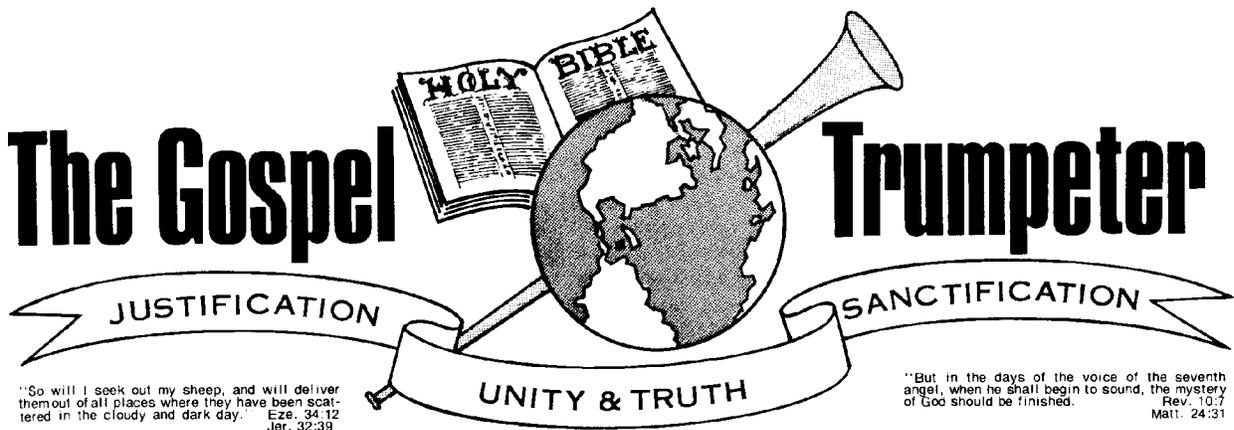


# The Gospel Trumpeter



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 March 2020 No. 3



Church of God Tabernacle in Newark, Ohio

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

***Psalm 122:1***

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

# Guest Editorial

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

Brother Roger L. Decker ..... Editor  
Workers Too Numerous to Mention

### THE CHURCH OF GOD BELIEVES IN:

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

### SOME SPIRITUAL FACTS PERTAINING TO THE CHURCH

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

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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 March 2020 No. 3

*"... how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"*

Matthew 23:37

### "Ye Would Not"

This Scripture finds Jesus grieving over the deplorable spiritual condition of the Jews. They were God's chosen people. Jesus was heartbroken because they rejected Him and their only hope of finding true peace. On many occasions He performed miracles to prove that He was the promised Messiah. With all those infallible proofs, they still would not believe or accept Him. Many people yet today have that same foolish attitude toward Christ. Regardless of how much He does to show His love, multitudes simply disregard His loving care.

Throughout history God sent various prophets and messengers to convince men and women of their lost condition. Sad to say, frequently when He sent His servants, they were beaten, misused, stoned, and killed. Finally, God sent His only Son to redeem the lost house of Israel. He hoped that they would surely accept His Son and His plan to reconcile them to Himself. God's desire was to bless people rather than to execute wrath and judgment upon them. Isaiah 28:21 informs us that the Lord would rise up in judgment against those people and do "his

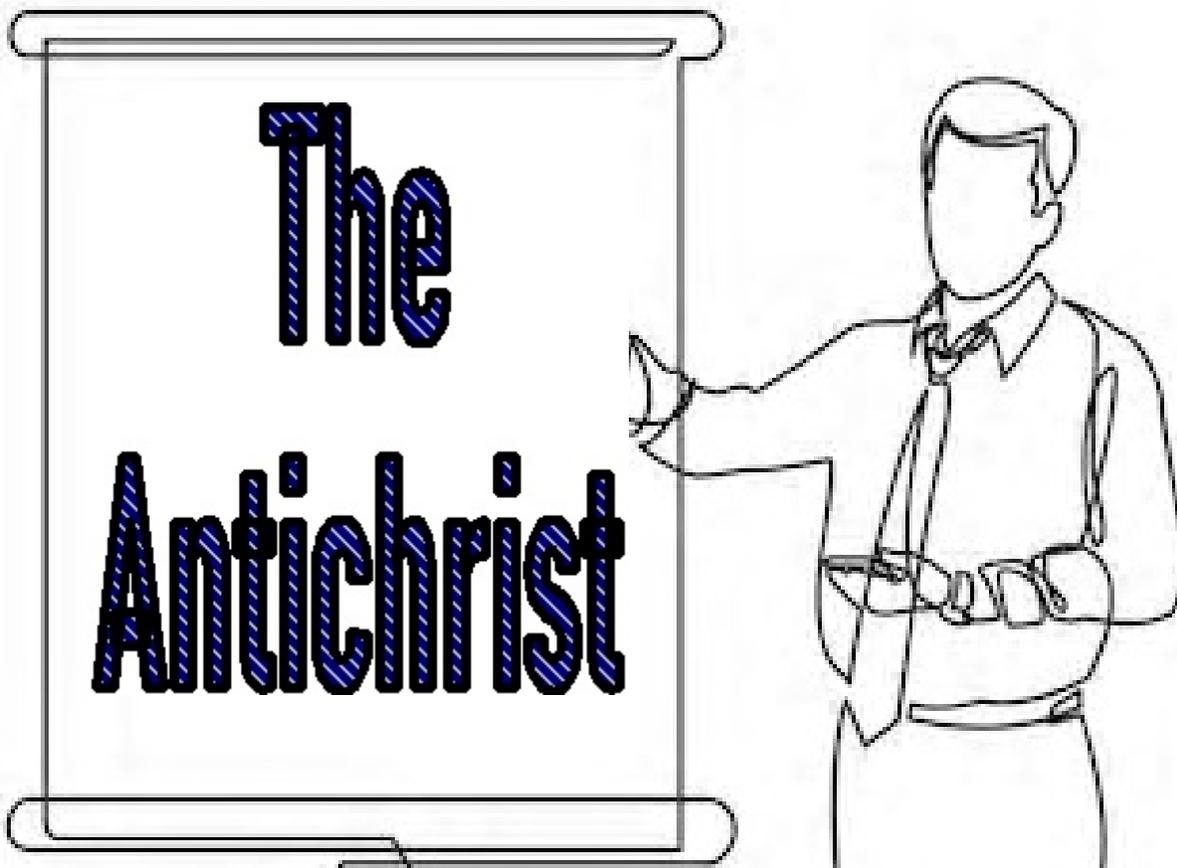
strange work." In Jeremiah 29:11 the Prophet Jeremiah wrote, "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end." This is God's desire for all men.

Unfortunately, as it was then, so it is yet today. Many people want to live their own way, do their own thing, and refuse to obey His commands. Many are determined *not* to surrender to the Savior's call to repentance. They have resolved to walk in the paths of sin and unrighteousness. The holiness lifestyle is not appealing to them and their corrupt way of living. What a sad picture this portrays! Rejecting Christ's offer of redemption will prove to be the saddest tragedy a man or a woman will ever choose in this life.

It is recorded in Luke 18:18-23 that a rich, young ruler spoke face to face with the Savior, inquiring how to get to Heaven. Jesus instructed him to do the commandments that he knew. The young man let Jesus know that he had obeyed them from his youth and was living a good, clean, moral life. Jesus told him that he lacked only one thing that would bring him to salvation, peace, and a home in Heaven. Jesus then instructed him to go and sell all that he had, give to the poor, and come and follow Him. Forsaking all his riches was too great for him to do; therefore, he turned from the Savior and went away

*[continued on page 7]*

*Acts 20:28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.*



*Brother Roger L. Decker*

### **Be Established in the Truth**

Doctrinal messages are necessary. Peter said in 2 Peter 3:1, "This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance." Peter said in 2 Peter 1:12, "Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth." Many people have a lot of misconceptions when it comes to doctrines set forth in the New

Testament, especially with teachings concerning the kingdom. There are teachings of millenniums, raptures, antichrist, purgatory, and the kingdom that are mistaught.

Some people literalize the Word of God, but you cannot do that. If you go to the Book of Revelation, you are going to realize that when you read about dragons and other beasts and the woman clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet (Revelation 12:1). Can you imagine the size that woman would have to

be if you were to literalize that Scripture?

How can you know when someone is preaching the Truth? First of all, you should follow along in your Bible. Then, 1 John 2:20 tells us, "But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things." The word *unction* simply means "anointing." If you are a child of God, God is going to anoint your eyes and anoint the message so that you can understand it in a greater way than a sinner can. First John 2:27 states, "But the anointing

which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him."

That Scripture is not doing away with pastors, evangelists, teachers, or other functions of the ministry. If you take that Scripture in its context, John was saying that you do not need any man to teach you what you have heard from the beginning. What you have heard from the beginning is found in verse 24, which reads, "Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father."

The expression "from the beginning" was used seven times in 1 John and two times in 2 John. From the beginning, what did they hear? They heard about the death, the burial, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Book of Acts is full of that doctrine. The apostles were not speaking of tradition, but they were saying that what they heard was factual. From the beginning, what do we hear that converts us? We hear the Truth. Now, you might not have gotten converted the first time you heard the Gospel, but it was Truth that brought you to Jesus Christ.

### **Promoting Erroneous Teachings**

Now I want you to consider some prophecy dealing with Israel. Have you ever read about the antichrist in the Bible? Only one man mentioned the word "antichrist" or "antichrists," and that was John. What does the word *antichrist* mean? Antichrist is an opponent or an adversary of the Messiah, or Christ.

I have a book entitled *Arma-*

*geddon: Appointment with Destiny*. I bought the book because I wanted to see what some of the teachings are out there concerning the subject of antichrist, which is mentioned in that book. The author is a best-selling writer of religious books, but most of what he wrote is false. Many people writing religious books have not even been born again and do not see the Kingdom of God. That is the reason they misteach the kingdom.

The writer stated that the antichrist would be a world leader and would force the Jews (literal Israel) to stop their sacrifices in the rebuilt temple. He said the antichrist would set up an idol of himself to cause the abomination in the temple to be worshiped as God until he is destroyed at the end of seven years when Christ returns.

