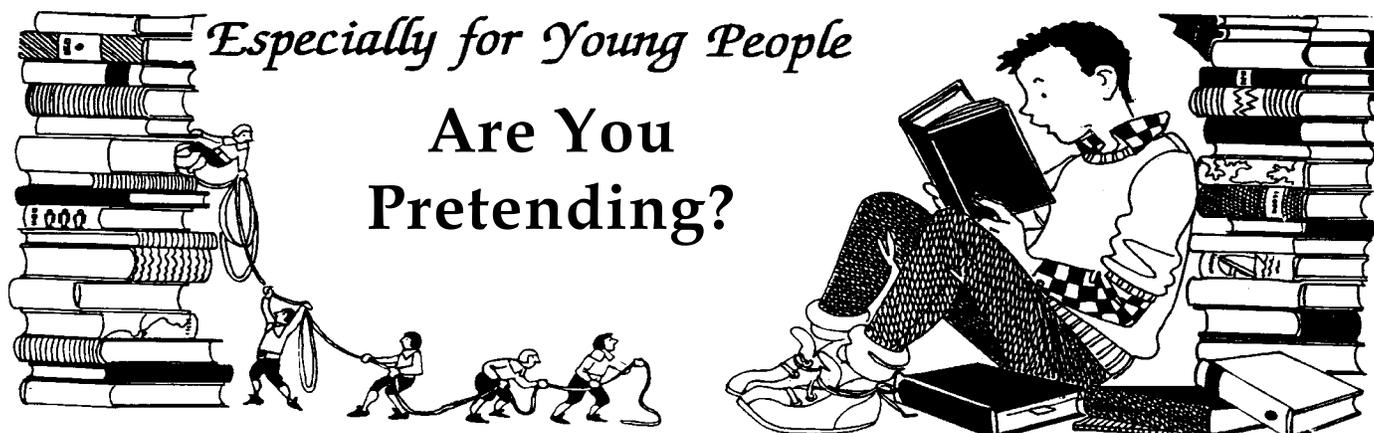
You are the only one who can truly answer those questions. Another song says: "God's eye can see through all our covering, God's eye can pierce through all our spiritual veneer, God's eye penetrates clear into the deepest recesses of our soul, The eye of God sees us, God knows us for exactly what we are."

Is your heart right with God? This is the most important question that you will be faced with because it involves your eternal destiny. To have a heart right with God should be the most priceless treasure you could ever find on this side of eternity.

(Compact Disc TR-1954)

"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

Matthew 7:13-14



Especially for Young People

Are You Pretending?

As I was thinking about pretending, I thought of a song that came out a few years ago that was quite funny about a man who pretended that he was a country singer. He wanted to be a country singer, and he created a MySpace account, which was a social media platform prior to Facebook. On his social media account, he posted a country singer's picture as his own profile picture. He said that he was six feet, five inches tall, but he was actually only five feet, three inches tall. He claimed that he drove an expensive car, but a video showed that he drove a clunker that could barely chug down the road. He said he had a black belt in karate, but he did not. He said he was rich, yet he lived in his parents' basement and delivered pizza. He claimed to be quite fit, but he was chubby, balding, and short. His song lyrics said, "I am so much cooler online." He said, "I grow another foot and lose a bunch of weight every time I log in." He pretended to be something that he was not even close to being.

The job of actors and actresses is to pretend. Heath Ledger was an actor who was cast as the Joker, a creepy villain, in the 2008 sequel of Batman called *The Dark Knight*. It is said that for about a month he locked himself in a hotel room and would not come out at all. He was practicing the laugh, the facial expres-

sions, and the voices of the Joker. He said he ended up landing more in the realm of a psychopath. He worked so hard on that role that sometimes it felt like reality. He was very good at pretending to be someone he was not.

There is an old song called "The Great Pretender." The lyrics say, in part, "*Oh-oh yes, I'm the great pretender, Pretending that I'm doing well, My need is such I pretend too much, I'm lonely but no one can tell.*" This song was sung by many famous people, including Elvis Presley. He was very famous in the rock-and-roll world. Outwardly it looked as though he had it all: money, women, and fame. However, he died at forty-two years of age, and he was divorced, taking drugs, and drinking.

I heard about a very sad story of a young man who wanted to avoid the draft for Vietnam. He began to pretend that he had mental issues, and in time he developed those mental issues. He died a very sad death. This man pretended so much that he actually became what he was pretending.

In the Bible you can read stories about people who pretended. In the Old Testament Book of Genesis, you can read that Jacob pretended to be his brother Esau to fool his father. In 1 Samuel, Chapter 28, you can read that King Saul pretended

that he was not the king when he visited the witch of Endor because he wanted her to give him a prophecy and bring up Samuel. First Samuel, Chapter 21, tells us that David pretended to be mad, or insane. Fearing for his life, he changed his behavior and acted insanely and drooled on his beard to fool King Achish.

One of the saddest stories about pretenders is recorded in the New Testament in Matthew, Chapter 7, where Jesus told what will happen when pretenders come to the Judgment. They will have pretended for so long that they fool themselves. In verse 22 Jesus said, "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not. . . ." No doubt, they will mention all the things they did, but Jesus will say to them, "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (verse 23). Many have pretended to be Christians for so long that they have fooled themselves.

Another sad story is found in Acts, Chapter 5. You can read that Ananias and Sapphira pretended. They told Peter that they were giving all the money to the church from the sale of their possession. They pretended to be something that they were not, and their pretending cost them their lives.

Pretending can be harmless, as when children play and pretend. No doubt, you did some pretending as a child. As chil-

dren, my siblings and I did a lot of pretending and played church. One of us was a preacher, and one of us was a singer. We had a lot of fun pretending. However, pretending can be dangerous, as with the man who pretended to be mentally ill to avoid the military and ended up having the mental illness that he pretended to have. Are you pretending to be something that you are not?

Now, if you are participating in a play and portraying a character, you are filling a role. I am not talking about that kind of pretending. If you actually live a pretense, this is where you are going to get into trouble.

