

# 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. 51 January 2021 No. 1



Church of God Tabernacle in Newark, Ohio

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

*Psalm 122:1*

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

# Guest Editorial

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

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

## THE CHURCH OF GOD BELIEVES IN:

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

## SOME SPIRITUAL FACTS PERTAINING TO THE CHURCH

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

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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## Insensibility

*"For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them."*

Acts 28:27

While the Apostle Paul was in confinement with Roman guards, he had an opportunity to speak to his countrymen about the Gospel. He confirmed the fact that Christ was the promised Messiah. As they communed, some accepted the message and believed, but others refused to embrace the Truth. Their rejection of Christ and the message troubled Paul's heart. In the above text of Scripture, Paul referred to God's Word recorded by the Prophet Isaiah. In Isaiah 6:9 we read, "And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not." Paul saw that some were insensible and had hardened hearts.

Being insensible to God's Word and the moving of His Holy Spirit is a dangerous condition, such as hearing a message from a man of God but being unable to comprehend it. Unfortunately, multitudes are lost and have fallen into this terrible entrapment. Let us look at the word *insensible* and see what it reveals. It means being unresponsive in feeling, being indifferent, numb, and unaware, and not susceptible to agencies

or influences. When insensibility takes hold in the heart, it leaves one with little or no hope of ever being reached with the Gospel. Physical death or the Second Coming of Christ could find this soul unprepared to meet God.

Paul gave sound advice when he penned these words in 1 Thessalonians 5:6-7: "Let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night." People who are asleep spiritually are insensible to the Gospel message of our Lord. It is similar to one who is asleep physically. He is unaware of what is taking place around him. It is so important for the saints of God to be alert, awake, and on their guard against such a deceitful and destructive spirit. The unsaved soul must be aware of the dangers of disregarding God's call to repentance.

This spiritually dull, sleepy condition catches many unaware. An individual does not fall overnight; instead, it is a slow, gradual process that takes place in the heart. It comes as

[continued on page 14]

# The Great Tribulation



*Brother Roger L. Decker*

## **Doctrinal Truths**

There are a lot of false doctrines in our nation today. Sometimes people have a tendency to believe almost anything that comes across the airwaves and the pulpits, such as millenniums, eternal security, the rapture, once in grace always in grace, prayers for the dead, and purgatory, just to name a few. Those doctrines seem to get the attention of the masses in religion. The United States is in its present condition because of the lack of the Truth being heralded from pulpits. Many ministers have backed away from basic fundamental Bible Truths.

I want to talk to you about one teaching that fits in among

other teachings. Israel of old is always the centerpiece of these false teachings because people do not understand the true Israel. The true Israel consists of those who are born again. Under the new covenant, the spiritual Israel is the spiritual Jew.

I saw the church through continual doctrinal preaching. Doctrine is necessary to see the church. Naturally, people have to be saved, but they must come to the knowledge of the Truth. Matthew 7:28 reads, "And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine."

Doctrinal truths are so important to the church. Inside the cover of this periodical, you will find some Scriptural facts

pertaining to the church, such as the cardinal teachings of the church, which include the head of the church, the one church, the name of the church, the government of the church, and the entrance of the church.

I want to talk to you about the great tribulation. Daniel, a minor prophet, pinpointed the kingdom almost right down to the day. It is one of the most pinpointed prophecies in the Word of God. As far as I am concerned, Daniel is head and shoulders above all the rest when it comes to pinpointing the kingdom. Daniel 9:25 reads, "Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall

be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times."

In the Prophet Daniel's vision of the seventy weeks, he was told it would be sixty-nine weeks from the going forth of the commandment to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the coming of Messiah the Prince. Those weeks were prophetic weeks, in which each week stood for seven years, and they were literally fulfilled. It was exactly four hundred eighty-three years from the going forth until Jesus rose and triumphed in Jerusalem in A.D. 30 and He was hailed as the promised Son of David. Within the sixty-nine weeks the Jews had Jesus crucified.

Supposedly God's clock stopped and still remains so, with one week going into the future. False teachers say the seventieth week is yet to be fulfilled. In the meantime, in the break between the sixty-ninth week and the seventieth week, the Holy Spirit supposedly is gathering out His church. They claim that when it is completed, it will be taken away and God's clock will begin to tick again, and He will begin to deal with His people, the Jews. It is said that the tribulation is to occur during the seventieth week of Daniel's seventy weeks. Since the sixty-nine weeks have already been fulfilled, or the length of seven years, so the seventieth week must be in that same time frame.