There are a lot of articles written about the antichrist on the Internet, but most of them are false. Speaking of the antichrist, one site said this:

"The figure who acts as Satan's lead agent on earth during the end times. Most Christian scenarios predict the Antichrist—a sort of evil twin of Jesus in many ways—will forge a one-world government through promises of peace. When Jesus returns, he will expose the Antichrist as an impostor, defeat him in the battle of Armageddon, and reign with the Christian martyrs for a thousand years on earth."

You would be surprised at how many people believe that. Error is sown in among bits of Truth, but let us allow the Word of God to speak. The antichrist is not mentioned in the Book of Daniel, but often people try to tie it in with Daniel's prophecy. They erroneously teach that antichrist was the one who would confirm the covenant (Daniel 9:27). On the contrary, the One who confirmed the covenant was the One who gave the

covenant: Jesus Christ.

The Word of God lets us know that John had returned from the Isle of Patmos, and then he wrote First, Second, and Third John. You really do not need a great depth of understanding to understand these epistles that John wrote. In 1 John he wrote about loving your brother, because a lack of love for your brother is one sign of apostasy. John was at Ephesus after he returned from Patmos. He was an elderly man. Apostasy had set in and had gained force, so he wrote and let the people know who was a sinner. It was as though they had gotten off track regarding the simplicity of the Gospel.

### **Falling Away From Truth**

John said in 1 John 2:18, "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time." There are three things about antichrist in this one verse. I want you to notice that many antichrists were present at that time. John was writing to the congregation at Ephesus when he said that "ye have heard that antichrist shall come." This is the first time the word "antichrist" appears in the Bible.

Jesus called the antichrists false prophets and false Christs. In Matthew 24:24 Jesus said, "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." I want to point out that John said that "even now are there many antichrists." John mentioned "antichrist" four times and "antichrists" once.

Many names have been attached to the long list of antichrists. It is amazing what false religion will say regarding

antichrist. Down through the years, they have thrown around names of communists and other dictators. They have named Hitler, Stalin, Khrushchev, Mussolini, Castro, and Saddam Hussein, but these men were not alive in John's day. Although those men did oppose the Truth and Christians, they were not who John was talking about. The list of antichrists that I just mentioned did not live in the day when John wrote that. Remember, John said they were already there. The antichrists that John was talking about were not world leaders or political leaders.

Antichrists are not necessarily atheists or communists, although we know they have always opposed Christianity. Who were the antichrists that John was speaking of in his day? They were apostates. They were people who knew the Truth, but they defected from the Truth. They were those who were involved in the falling away. This apostasy is going on yet today. In many cases of division, you will find an antichrist spirit. Antichrists were present in John's day, even before those world leaders were born, but John said that "even now are there many." The word "many" is plural. There are many antichrists around today.

Let us look at 1 John 2:18 again: "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now [while he was writing this letter] are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time." You need to understand that First, Second, and Third John were written at a time when the church was starting to compromise and go into apostasy. Things were beginning to change.

John had been on the Isle of Patmos prior to his return to Ephesus. He was there for one

reason, and that was for the Word of God. However, when he returned, he saw that the people were different from when he left. The church was not on fire as it was when he left. He saw that apostasy was setting in. May God help us to keep these spirits out of our congregations.

What was going on at Ephesus? Revelation 10:8 tells us, "And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth."

Verse 11 reads, "And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy [or preach] again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings." John did that when he returned to Ephesus from the Isle of Patmos. I want to repeat, apostasy was setting in. Some people had fallen away from Truth. The morning-time church did not quite have the glimmer that she had when John left there. When the spirit of apostasy hit, many of the people were touched by the long tentacles of Satan. Their spiritual strength slowly drained until people were confused, misled, and ensnared in the devil's grasp.

### **"Let No Man Deceive You"**

When Daniel wrote about the seventy weeks in the Book of Daniel, do you know what he did first? He repented. In essence, he said: "Lord, You have given us over to confusion of faces" (Daniel 9:7). He prayed not only for himself but also for the sins of Israel. Under Nebuchadnezzar, Israel was taken out of Judah and taken captive. There was a reason that God allowed their captivity, and it was due to their disobedience. Daniel was loved of God, but he knew that Israel was there for a reason. Remember, when he went there, he was quite young. However, he

was grown at this point in time and maturing, and God was revealing some things to him.

Daniel mentioned "confusion of faces." The people were confused, so he repented of Israel's sin and his own sin. While Daniel was speaking this prayer, God dispatched the angel Gabriel to Daniel. He came at the setting up of the prophecy of the kingdom. He also appeared to the beloved Mary when the kingdom came.

What are antichrists? They are comfortable, professed Christians who are neither hot nor cold; they are lukewarm. They no longer love the Truth. They have changed their minds about it. Today times are changing, and many people are being affected. Do you know why? They talk to antichrist people who have left the Truth, and they tell them: "You don't have to do all of that. There's no sin in that." They start measuring themselves by themselves, but Christ is the measuring rod.

When you love the Truth, you want to hear the Truth. I love the Truth, and I love the Bible standard. I think the Church of God has a beautiful standard. John saw that many people no longer loved the Truth. If you do not love the Truth, you need to pray and ask God to give you a love for it. It is the only way that you are going to finish this Christian race successfully.

I am going to digress a little. Second Thessalonians 2:3-12 reads: "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. [Who sits on a throne and is exalted? The Pope of Rome does.] Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with

you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.

"For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, [The word *delusion* means 'strong deceit.' When God sends it, no one can lift it except God Himself.] that they should believe a lie [if you want a lie, God will help you to believe it]: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

### **Sowing to the Flesh**

Verse 10 does not say that they did not have the Truth, that they did not know the Truth, or that they did not know who spoke the Truth; however, it does tell us they did not love the Truth. They lived in sin and practiced sin daily, and they received not the love of the Truth. There is a force of evil in this world, but even though that is true, God is still in control. Therefore, we must stay really close to God, especially in these latter days.

When people want to fuss over the Bible standard, God lets them have their way. If people want to have their own way regarding the Bible standard, what does God do? He lets them have their way and yet believe they are all right, and they are sent a

strong delusion. Some people believe they are right, when at one time, they knew they were wrong. Galatians 6:7 reads, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." That Scripture is going to come to pass.

If you commit sin, you are going to reap the consequences of sin, but it might not be when you want it. God will deal with you in His time. He knows the best time to teach you a lesson. Verse 8 tells us, "For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

You may go out and do sinful things and not serve God, but somewhere along the highway of life, something will come that you cannot handle. You are not going to be able to go to Mom and Dad or a friend to get out of it. You will have to face it, and the only one who will be able to deliver you is Jesus Christ. On the highway of life, there will be something that you cannot handle in your own strength.

Antichrist is a spirit that opposes the Truth, and it will even work on the Christian. The devil wants to get people to look to the future for an antichrist while that spirit works right among them. Again, that spirit was working in John's day, and it is still working today. Around A.D. 96, John wrote in 1 John 2:18, "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time." Again, what did Jesus call them? He called them false Christs and false prophets. Where did the antichrists come from? Were they world leaders? Is that who John was talking about? No, those people came out of the Church of God.

### **Working Division**

There is only one church mentioned in the Bible, and there was only one church back then. Where did all of these other churches come from? They are man-made churches, but the divine church is the Church of God. John was talking, and I want you to notice the language he used. Where did antichrists come from? John explained it. He said they were going to come, and they were there (1 John 2:18). Now I am going to tell you where they came from. In 1 John 2:19 John wrote, "They went out from us [the Church of God, which included John], but [this is really simple] they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest [or made known] that they were not all of us."

Why did some go out and start other congregations? To let everyone know they were not of them, but it was the spirit of antichrist. The "us" that John was talking about was not some sectarian church. It included John and the people of God that he was talking to. How much simpler could John have stated it? He was not talking about an antichrist out in the future, as some of these false prophets talk about. John said they were present then. Where did they come from? In so many words, John said, "They went out from us."

John was an apostle. In Third John, you can read that a man named Diotrephes was bold enough to stand against John. That man stood against the Apostle John to the place that John had to name him out. Can you imagine someone being bold enough to stand against an apostle? That was the spirit that John was talking about that was working. Diotrephes wanted to make it known that he was not of John.

John said they went out from them, a Church of God congregation. To my knowledge, that was the only church active in that day, and that was the only church that John was a member of. Those who left wanted it known that they were not of them. If they had been of them, they would not have left. Why was that antichrist? It portrayed a divided Christ.

The Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 1:10, "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, [That does not mean that all pastors necessarily agree on everything. That was not what Paul was talking about. You have to read the context of what he was talking about.] and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."

What was the same mind and the same judgment that he was talking about? Verse 11 tells us, "For it hath been declared unto me of you [all you have to do is read on; do not take that and privatize it], my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you."

What is it that we need to speak? Christ is not divided. Some were saying, "I am of Apollos" or "I am of Paul" or "I am of Cephas," and so on. We all are one, and that is the message that keeps us together. Pastors may differ on how to handle a congregation and on many other things, because there are differences of administration, but that is not what Paul was dealing with. Amos tells us in Amos 3:3, "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" What was Amos talking about? The two have to agree with God. If both agree with God, one brother could have served God for thirty years or more and another brother for

only one day, but both can walk together. Why? Both of them agree with God.

The spirit of antichrist shows a divided Christ. The division at Corinth had not gotten outside Corinth yet. Paul was writing the letter to head it off. He was hearing that from the house of Chloe, and some were asking Paul questions about this. Also, others there let him know what was going on at Corinth. Paul was not there at that time. He was away at Ephesus, and the house of Chloe took him the news that there were contentions and envyings.

Do you know what happens when people get divided over preachers? For example, someone may say: "I believe he is speaking the Truth. I love the way he preached over there. Who are you going to have for an

evangelist? Oh, I wanted this one." Paul said not to do that. Why? If people get divided, they will not want to hear anyone else. One brother does not preach like another brother does. All of them have diversities. They each have different mannerisms, but the messages are the same. They all preach Christ.