Young person, you are at an age of uncertainty. What are you going to do with your life? What are you going to do after high school? Are you going to attend college? What career field are you going to choose? Who are you going to marry? Where are you going to live? Sometimes at this time in your life, it is easy to slip into a pretense. Perhaps you want your mom and dad not to put too many rules on you, so it is easy to pretend to be a Christian.

When you are on social media, do you pretend to be someone that you are not? Sometimes you might not want anyone to see what is truly going on in your life. Today a lot of social media posts are all about, "Look at all the things going on in my life." If you are not careful, you will want a perfect life, perfect hair, and perfect everything. Therefore, you may be tempted to create an unrealistic social media presence.

When is pretending dangerous? It is most dangerous if you are pretending spiritually. Each of us wants to fit in, and each of us wants people to think well of us. Christian young people know they need to dress modestly and act a certain way; however, if you are not careful, you can pre-

tend that you are a Christian when there is no reality within.

I have heard young people say, "When I'm eighteen, I'm out of here." That is a very sad statement to make. I have seen many young people leave, but often they are not happy. Some of their lives are a mess. The devil uses the same lies over and over, and too many are gullible enough to believe him.

What is the lie that the devil tells many young people? "You will be different. You had better pretend that you are doing well spiritually. If you don't, Mom and Dad might get stricter on their rules." Therefore, you sing in the choir, participate in the youth group, and act as though everything is fine. However, you are starting to create a dangerous habit of pretending. If that continues, you are going to be a hypocrite.

Young person, are you pretending to be something that you are not? Are you one person at church and another person away from church? Do you keep company with someone and act really nice to that person's face, but when you are not with that person, you make fun of him or her? Have you ever been with someone who makes fun of others and you catch yourself laughing and joining in, and then you walk away and think, "That is not who I want to be"?

Some people are not living the Christian life, yet they have pretended until they have fooled themselves. Young person, who are you when your parents are not around? When you keep company with unsaved people, who are you? When you are attending the church services, it is easy to be a Christian, or to pretend to be a Christian. However, when you are away from Christian influences, when you are with friends who want you to do the wrong things, who are you?

When you post on social

media, do you pretend or are you being real? At school, at work, or on vacation, are you pretending to be something different? How about when you are alone in your room with the door shut? Are you somebody different at the dinner table with Mom and Dad, at the youth group meeting, or at church?

In Luke, Chapter 18, Jesus told a parable about a Pharisee who went to the temple to pray. In essence, this man said, "God, I thank You that I am not as other men are." Who prayed such a proud prayer? It was a Pharisee. In his pride he believed that he was better than other men. If you are not careful, you will feel really good about yourself as you try to do what is right and yet look down on others.

There is a verse of Scripture in James 2:10 that says if you keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, you are guilty of all. You may look down on other people and pretend to be better than they are, but we all have failed at one point or another. We all have had struggles. You have to be careful that you do not pretend.

Do you pretend to be a Christian only when it is convenient, such as at camp meeting time, around Christian young people, or to keep Mom and Dad off your back? Are you someone else when Mom and Dad are not looking? Are you someone else, depending on who you keep company with? Are you so much cooler online? Is your social media presence different from the real you? Maybe the two are so different that you cannot even recognize yourself. Are you feeling good because you are not like someone else? When you look in the mirror with no one else there to impress, who do you see?

If you are pretending to be someone that you are not, who are you trying to fool? Are you trying to fool your mom and

dad? Well, you might fool them for a little while, but God has a way of revealing things to parents. Remember, you cannot fool God. Galatians 6:3 states, "For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself."

Young person, pretending can become a way of life. If you have been pretending, if God is putting His finger on something in your life, it is time to do honest business with the Lord. You

can fall into a pretense and pretend to be okay, but in the end you will only fool yourself. Psalm 139:23-24 states: "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

I want to close with this quote: "You can pretend all you want to be someone else, but at the end of the day, you are just fooling yourself." I trust that you

can see there is a great danger of slipping into pretending. Young person, you know what is expected of you, and you may try to make sure that you have a perfect image when you are with certain people, but the most important thing is, how does God see you? When you look in the mirror, who is the real you?

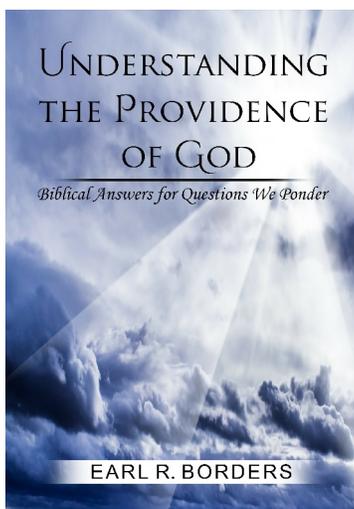
Sister Sheri Strelecky

Idle Words

A great many people speak before they know what they want to say. They often express the lack of an idea rather than an idea.

God did not give us words to use idly. They are too powerful and contain too many possibilities. A word may be a dagger, a bullet, a balm, a poison, a serpent, a mine of wealth, or a dynamite bomb. Words can build or blast someone's reputation. Then what right have you to be playing with such engines of power without understanding them?

Unless you learn to weigh all your words, you are as dangerous as a child entrusted with the throttle valve of a locomotive.



Understanding the Providence of God by Brother Earl R. Borders

Have you ever wondered: "Why is this happening? Why am I in this situation?" If so, consider the lives of Joseph, Esther, the Apostle John, the Apostle Paul, and John Bunyan. Today we read their stories, and God's providential plan is quite clear. Yet, in the midst of their difficult trials, they must have prayed, "Take it away" or "Get me out of here" or "Make it stop!" Although they could not have fully seen it at the time, God was working every difficult situation for good and for His purpose.

God is yet working His counsel, His thoughts, and His will in the lives of all who love and serve Him. We do not always know God's providential will for our lives, or even a portion of our lives, but we can be encouraged that:

- Throughout our entire lives, God is working "all things after the counsel of his own will."
- God's providential plan is often not something we could have chosen.
- One day we, like Joseph, will be able to look back and say, "God meant it for good!"