### Examining the Scriptures

Ahead of this tribulation period is supposed to be a pre-tribulation period. People are being taught that true followers of Jesus Christ will be transformed into their spiritual bodies in the rapture and taken from the earth to be in Heaven with God. They say nonbelievers will be left

behind to face severe tribulation as the antichrist prepares to take his place as the beast halfway through this seven-year period.

According to this view, nonbelievers will still come to accept Christ in spite of the church's absence during this time, but these new Christians will endure extreme persecution to the point of death by beheading. The length of the tribulation period should be seven years, but Jesus tells us in Matthew 24:22, "And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake [not the elect of the church, for they are supposedly called out before the tribulation, but the elect of Israel, the 144,000, the sealed ones of Revelation 7:4] those days shall be shortened." Revelation 7:4 reads, "And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel."

I am not going any further into the rapture, but let us see what the Bible says about the great tribulation. Now, that is quite a doctrine to put forth, especially when there is no Truth in that false doctrine. In the seventy weeks of Daniel, this was supposed to take place. Now, if the seventieth week has not come, this has not happened. Daniel 9:24 tells us, "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy." You may ask, "Has this taken place?" It absolutely has taken place. Jesus Christ fulfilled every one of those in the seventieth week.

Let us look at the word *tribulation*. It means, "suffering,

misfortune, pain, and distress." We know the word *great* means, "large, big, and enormous." Putting these two words together, we know that during this time of tribulation, there would be enormous suffering and extreme distress. We want to look at the subject of tribulation and ask this question: Is there going to be a great tribulation in the future?

Jesus warned there would be tribulation. You can read about it in the Word of God. Jesus said in John 16:33, "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." The church in the morning time lived in tribulation, more so than we do. I am talking about outward physical assaults.

Acts 14:22 reads, "Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." The church suffered much. First Thessalonians 3:4 tells us, "For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know." Tribulation, suffering, and persecution were just a way of life for the early church.

### Saul's Disposition Toward the Church

Acts, Chapter 9, talks about a man before he was converted. His name was Saul, who later changed his name to Paul. The Corinthian letter says this man was a wise master builder, but before that he was a destroyer. Acts 9:1-2 states: "And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way,

whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem." He was one who breathed out violence, or cruelty. The inward disposition of this man's mind was rage, wrath, malice, envy, and blood-thirstiness.

You have to remember that this man was there to wipe out the church. His name is mentioned as being a destroyer, and he was out to destroy the church, even if he had to do it by himself. He started down the road to Damascus in this condition, but no doubt, one thing that worked on him was the death of Stephen. Acts 7:59-60 tells us: "And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep."

Undoubtedly, Saul was thinking, "How could a guilty man die that way?" Perhaps Saul's mind was totally confused as he traveled. He was filled with rage and violence. I imagine his mind was so troubled with thoughts that it stirred up the flesh all the more, and the Christians received the blunt of this rage.

David said in Psalm 27:11-12: "Teach me thy way, O LORD, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies. Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies: for false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty [and violence]." I do not believe we have ever seen so much violence out of an individual as people saw from Saul at that time. It did not make any difference to Saul who they were or if a woman was with child. If they professed Christianity, Saul would bring them back bound and throw them into prison.

As a church, we have not witnessed violence of this sort so far. We are protected by laws

that govern the behavior of people. However, as the lawless gain control, these things could begin to appear. Proverbs 29:2 reads, "When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn." Church of God people need to be careful of how they vote. Every Christian ought to have a hard time with more than fifty million babies being slaughtered through the act of abortion.

### Confirming the Covenant

I want to start at the place where a lot of false doctrine on the tribulation starts. It begins in Daniel 9:27, which reads, "And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate."

The word *antichrist* appears three times in 1 John and one time in 2 John, which were written by the same man, the Apostle John. It does not appear anywhere else in the Bible. The teaching is that the antichrist will confirm the covenant with the literal Jew in Palestine during the seventy weeks mentioned in Daniel, which they say is out in the future. When Daniel mentioned "he" in verse 27, he was speaking of the same person mentioned in the rest of the verses: Jesus Christ. He was the only One who could confirm the covenant, because He gave it.

Mark 16:19-20 tells us: "So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs

following. Amen."

The word *confirm* means, "to prove, to back it up, and to authenticate." Romans 15:8 states, "Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers." When the Gospel is preached under the anointing of the Holy Spirit, the witness of God is there to confirm that covenant.