When people leave as they left John's congregation, it does not say they just quit; they went out from them. Where did they go? They set up congregations somewhere else and went on professing to be Christians. Dear one, your anchor is only secure as long as it is where it belongs, and that is in Jesus Christ. The antichrist spirit was present in John's day, and it is present today.

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*[Guest Editorial—continued from page 2]*  
sorrowfully. He was so close, yet he ended up being lost.

Today millions of people forsake the Savior for things that are of much less value than this man's riches. To some, a bad habit is too much to turn away from in order to have peace. To another, it may be an evil attitude that he is carrying toward an individual or a condition that he is facing. Oftentimes a person may hold unforgiveness in his heart toward someone who has hurt him deeply.

Perhaps a spouse violated the marriage vow. The innocent party has suffered much pain and sorrow, and with that injustice, the innocent person is holding an unforgiving spirit toward the one who committed the infraction. Heartfelt forgiveness must be granted to the guilty party. Jesus said in Matthew 6:15, "But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Regardless of

how cruel the damage that was done, forgiveness must be given. The damage done may be a very critical issue; however, forgiveness must be granted.

As Jesus views your life, what stands in your way of obtaining His free gift of salvation? You may or may not realize that the Lord grieves over your sinful way of living. He wants to gather you under His wings to redeem you from the awful calamity coming to you just out ahead if you fail to repent and turn to Him. As He stretches out His hand in mercy to offer you pardon and deliverance from sin, why not take advantage of this opportunity to receive Him into your heart today? The people in our Scripture text refused the only One who could deliver them from the sinful condition they were in. Their decision caused them to suffer greatly in this life, and they will continue to suffer throughout all eternity.

Selected

# What Are You Sowing?



*Brother Abraham Burton*

## **Looking to God for Deliverance**

I thank God for salvation. I am so glad that I gave my heart to God at the age of seventeen. I wish I had done it earlier. God saved me from the wicked streets of Chicago and made me a new creature. God delivered me from smoking cigarettes. I started smoking at thirteen years of age. When I gave my heart to God, I was determined that I was not going back to those cigarettes. It was a battle, but I just held on and said: "Lord, I don't want any more cigarettes. I want to stay saved." He said, "If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the good of the land."

God will bless you. All you

have to do is have a will and a desire to stay saved, and God will give you the power to resist temptation. The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 10:13, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." You have to look to God for deliverance. You cannot deliver yourself, but God can deliver you from temptation if you call upon Him. You should not be discouraged when you are tempted and tried. You should count it all joy. Although it does not feel joyous at the time, you can count it all joy, knowing that God is able to

help you. So be encouraged, because God is able to save you and keep you.

Man can build a submarine, take it down into the depths of the sea, and no water can get in it. The pressure does not damage that submarine. If man has that knowledge, how about God? He can save you from sin and keep sin out of your life once you give your heart to Him. All you have to do is believe God and live saved one day at a time. The devil will try to get you to worry about tomorrow. You need to live saved today and let God take care of tomorrow. You can pray: "Lord, keep me. I want to stay saved today." Just take one day at a time, and that is all.

Jesus said in Matthew 6:34,

"Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." You do not need to be worried about tomorrow. That is the reason the Bible says in 1 Peter 5:7, "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you." The trick of the devil is to get you to wonder how you are going to live saved next week. The devil is a liar. You can live saved every day. All you have to do is live saved today and trust God to keep you today. When tomorrow comes, you can trust God and ask Him to help and keep you saved that day. Again, just take one day at a time.

Sometimes temptations seem great, but the Bible says in 2 Peter 2:9, "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations." Do not hesitate to ask for help. You can go to someone who has stood the test. A minister can pray for you. The devil does not want you to ask for help, but if you are struggling, ask: "Would you pray with me? How would you advise me to go through this?" You have to want to stay saved. You must keep pressing.

### **"Desire the Sincere Milk of the Word"**

Jesus said in Matthew 11:12 that "the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." What does this mean? You have to be aggressive and put yourself into this thing of serving God. Some people get saved, and they stay on the outskirts of the congregation. You may say, "Well, I don't know anyone." Then you need to say: "Hey! How are you all doing? What are you doing tomorrow? Can I help?" The saints of God love you. Sometimes you might have some who will bring you in, but if they do not, you can ask.

I did not know anyone when I came to the Church of God, but one thing I did know was that I wanted to stay saved. I knew those people had salvation, and I was determined to stick right with them. How much do you want to stay saved? If you are newly saved, be encouraged. God saved you because He loves you, and He wants to do great things in your life. There is happiness in salvation. Be encouraged and be happy. You need to thank God if He has delivered you. Once you are saved, you should not go back to your worldly friends for advice. They are not going to advise you about how to stay saved.

Psalm 1:1 reads, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful." The Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 15:33, "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners." You should avoid your old stomping grounds, so to speak. You are a new creature, so you need to be with other new creatures. You need to leave your past behind. You should not keep company with those who are drinking alcohol or getting high on drugs. You need to stay as far away from sinful habits as you can. Why? Because you want to stay saved.

Psalm 1:2 states, "But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night." You need to read and study the Word of God. First Peter 2:2 says, "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." You need to delight yourself in the Word. How can you do that? You must start reading the Bible. You may say, "Well, I don't understand it." You need to read it anyway. You could start with John or the Book of Proverbs. Also, you should

meditate on the Word of God and think about the goodness of God. When I got saved, I did not want to listen to the old worldly tunes anymore. I do not want to be on the Internet on my phone or a computer looking at stuff that I do not have any business looking at. I want to focus on the things of God.

Psalm 1:3-5 tells us: "And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, [Plants love water. When your roots are in that soil and you are connected to the water and the sun of the Gospel is shining down on you, you are going to grow. Then you will start helping others.] that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous." My prayer is that God will touch your heart.

### **God's Law of Sowing and Reaping**

Galatians 6:7-8 says: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." What are you sowing? Many people take the mercy of God for granted. They mock, ridicule, and play with God. You had better be careful. God is not to be mocked; He is to be feared.

The devil's job is to try to deceive you. He wants you to make a mockery of the things of God and cause you to think that the things that God has determined to be important are not important. The devil will trick you and deceive you so that you do not value spiritual things and

eternal things.

In Matthew 5:29-30 Jesus said: "And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee. . . . And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell." Now, this does not have a literal meaning, but you have to make the flesh come under subjection to the will of God. You cannot live just any way you want to live.

Under the Law dispensation, when someone sinned, he brought his best offering, but God has a better offering for us, because it is not possible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. Jesus Christ offered Himself as a sacrifice for our sins one time to purge our conscience from dead works to serve the true and living God.

What seeds are you sowing through your mind and your actions? How are you living? Again, Galatians 6:7 says, ". . . for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." You are going to reap what you plant. If the seed is sin, you will reap corruption. Galatians 6:8 reads, "For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption, but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

Romans 6:23 states, "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." If you have accepted Jesus Christ into your heart and life and you are living right in the sight of God according to His Word, you are sowing to the Spirit, and of the Spirit you will reap everlasting life.

### **Power to Overcome Sin**

I want you to understand that God is looking at what you sow, and He is keeping a record. He

knows all about your actions. He knows all about the decisions that you make in your heart. Under the Old Testament, if a person committed the act of adultery, it was sin. If one person killed another, it was sin, and he had to bring an offering to make an atonement for his sin. However, Jesus said that if you look upon a woman and lust after her in your heart, it is the same as if the deed is done. You sowed a seed and committed adultery. Under the New Testament dispensation, you do not have to actually kill someone to be guilty of sin, but if you hate an individual, you have committed sin already in your heart, and you are going to reap corruption.

In 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 Paul stated: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." Paul said, "And such were some of you." It is wonderful to be saved.

Some teach that you should just do the best you can do. They say: "God knows you are weak, so just bend your knees at night. If you sin again tomorrow, just repent again." Friend, that is not how it works. John wrote in John 1:12, "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."

God will give you power once you give your heart to Him, but first you must repent of your sins, turn away from the life of sin, and accept Jesus Christ into your heart. He can give you

power to say no to the devil. He can give you the power to act right. He can give you power to bring your mind in line with the Word of God and give you the mind of Christ.

The nominal religious world does not have the power of God. They are yet bound in sin. If you belong to an organization like that, you need to come out of her, because Jesus Christ taught a Gospel of freedom and deliverance from sin. Do not be deceived. The devil wants to deceive you. He wants to make a mockery of the things of God. I repeat, you cannot live any way you want to live and serve God.

You cannot commit fornication and be a part of God's church. What does the word fornication mean? It is having premarital sex. Sex is for married people. We pay much in taxes to take care of people's premarital pleasure. I do not have anything against the babies born out of wedlock, and I do not mean them any harm. Nevertheless, many are living in sinful pleasure, doing whatever they want to do, but not dealing with the consequences of their actions. The rest of us have to carry their load and feed their sinful ways because they want to have fun and keep moving like a bee from one flower to another. They are making a mockery of God.

### **Living Holy**

We were made in God's image, and we were made to live for Him. We were made to be holy and to live without blame before God in love. That is how He wants us to live. You cannot be an idolater and serve God. You may say, "I do not worship any idols." Are you sure? What about that car of yours? You know, the one you cannot stop shining. Maybe it is someone that you love so much. God is a jealous God.

Exodus 20:3 says, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." God will not be second to anyone or anything. Do not be deceived. You need to get rid of whatever is getting your attention and requires more of your time than you give God. What are you listening to? Is that your God? What are you into? What requires your attention, your time, and your devotion more than serving God?

The devil has deceived many people by convincing them that they can live any way they want to live and yet make it to Heaven. False preachers are eulogizing unrighteous people at their funerals. For example, they may say: "Jerry was a good person. He gave his heart to God ninety years ago. We know he made it to Heaven. He is with his mother now." The truth of the matter is, Jerry has not been in church for years, and the people know the preacher is not being truthful.

You cannot live in sin and serve God. You cannot commit sin and say you are a Christian. Have you ever heard of a truthful liar or an honest thief? You need to either serve God the right way or take down your sign, so to speak. You are not in the Kingdom of God, and you are keeping others from entering because they are stumbling over your life.