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Psalm 111:9 He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend is his name.

Colossians 1:14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.



Brother Larry Dishman

The Point of No Return

Both verses in our Scripture text talk about redemption. I am thankful to be redeemed. Isn't it wonderful that people can be redeemed by the blood of Jesus? When you travel the highways, you will see billboards that contain mistakes, others contain confusing messages, and a few others make you laugh. One sign that I saw was very profound. It was at Niagara Falls. It read: "Beyond Redemption's Point."

If you visit Niagara Falls, you will see a sign that serves as a warning to let people know that if they reach that place, it is a point of no return, where help cannot arrive soon enough to save you. The sign was placed

there before the river plummets three hundred twenty-five feet and then flows north to Lake Ontario. The sign assumes that death is inevitable. On the Upper Niagara River on the border between Canada and the United States, signs mark a point of no return. Going beyond that point most likely means going over the falls.

In July of 1960, James Honeycutt took seven-year-old Roger Woodward and his sister Deanne for a boat ride on the Upper Niagara River. According to one account, he had gone past the point of no return. He tried to turn his fourteen-foot aluminum motor boat around, but a shear pin failure disabled the motor, leaving the boat and those in it at

the mercy of the current. The boat flipped over quickly, and the three former passengers were heading for the falls. Fortunately, Deanne floated close enough to the island, and some of the tourists were able to pull her to safety. However, her brother Roger and James Honeycutt were not so fortunate and were swept over the Horseshoe Falls. Three thousand tons of water crash over those falls every second. Miraculously, Roger survived, but sadly James Honeycutt was battered and drowned.

Some people do ignore warning signs and head the wrong way in life. They reach a point where it is too late to change directions. Many people have almost reached that point of

no return. The thought of going beyond redemption's point is one of the most serious messages that I have ever preached.

The Danger of Resisting God's Spirit

Genesis 6:3 reads, "And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years." You can reach a point where God leaves you alone. Maybe He has already left you alone. Noah preached one hundred twenty years and had not one convert. The Flood destroyed every living creature except for those who were in the ark.

Someone may ask, "Why did all those people on the earth perish?" They resisted the Spirit of God. It is dangerous to resist God's Spirit. I have no doubt that those who would not pray when the ark was being built prayed when the Flood came, but it was too late and their prayers were not answered. I have no doubt that when Lot went out of Sodom that the people of Sodom cried out to God, but it was too late. God's judgment swept them away. Oh, the tragedy of going beyond redemption's point!

I believe the people of Jerusalem went beyond redemption's point in Jesus' day. Those men of Jerusalem missed a golden opportunity. Christ was right there in their midst. The Son of God wept over Jerusalem. His heart was bursting with grief for the city. He cried in Matthew 23:37, "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!" They went beyond redemption's point.

Jesus talked about this. Luke 19:41-44 reads: "And when he

[Jesus] was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation." That is the reason it all happened. Dear one, this is your time of visitation. This is the day of salvation. Now is your opportunity to get where you need to be with God.

Friend, those people in Jesus' day were not dead. They were still alive, yet they went beyond redemption's point. Jesus could look ahead forty years and see Titus coming with his army and besieging that city. He could see that they would call upon God, but it would be too late. More than one hundred thousand people went beyond redemption's point and perished.

The Perils of Procrastination

Procrastination is perilous because it robs one of that which can never be regained. It is perilous because it increases the weight of your burden. When you procrastinate, you get further behind and further away from God. Procrastination is perilous because it is a sin that separates you from God. Some might have already crossed that line. If you have not crossed the deadline, you may be getting ready to. Soon you may be beyond redemption's point. The Bible clearly states in Proverbs 29:1, "He, that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."

Friend, in this life we face deadlines. According to Webster's Dictionary, a deadline is a time set for doing or completing something. Dear friend, if God takes the Holy Spirit from a sinner, he is left to the hardening of his heart, and no godly grief can ever affect his heart. No tears of sorrow will ever fall down his cheeks, and his sins will be without remorse. If God takes the Holy Spirit from you, the things that belong to your peace will be just like it was with the people in Jerusalem. They will be hid forever from your eyes, and you will remain eternally unprepared for Heaven.

The sad tragedy of going beyond redemption's point is there are many warnings from God. He is pleading. He is so patient and kind, but if you are not careful, you are going to eat of the forbidden fruit. You are going to believe Satan's lies telling you that you have plenty of time when you do not. Your heart can be hardened.

Sin darkens your mind, and how sad to face the Judgment in that condition. You will recall that you had an opportunity to get saved. You were often reproved. God talked to your heart time and time again, but you said no. You tarried until the Spirit was gone. What reproach and what mourning when death finds you hopeless because you tarried too long! You do not want to wait until it is too late. Remember, you can go beyond redemption's point. Hebrews 9:27 states, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Friend, you will either face God as a redeemed saint of God or as a hopeless sinner.

Being Without Remedy

How sad to be a hopeless sinner facing the Judgment unprepared to meet God. Friend, the choice depends on you and

what you do with God in the time that He has given you. God has set a deadline for each of our lives. There is a deadline out there for you, and He alone knows when that deadline will be. Death comes to each of us, and none of us can say for sure when we will die. It is in the hands of God Almighty.

You need to think about what the Bible says about being without remedy. There are some diseases where there is no remedy, no cure. Again, Proverbs 29:1 says that "He, being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." What was the writer saying? There is no healing, no cure, and no pardon for this sin. There is no recovery out of the miserable state of this condition. They are lost beyond hope. There is no help for them because they have despised the advice and the instruction that God gave them.

Sometimes God reproves sinners through godly parents who do their best to raise them right. God reproves unconverted sinners as He speaks to them through the precious Word of God. God reproves unconverted sinners as they listen to sermons from the Word of God. He reproves unconverted sinners by the Holy Spirit and as He speaks through His servants. He shall suddenly be destroyed without remedy. Friend, this is speaking of being suddenly destroyed and broken beyond repair, beyond redemption's point.