It is necessary to digress a little and look at what is being taught in some of the religious sects. Someone may say, "I don't want to be called a Jew." Then, if you are saved, you would have to backslide, because the Bible says in Romans 2:28-29: "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly [one could always tell the Jews back then by the way they dressed]; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God."

Now, if you were going to bring back the practice of the literal Jew, then you would need to go back to the letter. Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 3:6, "Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." What is the letter? It is the Law. Romans 7:9 tells us, "For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment [or the letter] came, sin revived [it brought out sin], and I died [spiritually speaking]."

Verse 6 reads, "But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter." You can tell that some religions are completely off track because they are under the covenant of death and the Law. If you were going to go

back to the old Law, then you would need the old temple.

If you have the old temple, you are going to have a hard time, because Jesus said it was left desolate. He said in Matthew 23:38, "Behold, your house [He called it 'your house.' It used to be God's house, but He turned it over to them.] is left unto you desolate." In other words, Jesus was saying, "It is your house, because I have moved out; it is no longer My house." It was a temple and the place of worship for old Israel. He was talking about the temple because Matthew 24:1 tells us, "And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple." God does not dwell in temples and buildings anymore. He is not confined to a box called the ark. He dwells in the hearts of each man and woman who is saved from sin.

### **Fleeing That Which Was to Come**

The term "great tribulation" is used three times in the Bible: once in the Book of Matthew and twice in the Book of Revelation. In Revelation 2:22 Jesus said, "Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds." Here John was writing and uncovering the true condition of Babylon, which seduces people into committing spiritual fornication.

We all know that literal fornication is wrong, but spiritual fornication is just as wrong. When you are married to Christ, you should not look around anymore. You stop committing spiritual fornication. In 2 Corinthians 11:2 Paul wrote, "For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to

Christ."

Revelation 7:13-14 reads: "And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." John saw a picture of a great host of people coming through great tribulation. They went back to Mount Zion in the unity of God's people.

I want you to read about the tribulation spoken of in the Book of Matthew. Here is where it is all wrapped up in the great tribulation, and then we will read it from the Book of Luke. Luke explained it a little differently than Matthew did, but they both were saying the same thing. In Matthew 24:15-22 Jesus said: "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes [something had to happen fast; they could not get their clothes, but they had to flee quickly]."

"And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter [when it would be cold], neither on the sabbath day [when they were not supposed to go out]: For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."

### **"The Days of Vengeance"**

Let us look at two words that Matthew mentioned in these verses: *abomination* and *desolation*. The word *abomination* means, "a hated thing, a dislike, or a disgrace." This word is used several times in the Bible. One place it is used is in Proverbs 6:16 when the writer talked about the "six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him."

Luke wrote to the Gentiles, and Matthew wrote to the Jews. Matthew started with the genealogy. Luke did not write the words *abomination* and *desolation*, but he said it a little more clearly. In Luke 21:20-23 Jesus said: "And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh [this was something they could see]. Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains [remember, they were told not to return to their houses to get anything]; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people."

What is an abomination? What was the thing that Jesus warned people about? What was the hated thing? It was the Roman army. The Jews and the Romans detested each other. The Jews could not stand the Roman army. Jesus said, in so many words, "When you see the armies starting to surround you, you had better get out of there." Why? Because those were the days of vengeance, or the days of wrath. As I thought about that, I thought it was like the judgment of God. There was no mercy in this desolation.

Now, let us look at the time element and see who Jesus was talking about. Was this in the future? We will let the Word of God speak. Matthew 24:1-4 tells us: "And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you." He was talking to His disciples. When would this take place? When would the stones be thrown down? In verse 15 Jesus said, "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place." It was going to start taking place.

### **A New Covenant**

The abomination of desolation was something that the apostles could see. If it had been out in the future, the apostles could not have seen it. It was not something out in the future. The old temple of God used for the Israelites of old was left to them desolate. In other words, according to the Law, God was not accepting their worship anymore. In Luke 16:16 Jesus said, "The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man [not just certain people, not just the Israelites] presseth into it."

History lines up with the words of Jesus, and there was a desolation that took place in A.D. 70. History bears this out,

right down to the letter with the Word of God. Jesus said there would be great tribulation. In Luke 21:22 Jesus said, "For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled." In Mark 13:19 Jesus said, "For in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be." God is finished with old temple worship, and He has no plans to re-visit it.