At work a man carried his Bible, but when ladies walked by, he would say all kinds of vulgar things with the Bible laying open in front of him. He did that day in and day out, and then he wanted to talk about the Bible. One person told me: "I would get saved, but So-and-So curses worse than I do, and he says he is saved. I don't want anything to do with that." Jesus called the scribes and the Pharisees hypocrites and whited sepulchres. He let them know they looked good on the outside,

but inside they were full of dead men's bones. How are you doing spiritually?

No adulterers can be in the Kingdom of God. You cannot commit adultery and be saved. When you are married, God is holding you to your vow of holy matrimony. If you have broken those vows, you need to repent to God and confess to your companion. When you get married, you must forsake all others. Your body does not belong to you anymore; it belongs to your spouse. I am married, so I have to watch how I conduct myself with the opposite sex.

When you truly get saved, God will give you the power to live right. He will give you the power to have a good home and a lasting marriage. I got married at twenty-one years of age, and I do not regret it. Has it been easy? No, but I have Jesus. When you have Jesus in your marriage, you should not want your own way, and your spouse should not want his or her way. You both want Jesus' way, and you will submit.

### **Doing the Will of God**

Jesus makes living for Him easy because you should not want to do anything that displeases God. You should love your spouse and treat him or her right. If your spouse hurts your feelings, you should be forgiving and go on and love him or her. You should not pout. If you are hurt or do not like something, you need to just go right on and keep talking to each other. You should not go to another bedroom. You ought to respect God's Word, respect God, and respect each other. You should not want to commit adultery. Jesus will keep you. You should want to please God.

When God made Adam, how many helpmeets did He make for him? He made only one—Eve. It is a deception of the devil if you

think that you need more than one wife. You may say, "Some men had more than one wife in the Bible." God permitted some things because of the people's ignorance or the condition they got themselves into, but Jesus said from the beginning it was not so. Jesus said in Matthew 19:5, "For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh." Husband, all you need is one wife. The devil is deceiving you if you think it is all right to cheat on your wife. No, it is not all right. You are out of the will of God. You are not a part of the family of God if you commit adultery.

The effeminate are not a part of the Kingdom of God. A man ought to be a man and a woman ought to be a woman. Next, Paul mentioned abusers of themselves with mankind. Today men are abusing themselves with all kinds of things. Substance abuse is at an all-time high, starting with pain pills. Something good can be perverted and misapplied. The Bible teaches temperance—not too much and not too little. You need to be temperate, even in helping yourself. So many young people are addicted to drugs. Drugs are a major epidemic in our country.

You cannot be a thief, covetous, a drunkard, a reveler, or an extortioner and still be saved. You should not be argumentative. Everyone is not always going to agree. The Bible says in Proverbs 21:19, "It is better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and an angry woman." God can give you power. You must be quiet about some things. James 1:19 says to "be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath." If you do not understand something, you need to pray about it. Do not make an issue of it.

Also, Paul said no extortioner shall inherit the Kingdom of

God. When I was a newly saved young person, someone asked me, "Could you loan me some money?"

I asked, "How much do you need?"

He replied, "How much do you have?"

I said, "You are out of order." A child of God does not extort or run cons. He is honest, and he provides all things honest in the sight of God. I inquired: "What do you need? Do you need something?"

"No, I'm okay."

He was not expecting that reaction from me. He thought I was going to tell him how much money I had. Do not tell people what you have. If they need something, they can tell you what they need, and then you can determine whether or not you can help.

Paul stated in Colossians 4:6, "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man." What you say should be to the glory of God. Your mouth belongs to God once you are saved.

God delivered my mouth. My brother told me when I gave my heart to God, "I will give you two weeks to be saved, but I surely am glad that you don't cuss like you used to." That was in 1975. I thank God that I am still wearing the belt of victory. God will take those bad words out of your mouth, because you cannot say just anything and call yourself a Christian. Also, your actions have to conform to the Word of God.

### **"Break Up Your Fallow Ground"**

Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:34, "Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame." When you give your heart to God, you have to stop the sin business. God can

help you if you have the right attitude. He can give you power so that you do not have to slip anymore. All you have to do is want to stay saved, and He will give you power. You need to wake up. Someone has put you to sleep. Someone has deceived you. You cannot act any way and be a part of God's church.

In Hosea 10:12-13 the Prophet Hosea wrote: "Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you. Ye have plowed wickedness, ye have reaped iniquity; ye have eaten the fruit of lies: because thou didst trust in thy way, in the multitude of thy mighty men."

You need to sow righteous seeds for the reaping if you want to reap in mercy. You need to break up your fallow ground, because it is time to seek the Lord. The Prophet Hosea used an analogy of the earth. Fallow ground is a hardened, uncultivated surface. You cannot plant seed on that, because the birds are going to eat it. It is not going to germinate. You have to break up that ground. You have to get a hoe or a plow to break up that ground so the soil is soft.

What is the ground Prophet Hosea was talking about? He was speaking of the heart. Has the Spirit of God been talking to you? Has He been telling you that God is not pleased with the way you are living? Has He been reproving you and telling you that you need to change? What are you doing about it? Friend, it is time to break up the fallow ground of your heart. It is time to turn your heart toward the Lord. It is time to seek the Lord so that He might rain righteousness upon your soul.

Do you want a better life? Do you want a life that is pleasing to God? Do you want God to get rid of sin in your life so that you can

be with Him? You do not know when death is coming. You do not know when God is going to call you from time to eternity. Do you want to be ready? Years ago a lady attended a morning church service. She listened to the message and purposed in her heart that she was going to get saved after the evening service. However, she went home and went to sleep, and she never woke up. She went into eternity unprepared to meet God.

### **It Is Time to Seek the Lord**

How long are you going to keep putting off salvation? Are you going to keep plowing wickedness? If you keep plowing wickedness, you will reap corruption. The devil is going to keep binding you. He is going to try to tie you up so tightly in sin that you cannot get free. It is time to seek the Lord.

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." Some people wish they had gotten saved earlier because of the things they did that they have to deal with and because they are reaping. Some have lost their physical health because of sin. They are reaping the consequences of their actions. Why not remember your Creator and let Him save you? Let Him turn your life around and make you a new creature. You do not want to continue to plow wickedness and reap corruption.

You will eat the fruit of corruption if you trust in your own way. The Proverb writer stated in Proverbs 14:12, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." You do not have the answer to your needs. Your life is a mess. It is full of confusion and chaos. You

need God to straighten you out. You cannot straighten out your life on your own. You cannot fix it. If you will humble yourself at an altar of prayer and come with a broken and contrite heart, God will deliver you.

When you turn away from the life of sin and forsake it, repent and confess it to Jesus Christ, He will come in and straighten out your life. You cannot do it, but God can. I was a mess without God. I was doing what I wanted to do and making bad choices. I did not want to listen to anyone. That is a trick of the devil. Do not let the devil deceive you. You need to change, and only you can make that choice.

God loves you, and He sent this message because He loves you. Job 4:8 reads, "Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same." Your life is going to get worse and worse without God. It is not going to get better. There is a song entitled "Wasted Years." Do not go on in a life of wasted years.

What is it going to take for God to get your attention? Does someone close to you have to die? Do you have to be on a hospital bed, almost at the point of death? Do you have to be in a near fatal accident where you just barely make it out alive? What is it going to take for God to get hold of you? Is He going to have to take one of your children? What is going to have to happen for God to get your attention, to help you see that you are heading headlong into hell?

### **This Life Is Not the End**

We read in Luke 16:19-22: "There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: [He dressed well. Purple was a color for the

wealthy and for kings. This rich man fared sumptuously, and he ate well every day.] And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried."

The only comfort Lazarus received was from the dogs, but what happened? He stayed saved through it all, even though life was difficult. I do not believe he had bad feelings in his heart against the rich man because he would not feed him. He was contented to have Jesus. He was contented with the comfort that he got.

Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 6:6, "But godliness with contentment is great gain." The saints of God are content. We may not have a big house on the hillside or drive a Cadillac, but we are content and happy because we have Jesus. We have joy down in our souls. We are happy, and we love God. We have peace that passes all understanding.

Lazarus desired just a little food, but the rich man was too selfish to help him. He was caught up in his own world and his own life. It was all about him. No doubt, he probably looked with disdain upon Lazarus. Luke 16:23-24 continues: "And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me. . . ." They both died. You have a soul that will have to stand before God one day. Your body will go back to the earth, but your soul is going to meet God at the Judgment.

Hebrews 9:27 tells us, "And as it is appointed unto men once

to die, but after this the judgment." This life is not the end. Both the rich man and Lazarus died, but Lazarus was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. The rich man woke up in hell, and he remembered everything. He remembered the missed opportunities, the bad choices that he made, and the selfish life that he lived. He remembered it all in hell. Verse 23 says that "in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments."

When Jesus started this story, He did not say it was a parable. He said, "There was a certain rich man." Hell is real. You may play around and mock God, but there are consequences to life and the seeds that you sow. You might be getting along really well in life, and you might have a lot of friends. Everything might seem good to you, but if you die in your sins, Jesus said where He is you cannot come. You are going to be lost forever without Him.

### **What Choice Will You Make?**

The rich man wanted to do some praying after he died and went to hell. While he was living here on earth, he did not have time to go to church. He did not want to hear the Gospel preached. Many people are like that today. Have you rejected the Gospel message? Are you ashamed of the faith and ashamed of your saintly mother and father?

Luke 16:24 reads, "And he [the rich man] cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame." He did not ask for a cup of water. He wanted just a drop of water to cool his tongue. When someone is longing for only a drop of water, he is in a really bad condition. The rich man is in a bad way. He is being tormented in

those flames. He requested just a drop of water, but his request was denied. Do you get the picture?

Is that the way you want to spend eternity, thinking about a drop of water to cool your tongue because you are being tormented in the flames of hell? Is that the way you want to be throughout eternity, thinking about the missed opportunities, those times when you could have gotten saved? You are going to remember every opportunity and every message. The rich man is still facing the consequences of the life he chose to live. He is reaping the seeds he chose to sow.