The Bible says there is a condition of being hopeless. Hopelessness is the saddest word in the English language. To be hopelessly lost is the saddest condition that I can think about. The Bible says in Proverbs 27:1, "Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." You cannot say that you are going to get saved tomorrow, next week, next year,

when you get out of high school or college, or when you get married. The Proverb writer said, "Boast not thyself of to morrow." Tomorrow is a period of time found nowhere except perhaps on the fool's calendar.

Harden Not Your Heart

Three times in Hebrews, in Chapter 3, verses 8 and 15, and in Chapter 4, verse 7, the writer warned, "Harden not your hearts." Some people have been hardening their hearts for a long time. The Bible says not to harden your heart. Each time a person hears the Word of God and resists the wooing of the Holy Spirit, his heart becomes a little harder.

If you were to tie your arm in a sling and leave it that way for a year, although there was nothing wrong with your arm, a year later when you untied it, you probably would be unable to use it much at all. If you were to put a patch over your eye and leave it there for a year, your sight would be impaired. You might not be able to fully recover your vision in that eye.

Hardening your heart and resisting the Holy Spirit is dangerous. Maybe you have been hardening your heart since you were a child or a teenager. If you keep going that direction, a day is coming when your heart will be so hard that you are going to cross a line and go beyond redemption's point.

It is a law of nature, and you may know it well, that after you say no to the Gospel the first time, it gets easier to say no the next time. When you hear the Gospel and it comes time for the invitation, once again you say no. Those who are educated say concerning the subject of the Gospel, the first moment that a decision comes and you decide that you are going to reject the Gospel, in the future every time that deci-

sion comes up again, your brain automatically recalls the first time you made that decision. The chances are, if you say no the first time, it will be no the second time. Then your answer may be no to every Gospel meeting from then on. Then it becomes like throwing a rubber ball into the face of God Almighty. The next thing you know, the answer no will be your reply every time.

Some people have observed that it is strange that you seldom see older people get saved. Well, think about it, friend. They might have been hardening their hearts for a very long time. They might have ignored the Gospel, trying to get their minds off salvation and eternity. Is it any wonder that 90 percent of those who become Christians do so as little girls and little boys?

Friend, if you have no sensitivity toward your sin, toward the Gospel, toward your guilt, or toward hell, you need to repent and trust Christ. If you have no thought of Christ on the Cross dying for you, it could be that night is coming. Night is just around the corner. You may ask, "What is night?" The Son of righteousness could be about to set on your life. In other words, Jesus Christ could be about to walk away from you for the final time, and He may never say another word to you. He may never prick your heart again with the Gospel. Do you see the danger that you are in? God knows that it is only a matter of time before you go beyond redemption's point.

The Unpardonable Sin

In Matthew 12:31-32 Jesus said: "Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it

shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."

Jesus said there is a sin that shall not be forgiven in this life or in the life to come. If a man commits this sin, he is never going to be forgiven. This sin, once committed, is irrevocable. It is terrible to be lost. I am glad that I am not lost and that I have been saved by the grace of God. How sad it would be to be irrevocably lost. When I speak of the unpardonable sin, I mean there is a sin in which a person cannot have forgiveness. No sin can be forgiven after you die. It is possible that one can go beyond redemption's point while still alive. A person can pass forever beyond the realm of mercy while still living in this world. How terrible the sin which has no pardon, no repentance, and no forgiveness!

Powerful reasons compel me to warn you that if the Holy Spirit is still speaking to your heart, then you have not gone beyond redemption's point. What is an unpardonable sin? It is spiritual suicide. It is rejecting Christ one too many times. Unforgivable, unrepented sin will never be forgiven. Clinging to any sin or sin of omission can become unforgivable. If you refuse to recognize it and see it and will not confess it to God and ask for mercy, it becomes unforgivable. I do not believe it is a specific sin, but it is an act and a condition of the soul. It could be any sin that takes you over the line.

There was a sin that took a young, rich ruler over the line. He came to Jesus and said, "Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" In essence, Jesus told him to keep the commandments. The young man said, "All these have I kept from my youth up." Jesus said, "Yet lackest thou one thing." That one thing that Jesus mentioned took him over

the line, and it became unforgivable.

For some people, it is tobacco that is going to take them over the line; they will not give up their cigarettes. For others, it is alcohol that they will not give up. That sin is going to become unforgivable because they are going to hold on to it until the day they die. For others, it is drugs or pornography that has them bound. In a way they would like to be delivered, but they are still in love with their sin. Some are bound by unbelief, pride, or lukewarmness. They will not get on fire for God. Others carry unforgiveness or bitterness.

A Line That Is Drawn

Friend, if the Holy Spirit withdraws Himself from you, God has no other agency to convict you. The Holy Spirit is God's way to get the sinner to trust Christ. In front of every unsaved man, woman, boy, or girl, there is a deadline. If you ever cross that deadline, you will be broken beyond repair. There is a time and a place that marks the destiny of a person for glory or despair. There is a line that is unseen by you, a hidden boundary between God's patience and God's wrath.

There is an old song entitled "Have You Counted the Cost?" It reads:

*There's a line that is drawn by
rejecting our Lord,
Where the call of His Spirit is lost,
And you hurry along with the
pleasure-mad throng –
Have you counted, have you counted
the cost?*

*You may barter your hope of
eternity's morn,
For a moment of joy at the most,
For the glitter of sin and the things
it will win –
Have you counted, have you counted
the cost?*

*While the door of His mercy is open
to you,
Ere the depth of His love you
exhaust,
Won't you come and be healed,
won't you whisper, I yield –
I have counted, I have counted
the cost.*

*Have you counted the cost, if your
soul should be lost,
Tho' you gain the whole world for
your own?
Even now it may be that the line you
have crossed,
Have you counted, have you counted
the cost?*

Being Past Feeling

Feeling you have gone too far in sin or that you have been too bad does not mean that you have committed the unpardonable sin. Jesus came to save the vilest of sinners, but you can wait too long and get to the place where, as Paul said in Ephesians 4:19, you are past feeling. The verse reads, "Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness."