Hebrews 8:7-13 tells us: "For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.

"For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away."

### **The Historical Account**

In the literal destruction of Jerusalem, if you ever read the

book of Josephus, you will read one of the saddest accounts that you could ever come upon. This was about God's people at that time. If you read Matthew, Chapter 23, you will find that they had filled up the measure. When a measure or a cup is full, you cannot get any more in it. In those days blood was as common as water and poured out like water. In Matthew 24:21 Jesus said, "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be."

Many people have read the account written by Flavius Josephus. He was a Jewish historian, and he related this account. It is called "The Antiquities of the Jews," or "The Wars of the Jews." He stated that the number of those carried captive during the whole war was estimated to be ninety-seven thousand. The number of those who perished during the whole siege was eleven thousand.

During this time, before the war began, Josephus wrote about a man who lived to an old age. He said every day he would go out and utter these words as if it were a premeditated vow. He would go out among the people and say, "Woe, woe to Jerusalem!" That was his message day after day. The people would beat him, and he did not speak ill of those who beat him. They would give him food, and he did not say anything. That was his only reply to all men. God was reminding them that there was a woe yet to come from Him.

Josephus said that man cried out for seven years and five months, and his cry was the loudest of everyone, even at festivals. He never grew hoarse, and he never tired, but he kept it up until he saw his message fulfilled in the siege. When dying, he uttered those same words: "Woe, woe to Jerusalem!" Josephus said those were his last words

before he gave up the ghost and died.

Now, we have read about it in history and have even heard about it in our present day of terrible dictators. There were terrible methods of cruelty, but nothing ever came close to the destruction of Jerusalem. Hitler was a well-known dictator, and there was a holocaust. However, nothing compared to the desolation of Jerusalem. There was torture like no one had never seen up to that day. Some who tried to escape the siege, especially when they saw Jerusalem surrounded, swallowed pieces of gold, thinking they would escape and would have a means of making a living. Jesus warned them all through the Scriptures. His main concerns were covetousness. When the Romans heard of the plan, they would capture them and cut them open. They were not under anesthesia when they were being cut open. They just took a sword and ripped them open.

One night Josephus said two thousand escapees that went over the wall were captured and cut open. Many were destitute. They went outside the walls to escape and were captured. Mothers on the brink of starvation killed their own infants, roasted them, and ate them. An average of five hundred a night were killed and crucified, and several were nailed to the same stake.

### **The Cup of Wrath**

Stalin was a well-known dictator, as was Saddam Hussein. Mass graves were found where he killed people, but nothing as devastating as what happened at Jerusalem. In Matthew 23:37 Jesus said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen

gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" They killed the prophets and tried to stomp out the message. They ignored the Law and the Messiah, but this was not going to be ignored by God. Why? Because God turned loose His full wrath upon them. This was something that happened in Jerusalem. There was no mercy and no place to pray.

The Israel of old filled up the cup of wrath. Jesus said in Matthew 23:31-32: "Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers." They had turned down the Law, turned down the prophets, turned down prophecy, and turned down the Son of God. In essence, He said: "You have filled up the measure. No more mercy can go into that cup!"

Some discount the Word of God. Sometimes people have a feeling that there will be no retribution for what they do, but you need to listen to the Word of God. Ecclesiastes 8:11-13 states: "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil. Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him: But it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days, which are as a shadow; because he feareth not before God." If you are in that condition, a day is going to come when you will wish that you had allowed the Spirit of God to gather you.

Daniel 9:24 says, "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision

and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy." What is the holy city? The Bible tells us what it is in Isaiah 52:1. It reads, "Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean."

Revelation 21:10 says, "And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God." Jesus said in Matthew 24:21, "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." The human mind cannot even imagine such cruelty. It was such as has never been and never shall be.

Titus was the man who led the siege, and he reportedly refused to accept the wreath of victory, saying that the victory did not come through his own effort, but that he merely served as an instrument of God's wrath. It is reported that Titus delayed the attacks on the city to allow the Jews time to repent.

### **Turning Down Their Last Hope**

I want you to read an excerpt from the book "The War of the Jews" by Josephus. It says that Josephus himself was sent by Titus to try to convince the Jews to give up. They were his own countrymen. Titus got him to talk to them, and it says: "While Josephus was making his exhortation to the Jews, many of them jested upon him from the wall. Many reproached him. Some threw darts at him, but when he himself saw that he could not persuade them by giving them advice, he cried out, 'O miserable creatures,' and left them."