Luke 16:25 tells us, "But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented." The rich man fared sumptuously in this life. That was more important to him than eternal things.

Friend, the things you see in this life are going to pass away. You can get caught up with things in this life and be lost forever. When you die, you cannot take any of this stuff with you. Somebody else is going to spend your money. Somebody else is going to wear your nice clothes. Those things that you value will be left behind when you leave this life. Those cigarettes, those drugs, or that alcohol will not mean anything to you in hell. You had better think about your eternity bound soul. The rich man made a bad choice, and he faced the awful eternal consequences.

Verse 26 states, "And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence." Lazarus received good things in eternity. Saints, be en-

couraged. Yes, we are going to have trials in this life. Yes, you might have a hard life, but if you have Jesus, it will be worth it. Heaven will be worth it.

There is nothing too hard that I have to go through, and no storm is too great to weather. All I need is Jesus. He will make it better because Heaven will be worth it all. Do not think about what you have lost; think about what you are going to gain.

Lazarus made the best choice. The rich man had a good life and fared sumptuously here on earth, but he did not have Christ. It is sort of like having a lot of money and being sick and in intensive care. What good is the money if you are too sick to enjoy it? What good is living a life without Christ? It is no good.

### **Seek the Lord While You Can**

Luke 16:27-29 tells us: "Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: [Romans 14:11 says, 'For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.' That day is coming. You may be proud and haughty now, but one day you are going to be asking for mercy, just as this rich man was doing.] For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them."

Abraham was telling the rich man that his brethren had men of God preaching the Gospel. He wanted Abraham to send Lazarus to his five brothers to deliver a message: "I am in hell! Don't come here!"

Friend, there is no partying or joy in hell. There is only misery, torments, and gnashing of teeth. It is darkness and a separation from all that is good and all that

is of God forever. In hell you will retain your memory and your intellect. The greatest torment will be that you had an opportunity to get saved, but you did not take advantage of it. Once you are in eternity, a gulf will be fixed, and nothing can be changed. There is no mercy in eternity.

Revelation 22:11 states, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still." The way you die is how you are going to be throughout eternity.

There is no purgatory. Do not be deceived by those who say there is. That is just a money-making scheme taught by Roman Catholicism, telling people that they can pray their loved ones out of purgatory. You had better make the right decision now. Mercy is available now. Now is the accepted time. Today is the day to get saved. Now is the time to change your course and sow righteous seeds.

Luke 16:30 states, "And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent." If God were to send somebody from the dead, you would laugh at them and say, "That man is crazy." Some people would not believe it even if they smelled like fire and brimstone. They would probably think it was staged. Why? Because they have lost the fear of God. Their conscience is hardened, and their ears are stopped up. Friend, it is time to break up your fallow ground. It is time to seek the Lord so that He might rain righteousness upon you. It is time to make a change.

### **Why Not Give Your Heart to God?**

In Luke, Chapter 12, you can read a parable that Jesus told

about another rich man who was doing really well. He examined his barns and his bountiful harvest, and he had much goods laid up. After he finished examining his inventory, he thought he would tear down his barns and build greater barns. Since he had much goods laid up for himself, he decided that he was going to eat, drink, and be merry, because he had prospered well. However, that night God called him into eternity.

In verse 20 you can read that God said to him, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?" That is what you are if you make the wrong choice. If you are sowing seeds to the flesh, you are going to reap corruption, just as the rich man did. You are going to find yourself in hell if you turn away from the mercy that God is offering you. The Lord said in Genesis 6:3, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man." Maybe you were raised in the Church of God, but you have allowed your heart to become hardened. How can you become aware of the Gospel and continue to harden your heart? I hope to God that He does not sacrifice you to get hold of others. You had better humble yourself

before it is too late.

If you do not have a desire to get saved, you need to ask someone to pray for you so that you have a desire to be saved. James 4:17 states, "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." When you turn away from the Gospel, you are searing your conscience. You do not want your heart to get hardened so that your conscience becomes seared. Then God cannot reach you. There is going to come a time when you are going to want to change, but you are not going to be able to change.

A lot of young people do not want to obey the Bible standard. They want the easy way. In reality, there is no easy way. Jesus said in Matthew 7:14, "Because strait is the gate and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." He said in verse 13, "Enter 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."

Salvation is a strait way. It is difficult because you have to give up everything to be saved. Jesus said in Luke 9:23, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." What you give up does not compare to

what you will receive. I gladly gave up the life of sin, that life of pretense, trying to be cool and trying to impress others. I thank God for being delivered from that mess.

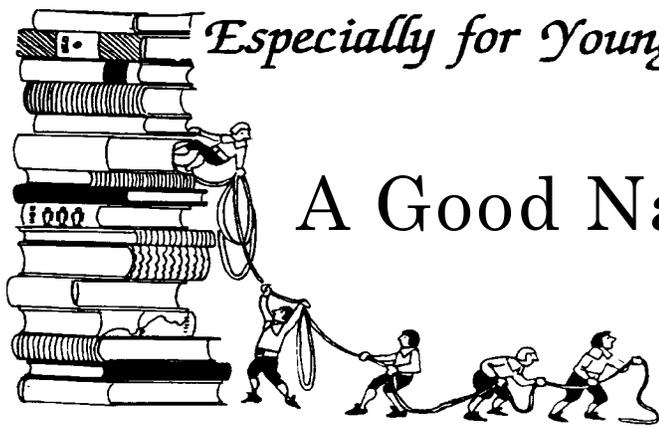
God can deliver you and change you. You need to break up your fallow ground. It is time to seek the Lord. He wants to rain righteousness upon your soul. Jesus said in Revelation 3:20, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." All you have to do is let Him in. Won't you open your heart and let Jesus come in? Romans 10:10 states, "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

John wrote in 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." All you have to do is humble yourself before God, repent and forsake all sin, and Jesus Christ will come into your heart.

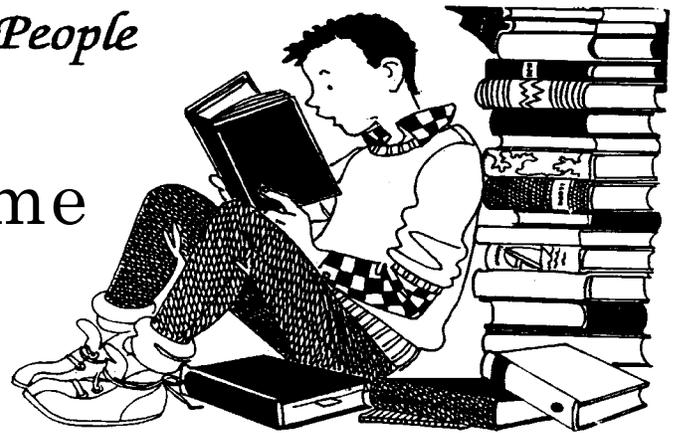
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Once when I was in Switzerland, I saw an eagle, a splendid bird, but it was chained to a rock. It had some twenty or thirty feet of chain attached to its legs and to an iron bolt in the rock. There was the king of birds, meant to soar into heaven, chained to earth. That is an example of the lives of multitudes of believers. Are you allowing business, the cares of the world, or the flesh to chain you down so that you cannot rise?

*Especially for Young People*



## A Good Name



I gave my heart and life to God as a young man. When I was twelve years of age, my father felt that God called him to pastor in Sylacauga, Alabama, so we left Ohio and all our family and friends. At that time, I wondered why God would do that. Why would He take us so far away to a little church that had only ten people who were all related and older. What was He doing? I battled that as a young man, along with some resentment regarding that.

Looking back, I can tell you that God was looking out for me. I believe that one reason He moved us was to protect me. I had a lot of confusion as a young man. There were things that I did not understand, but God helped me and protected me. When I gave my heart to God, I told Him, "God, I will do anything You want me to do, but I don't want to get up in front of people." That did not work out, but He has always been faithful.

As a teenager, there were a couple of things that were at the top of my priority list: the first was finding the right companion, and the second was choosing the right career. Jesus said in Matthew 6:33, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

I remember that I did not think I was ever going to find the right companion and get mar-

ried. The only girls in our congregation were related to me. Then, out of the blue, one day in February 2000, Brother Larry Dishman came and held a revival for us. About a month later, he returned with part of his family.

The first or second night that they were there, I knew that I had found the right one for me. Now, it took me about three months to convince her to let me take her out to dinner, but I knew she was the one for me. Once she consented to let me come to see her, I went every weekend after that. It did not matter to me how many miles I had to travel to see her. God has truly been good to me. He has kept me employed. We have never been in want. He has watched over our family, and I have done my best to serve Him faithfully.

Proverbs 22:1 reads, "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold." Young person, one of the most valuable things you own is your name, or your reputation. You may ask, "What is in a name?" A name is what you are known by in this life. For example, if I were to mention the name Job, what comes to your mind? No doubt, you would think of his faithfulness and dedication to God through the trials and tests that he went through. If I were to mention Samson, you might think of a servant of God who

went out and did things his own way. He was a man who stumbled and fell.

Many things come to your mind by mentioning a name. It is the same way with you. When your name is mentioned, what is the next thought someone is going to think? The Proverb writer was letting you know that in the decisions that you make in life, it is important to make sure that you keep a good name.

I work in a financial institution. As I was studying, my mind went to a banker that I knew of several years ago before the economy went down. We had a promotion in our financial institution. Whoever made the most loans in the highest dollar amount each month would receive a large bonus check for that month. One man in a very small town was the top loan person every single month.

Later we learned that he made loans to people who really could not afford them. He was making poor business decisions. Therefore, he turned around and made loans so that people could make payments on the loans he had already made. Eventually all these loans came crashing down on him, and he is forever marked in the financial institution because of those poor decisions that he made. In the short term, it looked good for him and he received many bonus checks. However, in the long term, those

actions caught up with him, and he is paying for those poor choices that he made.