Someone may say, "I don't feel there is anything wrong with it." That does not mean it is right, because it was not too long ago that you felt there was something wrong with it, and now you feel there is nothing wrong with it. Were you deceived then or are you deceived now? You see, you must not allow feelings to be your guide. The Bible is your guide. It does not matter how I feel or how you feel about a thing; it is what the Bible says. If the Bible says a certain thing is wrong, it is wrong.

I thought about a song in our "Evening Light Songs" hymnal entitled "The Last Call." It reads, "Thy conscience, once so keen to feel, His voice sent to reprove, No more is stirred at God's appeal, To seek His pard'ning love." Is that not sad? Is that your condition? Was your

heart once tender before God? Were you once very conscientious? What is wrong now? You have hardened your heart so that you do not feel His call anymore.

It would be good if you would ask yourself these questions: Am I cut off? Am I caught up in some worldly current? Am I being pulled away from God? Am I ignoring any warning signs? If so, may you return to Him right now. You must do so before you drift dangerously beyond redemption's point. Oh, friend, will you listen to God and obey Him? If you will not listen to God, and if you refuse to be obedient to God, the voice of God will become fainter and fainter, until you cannot hear Him at all.

There is a story about an old man who was dying. He showed no signs of conviction or guilt for the sins that he had committed. He was lying down, and a minister walked in and asked, "Do you want a Bible?"

"No."

"Do you want me to pray with you?"

"No."

"Are you afraid of dying?"

"No."

"Are you afraid to meet God?"

"No."

Do you know what Paul calls that condition? It is being past feeling. Friend, tomorrow may be too late.

Seek the Lord While He Is Near

There is a reason that the Bible says in Isaiah 55:6, "Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near." To seek Him while you can still find Him insinuates that you could wait until it is too late to seek Him. Why not seek your soul's salvation? Will there ever be a better time? No matter what age you are, is this not the best

time for you to seek the Kingdom of God? Will there ever be a better opportunity than now? Will Christ ever be more willing to save than He is now? My friend, is this not the best time for you to seek the Kingdom of God? You must seek Him while He may be found.

Solomon wrote in Ecclesiastes 12:1, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them." Friend, you can call on Him too late. Is God speaking to your heart? I can promise you, if God is still speaking to your heart, it is not too late for you. However, it may be too late in a few hours or in a few days. I cannot find any place in the Bible where He said to call on Him tomorrow. It always says today.

Christ is inviting you to come now. Jesus said in Matthew 11:28, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Oh, may you find that rest! May every soul find rest. Do not let anything divert your mind. You need to make up your mind this very hour that you are going to settle this great question of eternity, because now is the best time to be saved. Now is the time of mercy.

My friend, your days of grace may be few. You may be snatched away very soon. You may never hear or read another Gospel message. You may be hearing God's very last call to you. Won't you be wise and make up your mind that you are going to seek the Kingdom of God? If you leave this life lost, I truly believe that one of the greatest torments that you will face in hell will be your memory. You will remember the opportunities that you had to get right with God. You will remember the times that God spoke to your heart and you said no.

Some person you know might have already crossed the boundaries of mercy and entered into the realm of the doomed and the damned. Some person who is not troubled, who neither knows nor cares what he has done, may have already driven the Holy Spirit away forever. Many people are certainly doomed forever at the iron doors of hell. They have already entered the torments of the lake of fire because they stepped across the line. One of the biggest lies the devil has ever told is that you can be saved anytime you want to. You may say, "I'm not ready; maybe some other time." You must repent and believe when God is dealing with you. You cannot get saved when you get ready. You have to respond while He is pleading with you. That, my friend, is a Biblical fact. You cannot seek Him when He is afar off. You have to seek Him while He is near. Second Corinthians 6:2 states, "Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

Where You Spend Eternity Is Your Choice

Lost friend, God's grace is free, but even grace has limits. It will not be forced upon you, and God's grace will not last forever. Will you cross God's deadline unprepared to meet Him? Destiny is not a matter of chance, but it is a matter of choice. God has given you this lifetime, whatever length your life will be, to choose where you will be in eternity. Whatever length of time God gives you, that is the only space that you have to get right with God. What will your choice be—everlasting life or eternal damnation?

Deuteronomy 30:19 says, "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both thou and

thy seed may live." How awful to be beyond redemption's point. How earnestly we ought to warn sinners of the possibility that they may go beyond redemption's point. Oh, how seriously each sinner should consider the folly and the danger of waiting and rejecting Christ!

If you do not fear God, if you do not tremble before His Word and the Gospel, if you can look and see the crucified Lamb of God bleeding and expiring for you on the Cross and it means nothing to you, you might have already gone too far. In Christ's name and in God's place, as I represent Him, if there is a little flame or even a spark of feeling within your soul that God can blow on, you had better fan that spark, because it could be the last time.

I read a story once of a young

man who was an intellectual. He had no religion, and he lay dying. The doctor, who was a believer, came in and said, "Sir, do you know that you are going to meet God?"

"God?" he said. "I don't have a god. I have cursed the name of God, fought against God, and fought against my mother's prayers, and if it means that today I will be in hell, in hell I shall be." That young man, coughing and spitting, screaming, cursing, and blaspheming God, went off into hell. Medical science is robbing us of some people's dying testimonies. Do not get me wrong. I do not want to see people suffer, but there was a time when people died with no medication, and without God it was a sad sight. Today the medical staff gives the dying individual medication, and the

family thinks the person died peacefully. If they were to withhold the medication, the unsaved would not die so peacefully.

Can I plead with you again? As the bleeding Lamb of God is pleading with you, if you can feel the weight of your sins in the slightest, will you obey the Holy Spirit? You may be just about ready to cross the line. Sinner, backslider, you do not need to go beyond redemption's point. Many people walking around on God's earth are just like the people in Jerusalem—they are already beyond redemption's point. The things of God are now hid from their eyes, and they are in spiritual darkness. My friend, you had better turn to the Savior while the door of mercy is still open.