He went on to say: "Are you so unmindful of those who used

to assist you that you will fight by your weapons and by your hands against the Romans? You are going to take them on without God? Do you think you have the weapons to overthrow Rome without God? When did we ever conquer any other nation by such means? When was it that God, Who is the Creator of the Jewish people, did not avenge them when they had been injured? Will you not look back and consider whence it is that you fight with such violence, and how great a supporter you have profanely abused? Will you call to mind the prodigious things done to your forefathers in this holy place, how great enemies of yours were by Him subdued under you? I even tremble myself when declaring the works of God before your ears that are unworthy to hear them. However, hearken to me that you may be informed how you fight, not only against the Romans, but you are fighting against God Himself." Who did this come from? Josephus said this.

A great tribulation followed. Bodies piled high from starvation as never seen before. Titus cut off the water and all the food supply at the entrance into Jerusalem. Mothers ate their young. Barbaric conditions prevailed that never before existed. People turned on one another as hunger was getting stronger and starvation began to set in. Those who hoarded food, or kept it back, were found out, killed, and their food was taken from them. Those who went over the wall were captured, returned, and killed. Conditions were so barbaric that it is too graphic to repeat.

Why would a loving God turn on His people whom He loved? He guided them and delivered them so many times. If you read the Old Testament, what do you see? Repeated deliverance and failure. God showed them much mercy, and

all of a sudden, everything stopped. Not even a prayer could get through to God at this particular time. God stood back while women were being cut open, people were beheaded with the sword, and bodies were piled in the street. It is difficult to think about, but then go in your mind to the Judgment, when there will be no mercy.

### **Only the Obedient Were Saved**

Why did God allow this to happen? Well, there was a reason. Before I get into the reason He did that, there is quite a story in there about Titus. First of all, he went out to survey Jerusalem. He and a couple of soldiers with him went out to see what he was up against. Now, this is not in the Word of God, so I am going to tell you what it says in Josephus. While he was out, the Jerusalem army came out against him, and there, he and the people with him were surrounded. Titus said, "Let us go right at them." So they rode right at them.

One man was wounded, but they all got back to camp. How did that happen? It was the mercy of God. Titus kept giving them opportunities to surrender, hoping they would throw up a white flag and come out and give themselves up, but they would not. It says one time when Titus was going around checking the wall, someone threw a dart, or a small spear, and killed one of his lead men. That stirred the wrath of Titus after that. From then on, there was no mercy.

Why would God allow that? Romans 11:16-22 tells us: "For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root be holy, so are the branches. And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree;

Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in.

"Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear: For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness [that is how God wants to lead you to Christ] and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off."

The Jews had been given much. The oracles of God came to them. He came to His own first. We have been given much, but the ugly sin of unbelief works today just as it did in Israel's day. We also are going to live in tribulation. We are going to be talked about and slandered, and not everyone is going to love us. The Lord wants us to be settled and grounded in the Truth, to obey and to walk in the light.

Did everyone perish in that destruction? No, those who obeyed God escaped. Jesus said in Matthew 24:15-16: "When ye therefore shall see [when you see this Roman army start to develop] the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet [he goes back and picks up the prophecy because the Jews knew this prophecy well], stand in the holy place [Jerusalem], (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains." Those who obeyed the words of Jesus escaped the terrible siege that was to come. Where did they escape to? They went to the mountains. Where do you flee to? You flee to the mountain, the Church of the Living God.

*(Compact Disc TR-2207)*

2 Kings 20:1 In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live.

2 Then he turned his face to the wall, and prayed unto the LORD, saying,

3 I beseech thee, O LORD,

remember now how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore.

4 And it came to pass, afore Isaiah was gone out into the middle court, that the word of the LORD came to him, saying,

5 Turn again, and tell Hezekiah the captain of my people, Thus saith

the LORD, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee: on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the LORD.

6 And I will add unto thy days fifteen years; and I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.

# Set Your House in Order and Keep It That Way



*Brother Larry Dishman*

## **Examination Time**

Many folks seemingly get their house set in order during a revival, but they do not keep it that way. I want to talk about the three houses that must be set in order. One is the material house that you live in. Titus 2:1-5 states: "But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine: That the aged men be sober, grave, tem-

perate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of

God be not blasphemed."

I would like you to read an old poem titled "If Jesus Came to Your House."