I can recall the reputations that certain young people had when I was still in school. When some names were mentioned, we thought of those who partied a lot. We called them "party animals." Another name caused us to think of the class clown. A person is known by his or her reputation. Have you ever heard the saying, "He is going to make a name for himself"? This is often said about a young athlete who excels in what he does or about a young musician who has fine tuned his talent well or about a student who excels academically.

Then there are those young people who are always in trouble, or always up to no good. If something is wrong, often they are involved in it. They are making a name for themselves too. At some places of business, they post flyers with the mug shots of people who have gotten in trouble for criminal acts, and some of them are repeat offenders. They have developed a bad name for themselves.

I have seen young people who were in the high school yearbook that graduated from high school, but they allowed sin to rule their lives and guide them in the wrong direction. They made the wrong choices. Some once sat on a church pew and heard the Gospel preached, yet they chose to make poor decisions.

Young person, just because you sit on a church pew does not exempt you from having a bad name. Who you will become and who you will be known as will

directly reflect upon who you allow to help you as you are making your choices throughout life. As a young person, you are going to be making several life-altering choices that you are going to have to live with for the rest of your life. You need to always keep that in mind when you are making those choices.

In Mark 8:36 Jesus said, "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Essentially, the Proverb writer was saying the same thing in the Scripture that I mentioned earlier. What would it profit you if you acquire great riches and lose your soul in the process?

As you make choices and make a name for yourself, the questions I have for you are these: What do you want your name to be? Do you want a good name? When people mention your name, what do you want them to think of?

My desire in life is, if someone mentions my name, I want my name to remind them of Jesus. The next thing that I want is for them to think of me as one who is a good person who loves the Lord and serves Him with all he has and who treats people with the love that Jesus did. That is what I strive for.

What do you want your name to be? Young person, you have a choice. You have the opportunity now to make a good name for yourself for the rest of your life. You have the opportunity to be saved from sin. Let God help you to make good choices. My father has a plaque entitled "Your Family Name." It reads:

*You got it from your father  
It was all he had to give,  
So it's yours to use and cherish  
For as long as you may live.*

*If you lost the watch he gave you,  
It can always be replaced;  
But a black mark on your name  
Can never be erased.*

*It was clean the day you took it,  
And a worthy name to bear;  
When he got it from his father,  
There was no dishonor there.*

*So make sure you guard it wisely,  
After all is said and done,  
You'll be glad the name is spotless  
When you give it to your son.*

Young person, what kind of name do you want to make for yourself? Do you want to be remembered as the fastest racer? Do you want to be remembered as the greatest athlete of all time? Do you want to be remembered as the best lawyer there has ever been, the greatest politician on earth, or the best doctor? Do you want to have a name that is remembered for doing good things and treating people the right way? Do you want to have a name that is remembered for the life you lived serving Jesus, the One whom you loved? You need to ask God to help you to seriously consider this thought: What kind of name am I making for myself? "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold" (Proverbs 22:1).

Brother Tim Wilson, Jr.

**Do you spend more time reading the newspaper  
than you do reading and studying the Bible?**

*Psalm 139:1 O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me.*

*2 Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off.*

*3 Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways.*

*4 For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether.*

*5 Thou has beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me.*

*6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.*

*7 Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?*

*8 If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.*

*9 If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;*

*10 Even there shall thy hand*

*lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.*

*11 If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me.*

*12 Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.*

*Proverbs 15:3 The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.*

# The Eyes of the Lord



*Brother Garrett Haylock*

## **God's Eyes Are in Every Place**

As a Christian, if you stop and think of God in His full capacity, I believe it will constrain you to draw closer to Him and to be more careful with your life, with the way you live, because God sees everything you do. Today with all the technology and all the means of monitoring things, crime and wickedness are still on the increase, and yet there are so many unsolved mysteries

in existence. Although they are unsolved in this life and unknown to man, God has a full record of everything, for the eyes of the Lord are in every place. If you are a sinner today, you need to realize that God is aware of everything you are doing. If you would think of that, I believe it would deter you sometimes.

Before I became a Christian, I did not really think too much about what role or place God played in my life or in the world.

I thought this was my life, so I could do what I wanted with it, and I was not accountable to anyone except myself. I was so wrong in thinking that. If you are thinking that way, you are just as wrong as I was. God is keeping a record of everything. His eyes are in every place. If you were to see God in His full capacity, I believe it would definitely constrain you to be a more careful person.

I thought about the use of

surveillance cameras. Surveillance cameras have solved many crimes and have deterred others. Many people would have committed a crime, but they looked up and noticed a camera, so they aborted that wrongdoing. With all the technology, while you may be careful of what man sees you doing, are you as careful of what God sees you doing? If only you were as concerned about being on God's camera as you are about being on literal surveillance cameras installed at strategic points to cover certain important areas.

Even with the cameras and all the technology, there are blind spots where things can go unnoticed, but when it comes to the eyes of the Lord, there are no blind spots. There are no areas where you can just do what you want and get away with it. That is the reason the Psalmist David said in verses 11-12 of our Scripture lesson: "If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee."

Jesus said in His earthly ministry in John 3:19, "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." Anytime people want to do bad deeds, they strive to look for dark places, such as shady alleys and other areas where the deeds are less easily detected by man and his devices. On the other hand, the eyes of the Lord have those alleys lit up just as if someone had turned on a spotlight. God sees as well in the dark as He does in the light.

Near the end of World War II, man came up with night-vision devices. God has always had that functionality. Man is just starting to catch up in some little ways. From everlasting to ever-

lasting, the Scriptures let us know that God has had that ability, and He will always have that. If you could only grasp that, it would have a greater impact on the way you live.

### **"By Him Actions Are Weighed"**

God cares about every one of us. The Psalmist David asked in verse 7 of our Scripture text, "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?" Did you know there are times when you can get out of the presence of security? You can get out of the presence of your parents or your spouse, but in essence, God is saying, "Where can you go that I am not there?" Have you ever figured out how to go somewhere that God cannot see you? There is no way. Even if you run, you surely cannot hide.

Verse 8 of our Scripture text says, "If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there." A great fish took Jonah way down to the bottom of the sea, and then he cried out to God, and God was there. God heard his prayer and commanded that fish to spit him out upon the shore. Jonah had learned his lesson. He was prompt in going to where he was running from. According to Scriptures, Jonah cut that three-day journey down to one day. He was not fooling around. He wanted to get to Nineveh and accomplish the task that God had called him to do.

The eyes of the Lord are in every place. Jesus said in Matthew 5:16, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Man looks at the outward appearance. Someone may say: "Well, I don't worry about what people think. All they can do is judge." No, dear one. I like what another brother said: "When I tell

you what the Word says, I am reporting; I am not judging." That is true. When we use the Word of God right, that is a powerful source.

Today you need to realize that God is omnipresent, and He can see everything. We have satellites up in space, and some of those have recorded planes that can go as high as about ninety thousand feet. You cannot hear the satellites, but they can identify which president's face is on a coin on the ground. If man can come up with that kind of technology, it should not be hard for you to believe this.

Many are very concerned about what man sees them do, especially if they are professing to be Christians. Whether some people claim to be Christians or not, they do not want certain people to see what they are doing, but God sees everything. Today you may abort a mission because you see someone, but even though you abort that mission, God knows your intentions, and by Him actions are weighed.

First Samuel 2:3 tells us, "Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let not arrogancy come out of your mouth: for the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed." God weighs your actions. Actions can speak as loud as words, or sometimes louder. Maybe you never said a certain thing, but you thought it, and you acted it out. There are so many things that you need to be careful of, especially when you say you are a Christian.

### **Man Cannot Hide From God**

Are you too friendly with the opposite sex when your spouse is not with you? You may say, "He does not know what I am doing" or "She does not know where I am." Again, Proverbs 15:3 reads, "The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil

and the good." You need to be consciously aware of those things. God is a great God.

Job 34:21-22 reads: "For his eyes are upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings. There is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves." There is no place where man can hide from God. There is no place where the workers of iniquity can hide themselves.

Are you as careful of what God sees as you are about what others think or see? You need to realize that God's eyes are in every place, and you need to be careful of the way you live. Do you fear what your spouse may see if he or she were to get hold of your cell phone? That can be a big issue. Do you have things on your cell phone that you do not want your spouse to know about? Are you hiding things from your spouse? The eyes of the Lord are in every place, seeing the evil and the good.

Romans 15:4 says, "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." These things were written for our learning. God cares about us. God knows what we need, and He has it right in the Bible. It is all within the pages of God's Word. All of this was written for our learning. We are not going to get away with what others in the past did not get away with. God has the same eyes on us that He had on Cain way back when he killed his brother Abel. Cain tried to talk his way out of it. Cain said in Genesis 4:9-10: "Am I my brother's keeper? And he [God] said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground." It was only the two of them there, but God saw Cain kill Abel. It was written for our learning. If Cain could not get away with it,

what makes you think you are going to get away with it?

Daniel 2:22 reads, "He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him." God sees everything. Darkness does not make any difference with God, my friend. The things you are so worried and concerned about being discovered should be of lesser concern. You should be less concerned about what people may find out about you than what God already knows. Young person, do you switch channels once your mom and dad leave and switch it back when you hear them arrive back home? I wonder if you could unplug your earphones and share your choice of music? Remember, the eyes of the Lord are in every place, and where His eyes are, His ears are nearby. While others may not hear, God does. He knows exactly what you are listening to.

### **God Is All-Seeing and All-Knowing**

Jeremiah 32:17-19 tells us: "Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee: Thou shewest lovingkindness unto thousands, and recompensest the iniquity of the fathers into the bosom of their children after them: the Great, the Mighty God, the LORD of hosts, is his name. Great in counsel, and mighty in work: for thine eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons of men: to give every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings."

There is going to be a Judgment one day, and for God to judge justly, He has to know everything that has happened. If a lawyer is going to help a client in a difficult position, one thing he requires is, that person must tell

the truth. A lawyer needs to know the facts so he will know how to help his client to get out of his legal dilemma. God is so awesome, and He will reward everyone "according to the fruit of his doings."