(Compact Disc TR-1953)

[Annual Financial Report—contin. from p. 2] *Gospel Trumpeter* is a missionary effort and requires a large amount of income to operate it efficiently. Brother Decker and the saints feel the great responsibility of reaching out to lost men and women with the Gospel. We are endeavoring to offer salvation's message to those searching for freedom from sin's bondage.

Many people entangled in false religious systems need to be released. Our hope and prayer is that this publication will be a tool to lead souls to Christ and to help others live victorious lives for the Savior. It is very rewarding to be a part of a missionary effort that helps lead souls to the Truth and Heaven in the end.

We want to again present our

readers with the thought of taking a greater burden for this work. Your prayers certainly mean much to the success of this missionary endeavor. Also, your financial support is a tremendous asset to the continuance of this work. We trust that the Lord will bless you for your prayers and financial support. Thank you!

Statement of Condition

for 12 months ending January 31, 2020



	Income	Expenses
Supplies		\$ 29,008.08
Miscellaneous Expenses		1,159.78
Wages		54,135.87
Payroll Taxes/Insurance/Workers' Comp.		15,065.51
Donations/Offerings	\$18,996.83	
Equipment Maintenance/Repairs		5,909.49
Postage		74,527.88
 Subtotals	 \$18,996.83	 179,806.61

Balance paid out of the general fund of the Church of God congregation at Newark, OH \$160,809.78



Art Thou a King?

Brother Mike Wilks

Bearing Witness to the Truth

The Apostle Paul let us know that he did not come by word only, but by power and assurance and by the Holy Ghost. Those things are what assures us and convinces us. If a man preaches the Word but does not possess the Spirit of God, will it witness to people or change them? If there is no change, they are merely swelling words. I want to speak words that bring a change in the lives of others. We hear a lot of promises in politics. Some people actually think the answer to our country's problems is through our government. People need to wake up. In reality, the only answer to all our problems is God. He is the only One

who can unite us.

I thought about how God binds the people of God together. No one else in the world can do that but God Himself. It is due to the love of God that He puts down inside us that causes us to love one another. I am so glad to be saved. I found something wonderful! I want to pray and to have my prayers be effectual. I want to see more accomplished in the work of God. I do not want to get caught up in excuses. I work in sales, and my boss does not accept excuses. We must produce sales no matter what the weather is like and no matter what the economy is doing. Likewise, God expects us as Christians to produce fruit in our lives.

When it comes to prayer, I

want to see more accomplished. People may offer a lot of excuses regarding their prayer lives. One excuse that came to my mind is, "Well, it takes time for God to work." Sometimes that can become a crutch. I thought about when Peter prayed for Dorcas in Acts, Chapter 9. She was sick and died, so they called for Peter. He did not say, "Lord, give me a month or six months." He had to get down to business in prayer right then and there.

Often there are things going on in our lives. We need God to move, and we feel an urgency about getting those needs supplied. There is one thing that a good salesman must have, and that is a sense of urgency. If he has a sense of urgency, he can be

successful. What is our urgency? What is our calling? As Christians, we should have the greatest urgency of anyone in the world. Souls are depending on us. We must be in the will of God to help people.

In your mind you may wonder, "How can I help others?" There is only one way. God has to work through you. For example, when I go to work, I pray, "Lord, help me to sell something." I cannot just sit on my chair and expect God to do it all. I tell God, "I will do my part and give it all I have, and then I am asking You to make up the rest." It is the same way with your Christian experience. You have a part to play, and then God comes in. Little is much when God is in it.

In John, Chapter 18, we can read about an iconic moment in history. It is an exchange between Pilate and Jesus. Verses 35-37 read: "Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done? Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice."

Reigning With Christ

We are surrounded by vanity. It is only in Christ that we find true riches. Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 states: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into

judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."

Sometimes we that are saved forget a very valuable lesson. We reign with Christ. I do not want to be one who barely makes it into Heaven. Peter and Paul were mighty men of God, and they certainly did not barely make it into Heaven. They were turning the world upside down, so to speak. I have heard the foolish statement, "I would like to get saved and then die and go to Heaven." Well, that is not the way God operates. He saves each of us for a very specific purpose, and that is to further His kingdom in whatever we do.

If you were to randomly ask some people in the world if they were kings, they might think you were crazy for asking such a strange question. It would probably confuse most people, but in the Church of God, you should not be confused, because according to the Word of God, we are kings and priests. Revelation 5:10 tells us, "And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth." We are kings, not in some other life, but in this life.

If you would have asked King David, King Solomon, or King Hezekiah, "Are you a king?" each of them would have answered confidently, "Yes, I am a king." Every true Christian is reigning with Christ and has the power of God working in his life. I am talking about spiritual power. Hebrews, Chapter 11, speaks of faith. It says in verse 1, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." When it comes down to where we are living, it comes down to faith. Do you really believe these promises? Do you truly believe what is afforded to you in the Word of God?

There is so much godlessness that we must have the power of

God to help us. The Apostles faced much false religion, just as we do today, and they went out with a mission. Did you know that the Apostle Paul evangelized the then-known world in three years? What have you been doing for the past three years? There are greater things for each of us. True faith is believing, "I am a king, and I am reigning with One who can change the world."

A Great Calling

When the Word of God is being presented, faith works because the Spirit of God begins to work with people. Faith begins to rise and the Spirit of God tells the sinner that he can be saved from his sins. What a proclamation, that whosoever will can be saved! What a blessing to be saved! I came to Jesus sick of sin. I found something so much better and far greater than when I was living in sin.

God is real, and He expects us to be kings in this wonderful transaction called salvation. John 1:12 reads, "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." When I think about being a Son of God, it brings a feeling of responsibility over my soul.

A lot of religious folks say, "I'm a son of God," yet their characteristics do not match up with His. Their lives betray them. Using off-colored language, telling dirty jokes, and lying are not characteristics of the Son of God. Your talk must line up with your walk if you are a son of God. What an honor and a privilege to be called a son of God! Do you think being a son of God should afford you the power of God? The Christian has power that is not afforded to the world, because he is born again.