*If Jesus came to your house to  
spend a day or two –*

*If he came unexpectedly, I wonder  
what you'd do.*

*Oh, I know you'd give your nicest  
room to such an honored  
Guest,*

*And all the food you'd serve to  
Him would be the very best,  
And you would keep assuring Him  
you're glad to have Him  
there –  
That serving Him in your own  
home is joy beyond compare.*

*But when you saw Him coming,  
would you meet Him at the  
door,  
With arms outstretched in welcome  
to your heavenly Visitor?  
Or would you have to change your  
clothes before you let Him in?  
Or hide some magazines and put  
the Bible where they'd been?  
Would you turn off the radio and  
hope He hadn't heard?  
And wish you hadn't uttered that  
last, loud, hasty word?*

*Would you hide your worldly  
music and put some hymn  
books out?  
Could you let Jesus walk right in,  
or would you rush about?  
And I wonder – if the Savior spent  
a day or two with you,  
Would you go right on doing the  
things you always do?  
Would you go right on saying the  
things you always say?  
Would life for you continue as it  
does from day to day?*

*Would your family conversation  
keep up its usual pace?  
And would you find it hard each  
meal to say a table grace?  
Would you sing the songs you  
always sing, and read the books  
you read,  
And let Him know the things on  
which your mind and spirit  
feed?  
Would you take Jesus with you  
everywhere you'd planned  
to go?  
Or would you, maybe, change your  
plans for just a day or so?*

*Would you be glad to have Him  
meet your very closest friends,  
Or would you hope they'd stay  
away until His visit ends?  
Would you be glad to have Him*

*stay forever on and on?  
Or would you sigh with great relief  
when He at last was gone?  
It might be interesting to know the  
things that you would do  
If Jesus Christ in person came to  
spend some time with you.*

How is your house and your family? Friend, you need to set your house in order. Are you raising your children to know the Lord? Are you bringing them up in the fear and admonition of the Lord? Are you raising them up in righteousness or allowing the devil to shape their minds with wickedness? Is your house set in order? If Jesus suddenly visited your home, what kinds of things would He find? Would He find stacks of worldly CDs and DVDs, magazines, and posters of pagan stars? Oftentimes the physical order of the home is a reflection of the general habits and attitudes of the residents.

Do you need to repair broken relationships to set your house in order? Husbands and wives should strive to love and respect each other. Children must submit to their parents, and parents must not show favoritism among the children. Christians should make their homes a place where love, joy, peace, trust, security, politeness, and respect prevail. Strong Christian households make strong, growing, local churches.

You need to set your material house in order. Matthew 12:25 reads, "And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand." Husband, do you govern your house according to the will of God?

### **Your Earthly House**

The second house that I want to talk about is the house of God.

Do you know what the Bible says about this? In 1 Timothy 3:15 Paul wrote, "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." This was to set the church in order. The church must be a house of prayer. The church should have members who love, care, forbear, and forgive one another. The church should be a training ground for good soldiers of Christ.

The house that I really want to talk about is the house of your body. Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5:1-2: "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven."

Have you set your house in order? Your body is a house. Did you know that one day the "Landlord" is going to give you an eviction notice and that you will have to move out of your earthly house? You cannot live in that house forever. Whether you are saved or lost, one day you will have to move out of it. That is when Hebrews 9:27 will be fulfilled: "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." When you die, your spirit will leave your fleshly body.

Maybe there are some things in your relationships that you need to set in order. Perhaps you need to do some sorting out before your Maker. The Prophet Isaiah told Hezekiah, in so many words, "You are going to die; therefore, you need to set your house in order." He still had some things that he wanted to do for the Lord. What about you? I want you to really think about this. Is your house really set

in order? Most importantly, do you know for sure that you are saved? Do you know for sure that you are ready for Heaven? You have no guarantee of tomorrow.

In the latter part of 1 Samuel 20:3 David said, "There is but a step between me and death." It does not take long to take one step. Likewise, it does not take long to move from this life into eternity. Just one step, or one heartbeat, is all a person is from eternity. One last breath, and then he is gone. Are you ready to die?

### **Are You Rich Toward God?**

The Bible tells of a man who made great preparations here on this earth. He had accumulated much wealth. He was getting set up so that he could have it easy. He filled his barns with grain, and he had the intentions of sitting comfortably for the rest of his life; yet he made the mistake of not preparing his soul. Luke 12:19-21 tells us: "And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." This man laid up treasures for himself, but he was not rich toward God.