A familiar New Testament Scripture in Hebrews 4:12-13 reads: "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."

It is not avoidable, and it is not optional concerning whether you go that route or not. There is no bypass. There is just one way, and we all are heading there. All our actions, from birth through death, are open and manifest before God's eyes with whom we have to do. God has been great throughout time.

I thought about the computers and the smartphones we have today. Could you share your browsing history with your mom or dad from your laptop or smartphone? What about your spouse? Could you let him or her go through it? God is an all-seeing and an all-knowing God.

You need to be careful of where you go. There are some places that Christians should not go. First Timothy 6:17 states, "... in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy." This is not talking about every invention of man. God has given us richly all things to enjoy. It is man who has messed up and fooled around and brought about some diseases and the things that are harmful and hurtful to us. They are bringing about some terrible things that are harmful to man.

We have to be careful of what we do and where we go. Many people are going places where they know Christians should not go, and they hope no one sees them. Solomon wrote in Ecclesiastes 12:14, "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." I repeat, you have to be careful of what you do and where you go. The Bible talks about the whorish woman and says you are not to enter her gates.

### **Seek His Face While There Is Yet Time**

Colossians 3:25 tells us, "But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons." God does not care who you are or what your financial status is. God is not a respecter of persons. He sees right and wrong, and you are either right

or wrong in His sight.

The Bible tells us in 2 Chronicles 7:14, "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." Our land needs healing. If God can get full cooperation from people, He will bring about a healing, and more souls will be saved, blessed, and built up.

We read in Revelation 22:11-12: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be."

When the trumpet sounds, it is going to sound so loudly that it will awaken the dead, and they

will come forth from the graves, some to the resurrection of the just and some to the resurrection of damnation.

I want you to think just for a moment. Jesus is coming, and His reward is with Him. What that tells me is, there is not going to be any fix up time. When Jesus leaves Heaven, He will already know whether you are just or unjust. He said the unjust are going to be unjust still. There is not going to be any time to straighten up, and we do not know what time He is going to come. So while you have a chance to make amends for your wrongs and for the things that do not please God, I would advise you to "give diligence to make your calling and election sure" (2 Peter 1:10). "The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good" (Proverbs 15:3).

(Compact Disc TR-2128)

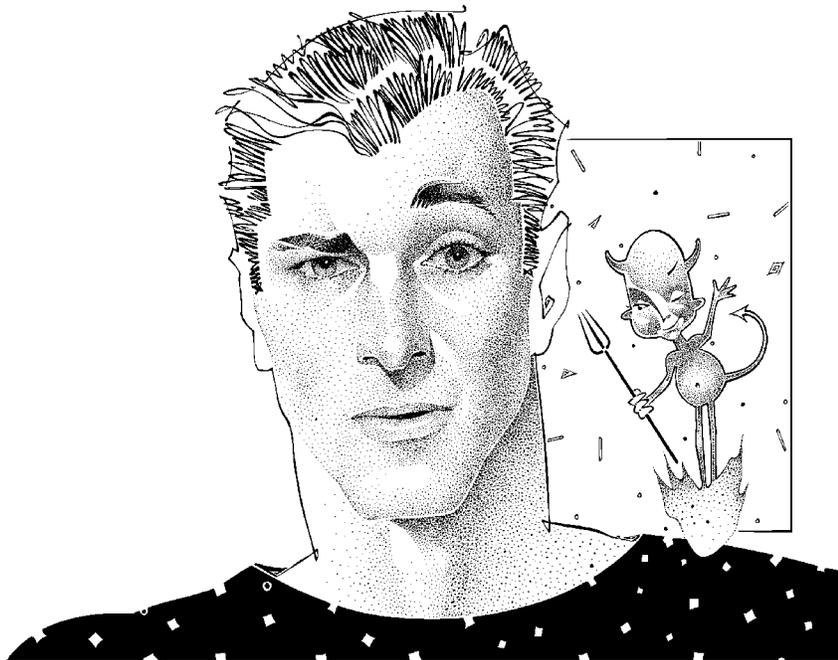
## ***So Far!***

***A humorous story is told of a man who fell out of a window on the fortieth floor of a skyscraper, who, as he fell past the tenth floor, waved at a friend and said, "Everything is fine so far!" The same answer could have been given at any floor except the ground floor.***

***Many people think that because their present moment of life contains no tragedy that everything will continue in that same happy state. Those scoffers say: "Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" (2 Peter 3:4). They are utterly oblivious to the crash that is coming. God has spoken, and nothing can stay the day of wrath.***

1 Samuel 4:3 And when the people were come into the camp, the elders of Israel said, Wherefore hath the LORD smitten us to day before the Philistines? Let us fetch the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of Shiloh unto us, that, when it cometh among us, it may save us out of the hand of our enemies.

# Don't Take God for Granted



*Brother Mike Miller*

## **Failing to Heed God's Warnings**

God often sends forth warnings that we need to heed. We need to be constantly reminded of some things. First Samuel, Chapter 4, talks about Eli. He was a priest that was serving the people, and Israel went out to battle against the Philistines. In the Old Testament, the ark of the covenant represented God and the power of

God. When Israel brought out the ark of the covenant, the people would praise God.

First Samuel 4:4 tells us, "So the people sent to Shiloh, that they might bring from thence the ark of the covenant of the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth between the cherubims: and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God." At this time, Israel was not doing well with God. Eli's sons were doing

wicked things in the temple. They were taking of the best meat and doing ungodly things with the people outside the temple. God let Eli know that he needed to restrain his sons and get his house in order, but Eli did not listen. When the armies rose up against them, the people decided that they needed to get God involved.

This account is a warning. Eli was mentioned in the Bible as an example. However, not everyone

is in the Bible as a good example. Eli was an example of what one should not do. Israel brought out the ark of the covenant, and 1 Samuel 4:5 tells us, "And when the ark of the covenant of the LORD came into the camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again." Although many were shouting and praising God, He was not happy with them.

The Philistines came in and took over and killed Eli's sons. When Eli heard about it, he fell over backward and broke his neck and died. What is the message for us today? We cannot take God for granted. We must live pure, holy lives before Him. Eli was given opportunity after opportunity to do what was right, but he failed to do so.

Backing up in 1 Samuel, Chapter 3, we find that God was calling young Samuel, and Samuel kept running to Eli and saying, "Here am I." Each time Eli said he did not call him. The third time Eli realized that the Lord was calling Samuel, so Eli told him the next time he was called to say, "Speak, LORD; for thy servant heareth" (verse 9). You would think that at this point, Eli would have wondered: "Why isn't God talking to me? Why isn't God having sweet communion with me as He used to have?" That should have been a wake-up call to Eli.

Too many people take God for granted. They expect Him to be there to take care of them and do whatever they want Him to do, yet they treat Him any way they want to. God is very powerful. He does not need us, but He loves us. A lot of times God speaks and gives warnings so people do not have to get caught in the midst of certain things. Sometimes they do not listen to God.

As God deals with you, He may say, "I need you to work on this." Are you really working on

it? God tells you that because He cares about you. He knows what is best for you. He cares more about you than you care about Him. You need to realize that His long-suffering has an end. Therefore, when God deals with you, you need to hasten to do what He tells you. Why do you linger?

### **Fleeing From Destruction**

In Genesis, Chapter 19, you can read about Lot. God sent a warning to Lot. He told Lot that He was going to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah and he needed to go. He loved Lot so much that He sent two angels to help him get out of Sodom. Verses 1-2 state: "And there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot seeing them rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground; And he said, Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways. And they said, Nay; but we will abide in the street all night." They had a message for Lot, and that message was for Lot to get his house in order and get ready to leave.

Now, I am confident that if a couple of angels were to come to me and say: "You need to get your house in order. We are going to destroy this area, and you need to leave," I would be heading out the door quickly. They would not have to tell me twice. Friend, do not get so caught up in the things of the earth and the things around you. That is what Lot did.

Verses 12-15 read: "And the men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? son in law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place: For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen

great before the face of the LORD; and the LORD hath sent us to destroy it. And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law. And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city."

The angels let Lot know that this was serious and he needed to get ready to go. Sometimes when God speaks in your life, He is saying: "This is serious, and it needs to go. I have something better for you, but this thing you are holding on to is a hindrance to you." Are you like Lot? The angels told him to make haste in the morning and take his wife and two daughters out of there lest they be consumed in the iniquity of the city. God knew what was coming.

Verses 16-19 read: "And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the LORD being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city. [The angels had to practically drag them out. It would be easy to speak against Lot, but how many times has God had to drag you because you took Him for granted?] And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed. And Lot said unto them, Oh, not so, my Lord: Behold now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, [Lot took God's grace for granted. Do you compromise and try to reason with God about things that He is trying to tell you?] and thou hast

magnified thy mercy, which thou hast shewed unto me in saving my life; and I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me, and I die."

How much confidence did Lot have in God? God sent two angels to tell Lot that complete destruction was coming to the place where he was living, and he needed to go up into the mountain. Friend, God wants you to go up into the mountain because He is trying to save your life. Are you going to tell God, "I can't go up there." If God wanted Lot dead, He would have left him in Sodom. Lot wanted to go an easier route, and God allowed it.

Verses 20-26 go on to say: "Behold now, this city is near to flee unto, and it is a little one: Oh, let me escape thither, (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live. And he said unto him, See, I have accepted thee concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow this city, for the which thou hast spoken. Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither. Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar. The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar. Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven; And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground. But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt." Verse 30 states, "And Lot went up out of Zoar, and dwelt in the mountain."

### **Failing to Obey God Brings Consequences**

When people take God for granted, there is a cost. Had Lot listened to the angels and left Sodom immediately and gone straight to the mountain as God

commanded, I wonder if his wife would have survived, because they would have been far away from the destruction in a hiding place where they all would have been protected. When people tarry, there are consequences. Failing to be obedient to God in the very beginning brings consequences. God has a way of getting you on your knees. God is going to get you where He wants you, but at what cost?

Jonah 1:1-4 reads: "Now the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me. But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD [sometimes people hear the message and want to go in the opposite direction]. But the LORD sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken."