The Prophet Isaiah wrote in

Isaiah 53:11-12: "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong." Do you understand what that says? God has given Jesus all power in Heaven and in earth, and through that power, Jesus is going to divide all that spoil with every child of God. I want you to think about that. He gives gifts severally as He will, and He is sharing that great spoil that God has given Him with us. If Jesus is giving the child of God the spoil, there ought to be evidence of it. There should be evidence of being royal.

When I thought about people getting saved, I could not help but think of Saul. First Samuel 10:1 tells us, "Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, Is it not because the LORD hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance?" Verses 20-22 read: "And when Samuel had caused all the tribes of Israel to come near, the tribe of Benjamin was taken. When he had caused the tribe of Benjamin to come near by their families, the family of Matri was taken, and Saul the son of Kish was taken: and when they sought him, he could not be found. Therefore they enquired of the LORD further, if the man should yet come thither. And the LORD answered, Behold, he hath hid himself among the stuff."

Saul was called with a great calling. He was going to be anointed king over Israel, but he was found hiding among the stuff. May God help us not to be hiding among the stuff. We are called with a high calling.

Commitment

Some lessons could be learned from sports. Professional

athletes are always striving for the mastery. They consult with experts to help them so they can gain every advantage possible over those against whom they are competing. However, they are limited in their capacity. As the great Church of God, we should be committed to working with God like that. The professional athlete is limited because he has to consult with human help, and he can only take his body so far. However, as the Church of God, we are not limited when we are working with God. What could be possible as kings? We need more power because we are not going to convince souls of their need of Christ without the power of God in our lives.

In the Old Testament, you can read that Joseph was laboring. What an example! He endured test after test, yet he kept laboring with God. What happened to him? He became highly exalted in the number two position in the land of Egypt. When we work with God, we are promoted, not because we are anything, but because we are workers together with Him. Are you living up to all your privileges as a son of God? Jesus was highly exalted. There is a law of sowing and reaping. Did you know there is a law in effect that if you sow sparingly, you are going to reap sparingly? The Apostle Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 9:6, "But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully."

I want to see greater things happen in the Kingdom of God. Do you? If you want to see greater results, what are you going to have to do? You must dig a little deeper. It is going to take greater commitment. Did you know that kings have power and authority? Did you know that a Christian is afforded authority in his life? If

you have Jesus in you, not many things should shake you. Do you know why? You have the King of kings dwelling in you, and you have been given the Word and the Holy Spirit. Through Him, you have all the power and the authority that you need.

Did you know that a king dresses differently? Modesty is royal. As an ambassador for Christ, you represent Him no matter where you are. Your appearance says something about you. At the end of an old commercial, someone would say, "Image is everything." When you are a child of God, people judge you by your appearance. As a son of God, you represent Christ, so you should exemplify the Bible standard. The Bible lets you know that the church has a certain standard, and that is the way a Christian should look. There is not one standard for a pastor and another one for the congregation. The rule is the same.

Did you know that a king is not voted into his position? Likewise, as a child of God, you are not voted into God's kingdom. You enter by birthright when you are born again, and then you become a son of God. God adopts you into the family of God.

Pilate knew that Jesus was standing there before him because of the envy of the Jews. Pilate was struggling when he asked Jesus in John 18:37, "Art thou a king then?" Jesus replied, "Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." Is your testimony that you bear witness of the Truth? May God help you as you are out in the world so that people do not question in their minds: "Is this person really a Christian? He proclaims that he has Christ, but the evidence is not there."

Paul turned the then-known world upside down in three years. Are you turning your workplace upside down? Paul was disrupting the world around him. May God help each of us to disrupt our neighbors and our fellow employees.

Are You Reigning?

As I was reading Acts 5:15, the very end of that verse caught my attention. They were trying to get to Peter so the sick would be healed, but the latter part of the verse says, ". . . that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them." I want you to think about that. I am talking about a spiritual king. Peter had such power that they were trying to get in his shadow.

Is your shadow finding the places that it needs to? Can you find your shadow visiting the sick? Can your shadow be found in the prayer closet? Can your shadow be found over the Bible? Is your shadow where it needs to be? Are you overshadowing those who are in the greatest need? Peter's shadow was.

Are you a king? I could not help but think about Jesus' great words that He spoke to Pilate in John 18:37. He said, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth."

I am starting to realize that it takes a lot of effort to raise children. It is very sobering to think about the souls of my children. We put much effort into raising them, yet they could go the wrong way. It is gut-wrenching to think about that. We were sent into this world for service. Think about all the effort your Christian parents put forth for you. Think about all the ones around you who prayed for you to be saved.

If you are lost, for what cause did you come into this world?

Some people came into this world, and they are drinking themselves to death; that is their cause. Some came into this world, and they are destroying their health with tobacco. Others come into this world, and they are disseminating bitterness. Sadly, many people are going to go to the grave in that condition. Friend, you were not brought into this world to be lost. You have a much higher calling. You were brought into this world to be a king, to reign with Christ.

God did not place you in this world to sip on a bottle of liquor, to be a drug addict, or to be a whoremonger. You are here to be saved and to prepare for eternity. If you are lost, it is time for you to start reigning, because other things are reigning over you. Before I got saved, I was sick of sinful habits reigning over me. I am so glad that I turned them all over to Jesus Christ. I want you to read the words of a song that ties in with this message entitled "Reigning in This Life," written by Daniel S. Warner. It reads:

*Do you triumph O my brother,
Over all this world of sin?
In each storm of tribulation,
Does your Jesus reign within?*

*One we hail as King immortal,
He did earth and hell subdue;
And bequeathing us His glory,
We are kings anointed too.*

*Shall we, then, by sin be humbled?
Must we yield to any foe?
No, by heaven's gift we're reigning
Over all this world below.*

*Oh, what grace and high promotion,
That in Jesus I should be;
Raised from sin to royal honor,
Even reigning, Lord, with Thee.*

*All this life is blissful sunshine,
Earth is subject at our feet;
Heaven pours its richest blessings,
Round our throne of love complete.*

*Then we'll sing and shout the story,
Of the wondrous blood divine;
Full salvation, glory, glory!
I am reigning all the time.*

*I am reigning, sweetly reigning,
Far above this world of strife;
In my blessed loving Savior,
I am reigning in this life.*

Are you willing to make a commitment to go a little higher? Have you been living below your privileges? I want to go higher and to see more accomplished for God. This is a spiritual work. Do you know that if you love to read your Bible, it is not because of your makeup, but it is because God put that love in you? Do you love to pray? It is not because of your flesh; it is because God placed that love in you. As a Christian, everything that you accomplish is a gift from God. If you want to go higher and see more accomplished in the Kingdom of God, there is only one place that you can go, and that is to Jesus Christ.