Do you have a hope of eternal salvation? Imagine, my friend, living your entire life without hope. Have you lived a life without the hope and the assurance that all is well with your soul? Imagine going to your death, to that eternal night, without any hope whatsoever. I cannot think of anything worse than coming down to death's door and not having the hope of Heaven and the hope of everlasting

life. What a fool one would be not to prepare his soul for this inevitable journey that each of us will have to take. One day each of us will have to take this journey. There is a choice of only two destinations. You must choose either Heaven or hell. Everyone is going to one of these two places, and it all depends on the choices each one makes in this life.

What will be your new location? As far as I am concerned, I would be content to live where I am living in Mississippi for the rest of my life, but God might have other plans. However, I will have to leave there one day to go to my eternal home. One day when you move from your earthly house, when you move out of your body, where will your new location be? For most people, their new location will be a devil's hell.

Jesus said in Matthew 7:13-14: "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Where is your new location going to be?

A bank in New York arranged for a florist to send flowers to a competitor who had recently moved to a new building, but there was a mix up at the flower shop and the card sent with the arrangement read: "With our deepest sympathy." The florist was greatly embarrassed and apologized, but he was even more embarrassed when he realized that the card intended for the bank was attached to a floral arrangement sent to a funeral in honor of the deceased person, and the card read: "Congratulations on your new location."

When you die, you are going to move to a new location. Where

will you be moving to? What is going to be your next stop? You need to set your house in order. Do you know why? Life is short. The older you get, the more you realize that life is short. Even if you live to be one hundred years of age, life is short. That is the reason the Bible lets us know that life is but a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.

### **A Wake-Up Call**

The third house that you need to set in order is your spiritual house. The first order of business to set your spiritual house in order is to be positively sure that you are a saved individual. Do you know for sure that you are saved? If not, you need to set your house in order. Do you have any unfinished business, spiritually speaking? I fear that too many professing Christians have unfinished business. Sometimes people go to church all the time and hear the Word of God preached, but they do not measure to the Word of God.

You are going to die. If you could have more time, chances are you would not be like Hezekiah and beg for fifteen more years and have it granted. If you were dying and God were to grant you a few more days, what would you do with those days? What would you take care of? Death is impartial, no matter what your age, your fitness level, your character, or your hopes to extend your life. When the time comes, you are going to die. Hezekiah got an unusual extension on life, but his was an exceptional case. Do not count on that happening to you, friend.

In due time, the message is going to be brought to you, "The Master is calling for you." Death is going to call for you one of these days. When death calls, the doctors will not be able to keep

you here. When God calls for you, you will have to go. It is appointed for you to die. This message is a wake-up call. Do you have your house set in order? Some folks do not have very long to set their house in order and to make things right with God and man. That is what is involved sometimes in setting your house in order.

Death is something that the Christian does not have to be afraid of. If you have been washed in the blood and you are saved and living a holy life, you have set your house in order. Therefore, you do not have one thing to be afraid of. You are ready to go. As long as everything is under the blood and you have your house set in order, you do not have to fear death. For the believer, death is truly a glad day, a coronation day. You can joyfully look forward to that day.

Psalm 116:15 reads, "Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints." Friend, none of us has a guarantee for tomorrow, saved or lost. You do not know if you have a month or only five more minutes. Think about it, friend. What will you leave behind when you die? It is said that God buries His workman, but not his work. Your labor of love is not in vain in the Lord. Men and women of God have touched lives and made their mark on other individuals, and so can you if you will set your house in order, but you must get saved and live a life pleasing to God. What will you do with your life? What legacy will you leave behind? What things do you need to set in order to be ready at the day of your death? Are you ready for the Lord to come and take you away? You need to be sure that you are saved.

What about your spiritual life? Could it be that you have unresolved issues that you know

about? You need to allow God to search your heart. He will show you if you have unresolved things that you need to take care of to set your house in order. Are you rich toward God? You need to invest your life in doing the will of God. Setting your house in order means getting serious about your soul and your spiritual life. How serious are you about your soul and your spiritual life? On a scale from 0 to 100 percent, how would you rate the fear of God that you have? Many people scarcely consider the fear of God. God is thought of very little in their minds.

Do you have your house set in order? How are you doing spiritually? Do you need to confess any sins to God? Are you doing some things that you know you should not be doing? Have you slipped in your experience? How long will you hold back from surrendering completely to God? What is it going to take to move you?