God got their attention. Verse 5 lets you know that Jonah was sound asleep. Verse 7 says they cast lots so that they might discover who was to blame for the disaster that had come upon them. The lots revealed that Jonah was the cause of their trouble. They did not know what to do, so they asked Jonah. Jonah told them to throw him overboard. Verse 17 tells us, "Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights."

Jonah 2:1 says, "Then Jonah prayed unto the LORD his God out of the fish's belly." If you take God for granted, He may put you in a place to get your attention. How would you like to be swallowed by a great fish like Jonah

was? That is not something that I want to happen in my life. I would rather have God speak to me gently to get my attention than to deal with being swallowed by a great fish. At that point, Jonah began to do some praying. If you were put in that situation, you would start praying as well.

Jonah 2:7-10 reads: "When my soul fainted within me I remembered the LORD: and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple. They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy. But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD. And the LORD spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land."

Jonah 3:1 states, "And the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the second time." The Scripture does not say that when he was in the fish that God spoke to him. Jonah spoke to God. God heard Jonah's prayer and told the fish to vomit him out on dry land. That sounds disgusting, but when God spoke to Jonah the second time, Jonah turned a three-day journey into one. He was not taking God for granted anymore.

God might have to use extreme measures to get your attention if you fail to listen to Him. In this lesson God is saying, "Do not take Me for granted." You should not always have your mind on everything else and yet expect God to be there for you.

### **Give More Earnest Heed**

Amos 6:1 reads, "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria, which are named chief of the nations, to whom the house of Israel came!" Israel was putting their trust in other things. Today many people put their trust in

bank accounts and other things.

The devil will constantly throw out options for you in your spiritual walk. No matter how long you have been saved, you are not above temptations and struggles. You should not think, "Well, I can handle that now." Friend, you need to be careful. Do not take God for granted. I would hate to do all of this and take God for granted, and then on Judgment Day hear Him say, "I never knew you." That is a scary thought. I want to make sure that I am always where I need to be with God. I do not want to become complacent in my walk with God. I do not want to take God for granted. He is too special in my life. He has done so much for me.

You should not go on in your own strength and go your own way. You need God. In Revelation, Chapter 3, you can read that the Laodiceans did not think they had need of anything. They took God for granted, and they could not see their own spiritual condition.

This generation nowadays teaches a lot about God's grace and mercy, yet they do most anything they want to do and say God loves them. The Bible still commands us to live pure, holy lives. When God talks to you and says, "I want you to get this out of your life," you need to get it out of your life. When He starts to open doors and reveals light, you had better walk in the light that He shows you. If you do not walk in the light, darkness will

come upon you.

First John 1:1 states, "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life." We have to remember those things and not take God for granted. You may say, "God is loving." Yes, He is, and He does have mercy, but He is also a just God. He knows the intent of your heart. He knows how hard you work to please Him.

You may be able to get by with some things in this life, but you are not getting by with God. Hebrews 2:1 reads, "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip." Why do you think that Scripture is in the Bible? If you do not give heed to the things which you have heard, in time you may try to put your own human reasoning above God's Word.

Proverbs 21:2 says, "Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the LORD pondereth the hearts." Sometimes people have good intentions, but they keep putting God off. A lot of sinners take God for granted and think that He will talk with them week after week after week. Others say, "When I get my life in order and get in a better situation, then I will think about serving God." They take God for granted all the time. What if God does not continue to speak? That is the danger of procrastinating. In

order to get saved, sinner friend, God has to draw you. What happens when God quits drawing? People rarely ever talk about that. When God quits drawing, you have taken too much for granted.

When God gives you warnings, you need to heed those warnings. He is not giving warnings to be mean. He is trying to help you. He cares about you and He loves you, but He does not want you to take Him for granted. You should not linger at what He tells you because there is a cost.

John 12:35-36 says: "Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have light [that means while God is speaking to you and drawing you], believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them."

If you take God for granted, it will cost you. God is still going to have His way. In Lot's case he lost his wife over it. I wonder how many times people lose their children or their family, not necessarily physically but spiritually, because they took God for granted. They did not put forth the effort they needed to for God.

*(Compact Disc TR-2306)*

## INVESTMENT

**"I can't get interested in missions," remarked a young lady. "No," was the reply given to her, "you can hardly expect to. It is just like getting interest at a bank: you have to put in a little something first, and the more you put in—time and prayer—the more the interest grows."**

# THE BROKEN ROPE



The Alps in Switzerland have a great attraction for tourists because of their grandeur and the variety of scenes they represent—icy gorges, snow covered peaks, precipices, waterfalls, charming little valleys, and so on. Able guides are easily procured by those who intend to climb mountains or visit dangerous places, yet accidents happen. A notable one occurred on July 14, 1865, when daring climbers resolved to try to reach the summit of the Matterhorn, a remarkable peak 14,780 feet high, rising skyward like a tower on its northern side, while on the other side toward Italy, it rises in a series of terraces with precipitous walls.

Edward Whymper, a famous English wood carver and Alpine climber, had for many years been ambitious to scale its dizzy heights, but although many times reaching the great shoulder on the Italian side, he had never gotten to the top. On the day named, he started again, the more eagerly because a party of Italians were to attempt it also on the same morning.

His party consisted of four climbers with three guides, as follows: Edward Whymper, Charles Hudson (an English clergyman and a young climber), his protégé Douglas Hadow, and Lord Francis Douglas. The guides were Peter Taugwalder and his son Peter Jr., and a famous French guide named Michel Croz. All went well until the top was reached, and for the first time, man stood on the dizzy peak enjoying a wonderful view, and as Mr. Whymper described it, "One crowded hour of glorious life!"

Then the climbers re-roped themselves to descend in the following order: Michel Croz, the guide first; Douglas Hadow next; the senior Peter Taugwalder in front of Edward Whymper, and the younger Peter Taugwalder in the rear. Carefully, they were letting themselves down the fearful precipice. Michel Croz, out of sight of the rear members, was helping Douglas Hadow to find a footing over the yawning abyss.

Suddenly a startling cry rang out as Douglas Hadow fell onto Michel Croz, hurling him off his slender footing. Charles Hudson and Lord Francis Douglas were dragged after them, but the experienced climbers above tightened the rope between them and stood firmly to bear the shock as one man. The rope ran its length and the blow came, but the cord snapped like a thread. The horrified climbers above saw their friends spreading their arms and legs in a hopeless attempt to stop their slide over the precipice. They fell on the great glacier 4,000 feet below!

For nearly an hour, the remaining three stood in terrified silence, too petrified to move. At length, the two guides began to weep, saying they would never attempt that fearful descent. However, Edward Whymper nerved them to the effort, and hours later they arrived in Zermatt to tell their sad story.

Why had the rope not held? The broken rope was examined. Alas! It was only a sash cord! It now lies in the little museum at Zermatt. Alpine club ropes are distinguished by a red strand

running through them. How was it that sash cord was carried on such an occasion? It remains an unexplained mystery.

It has often been said that the truth as to the precious blood of Christ runs like a red cord through the Bible. Are you joined to the Lord by this unbreakable cord? Or have you, dear reader, some sash line to which you cling? Every sash cord will break when the mighty strain comes. Trust not in vain hopes—to a cloak of religiousness while the heart is unregenerated, or to the good opinions of others. None of this will avail! It must be genuine repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, Who died for us and Whose blood cleanses from all sin. If you are joined to Him, nothing can separate you or break the threefold cord of His grace, His blood, and the faith that binds you to Him. John 10:28 states, "Neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." This is what Jesus declared of those who have put their trust in Him. Have you?

Selected

**YOUR WORDS  
May hide your thoughts  
BUT YOUR ACTIONS  
Will reveal them.**

# Announcements

**Warrensville, NC**  
March 23-29

**Revelation Meeting:** Church of God, 2042 Teaberry Road, Warrensville, NC  
Evangelist: Brother Earl R. Borders, Summersville, WV  
Preaching from the Book of Revelation each service.  
Service times: Sunday 10:00 a.m. & 5:00 p.m.; Monday-Saturday 7:00 p.m.  
For further information contact: Pastor Allen Borders  
Telephone: 740-485-8881 or 336-846-8859

**Canby, OR**  
March 27-29

**Weekend Revival:** Church of God, 522 NW 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave., Canby, OR  
Evangelist: Brother Mike Wilks, Newark, Ohio  
Service times: Friday 7:00 p.m. Brother Wilks will be speaking at a  
Men's Breakfast @ 7:00 on Saturday morning.  
Saturday evening worship 7:00 p.m.; Sunday 10:45 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.  
For further information contact: Pastor David Stegmeier  
Telephone: 503-266-9297  
Visit our website at [www.canbychurchofgod.org](http://www.canbychurchofgod.org)

**Mt. Pleasant, PA**  
April 18

**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 that 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, 109 Salvation Lane, Mt. Pleasant, PA 15666. Telephone: 724-547-2151

**Summersville, WV**  
April 20-26

**Revival/Fellowship Meeting:** Church of God, 74 Armstrong Rd., Summersville, WV  
Evangelist: Brother Larry Dishman, Hurley, Mississippi  
Service times: Monday-Thursday 7:00 p.m., Friday 10:30 a.m. & 7:00 p.m., Saturday & Sunday 10:30 a.m. & 6:00 p.m. Meals will be served by the congregation following each service Friday-Sunday. For special lodging rates, contact Econolodge @ 304-872-6900.  
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](http://www.ChurchofGodSummersvilleWV.com)

**Mt. Pleasant, PA**  
May 4-10

**Revival:** Church of God, 109 Salvation Lane, Mt. Pleasant, PA  
Evangelist: Brother Larry Dishman, Hurley, Mississippi  
Service times: Monday-Saturday 7:00 p.m. Sunday 10:30 a.m. & 1:30 p.m.  
For further information contact: Pastor Paul W. Prinkey, 109 Salvation Lane, Mt. Pleasant, PA 15666. Telephone: 724-547-2151

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Next Camp Meeting at God's Acres  
June 21-28

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