Are you willing to commit more to God? You cannot pray and get up and expect to be exactly like the Apostle Paul from that point on. It does not work that way. You can ask for more, and after you get a little more, then you can ask for a little more. It is a day-by-day process. I trust that you will live up to your privileges. If you are not, you need to ask God to help you to do that.

(Compact Disc TR-2120)

**God speaks to
those who take
time to listen,
and He listens to
those who take
time to pray.**

Meeting Announcements

- White Pine, TN**
April 10-12
POSTPONED – Easter Meeting: Church of God at Douglas Lake, 185 Hwy 25/32 E, White Pine, TN
Evangelist: Brother Keith Wolfe, Newark, Ohio
Service times: Fri. & Sat. 7:00 p.m.; Sun. 10:00 a.m. & 3:00 p.m.
Snacks will be served following the Friday evening service, and lunch will be served following the Sunday morning service.
For further information contact: Pastor Roger Nethers. Telephone: 770-206-0786
- Newton, KS**
April 15-19
CANCELLED – Revival: Church of God, 400 N. Meridian Road, Newton, KS 67114
Evangelist: Brother David Stegmeier, Canby, Oregon
Service times: Wed.-Sat. 7:00 p.m.; Sunday School 9:45 a.m. Sunday Worship 10:45 a.m. & 7:00 p.m.
For further information contact: Pastor Brandon Gonzalez. Telephone: 316-217-2696
- Mt. Pleasant, PA**
April 18
CANCELLED – Fellowship Meeting: Church of God, 109 Salvation Lane, Mt. Pleasant, PA
Service time: 10:30 a.m. A meal will be served by the local congregation.
MOTELS: *Holiday Inn Express, 724-547-2095* (This is on the same road as the church. Mention you are there for the church meeting.); *Super 8 Motel in New Stanton, 724-925-8915* on I-70W, 10 miles north of the church); *Melody Motor Lodge, 724-628-9600* on 119N in Connellsville).
For further information contact: Pastor Paul W. Prinkey. Telephone: 724-547-2151
- Summersville, WV**
April 20-26
POSTPONED – Revival/Fellowship Meeting: Church of God, 74 Armstrong Rd., Summersville, WV
Evangelist: Brother Larry Dishman, Hurley, Mississippi
Service times: Mon.-Thu. 7:00 p.m., Fri. 10:30 a.m. & 7:00 p.m., Sat.-Sun. 10:30 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.
Meals will be served by the congregation following each service Friday-Sunday. For special rates, contact Econolodge at 304-872-6900 and mention that you are with the Church of God.
For further information contact: Pastor Earl R. Borders. Telephone: 304-872-4047
Visit our website at: www.ChurchofGodSummersvilleWV.com
- Warrensville, NC**
April 27-May 3
Revival: Church of God, 2042 Teaberry Road, Warrensville, NC
Evangelist: Brother Larry Dishman, Hurley, Mississippi
Service times: Sun. 10:00 a.m. & 5:00 p.m.; Mon.-Sat. 7:00 p.m.
For further information contact: Pastor Allen Borders
Telephone: 740-485-8881 or 336-846-8859
- Medina, OH**
May 1-3
Weekend Revival: Church of God, 6745 Wooster Pike, Medina, OH 44256
Evangelist: Brother Josh Thilmony, Findlay, Ohio
Service times: Fri. 7:00 p.m.; Sat. 10:30 a.m.; Sun. 10:30 & 4:00 p.m.
A meal will be provided after the morning services.
For further information contact: Pastor Mike Miller. Telephone: 234-249-9309
- Mt. Pleasant, PA**
May 4-10
Revival: Church of God, 109 Salvation Lane, Mt. Pleasant, PA
Evangelist: Brother Larry Dishman, Hurley, Mississippi
Service times: Mon.-Sat. 7:00 p.m. Sun. 10:30 a.m. & 1:30 p.m.
For further information contact: Pastor Paul W. Prinkey, Telephone: 724-547-2151
- Kensett, AR**
May 22-24
Fellowship Meeting: Kensett Church of God, 409 SE 2nd St., Kensett, AR 72082
Evangelist: Brother Allen Polston, New Castle, Indiana
Service times: Fri. 7:00 p.m.; Sat. 2:00 p.m. (dinner will be served at 4 p.m.) Sat. 7:00 p.m.
Sun. 11:00 a.m. & 5:00 p.m. A dinner will be served after the Sunday morning service.
For further information contact: Pastor Calvin L. Foster. Telephone: 501-742-3961 or 501-593-5105
- White Pine, TN**
June 14-21
White Pine Camp Meeting: Church of God at Douglas Lake, 185 Hwy 25E, White Pine, TN
Three services daily: 10:00 a.m., 2:30 p.m., & 7:00 p.m. First service Sunday, June 14 @ 10:00 a.m.
Children & youth services daily. Campers welcome, but please make reservations. Bring your own bedding for the dorms. For reservations contact: Bro./Sis. Williams @ 678-215-1540 or 770-507-7404 or email: jwil6568@bellsouth.net. Or you may contact the pastor.
For further information contact: Pastor Roger Nethers. Telephone: 770-206-0786 or email: rogernethers@bellsouth.net. If you make reservations & can't make it, please call & cancel.

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