If you are a professing Christian, but you know you are not where you ought to be, what is it going to take to move you? What will it take for God to get your attention? When was the last time that God was truly working in your life? Is there someone that you need to witness to, someone that God has been putting on your heart that you ought to speak a word to, but as yet you have not said a word? Is there someone you want to show the love of God to? Friend, do not wait until it is too late.

What are you doing with your life? When was the last time you truly met with God? One preacher prayed: "Put a holy dissatisfaction in us. Let us not get satisfied and complacent. Let us pull out all the stops, so to speak, and say: 'I am not going to slow down. I am going to decide now to seek the face of God earnestly. I am going to seek to be filled with the Holy Ghost.'"

## Prepare to Meet God

Is there anything you need to make right, Christian? Have you left anything undone? Is there someone that you want to bless that you have not been around yet? Do you need to make a phone call? Is there a letter that you need to write? Is there a wrong in the past that you need to make right? Is there a hurt that you need to heal or a strife that you need to fix? Is there an offense that you caused that you need to make right? Maybe you need to apologize to someone. Is there some spiritual gift that you need to exercise or a ministry that you need to launch into? Is there a spiritual calling that you had but you have not surrendered your life to God? Is there something that you are holding back from God that you need to yield to the Holy Spirit? Is there a sin that you need to repent of? Do you have pride, bitterness, or greed that you need to get rid of?

Do you need to walk a closer walk with God? That is setting your house in order. Have you wrestled with God about your spiritual life? Have you offended the holiness of God? If so, you need to set your house in order. Are you serious enough about your profession of Christianity or are you settling for lukewarmness? Are you laying up treasures in Heaven? Where are you spiritually? Back in Adam and Eve's time, God came walking in the garden in the cool of the day. He said, "Adam, where art thou?" Where are you, my friend?

If you are saved, do you have loved ones that you have failed to tell of the grace of God? Are there hurt feelings or grudges that you need to make right? Is there someone that you need to seek forgiveness from or is there someone that you need to grant forgiveness to? Do you have unconfessed sin that requires repentance? If such is the case,

why has it taken you so long to humble yourself before God?

Life is short. When this life has passed, only what is done for Christ will last. How long do you have left to sit around and play with worldly, carnal living? Have you entered into the fullness of Christ? If not, what is stopping you from entering into the fullness of Christ? When you get a fresh revelation of God, who He is, and what He wants you to do, you need to be determined to live a life pleasing to God. It is time to seek the Lord. God is saying, "Set your house in order, for you are going to die."

Friend, this life is sure, and the judgment of God is sure; therefore, you need to set your house in order and prepare to

meet Him. Have you made preparations to meet God? Amos 4:12 instructs, "Prepare to meet thy God." Are you ready right this minute to pass into the eternal realm of death? If the messenger of the Lord came to you personally and told you to set your house in order, how long would it take you to get your house in order?

Friend, you need to set your house in order and keep it that way. I believe the Apostle Paul kept his that way. I believe that since he met Jesus on the road to Damascus, he set his house in order and kept it that way, and then one day he said: "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have

finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Timothy 4:6-8).

What kinds of thoughts would pass through your mind if God said you were going to die today? You need to set your house in order. You need to know that you are 100 percent sure of your salvation. We all know that we will die, but we think death is going to come later. What if later becomes right now? Are you ready?

*(Compact Disc TR-2428)*

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*[Guest Editorial—continued from page 2]*

the result of hearing the Lord's commands but simply refusing to believe and respond. Sad to say, too often many try to minimize what God's Word and His Spirit are saying. When God speaks, He expects men and women to fully obey His command. Man is not given the privilege to take or reject that which he chooses.

Some people feel an insensible condition only happens to those who are lost in sin. God certainly includes the unsaved in this message. Anyone standing in need of salvation surely must heed God's call to repentance. Refusing to give diligent heed can cause the Lord to turn from a person, never to visit him again. There is great danger in failing to heed the Savior's faithful pleadings. If you continue to override His invitation, you will end up being lost eternally.

If you are a professing saint, you need to be ever ready to hear and to heed the Word of God. Satan is ready to make you feel that you do not have to do this or that to be a Christian. Giving ear

to such suggestions will leave your soul in great peril. Brother, Sister, do not be deceived. Becoming insensible can happen to any child of God who fails to stay alert. Satan seeks for the Christian who is becoming careless and lukewarm in his relationship with the Lord. Along the way, some have loosened their grip on living a holy life by no longer taking God's Word as seriously as they need to take it.

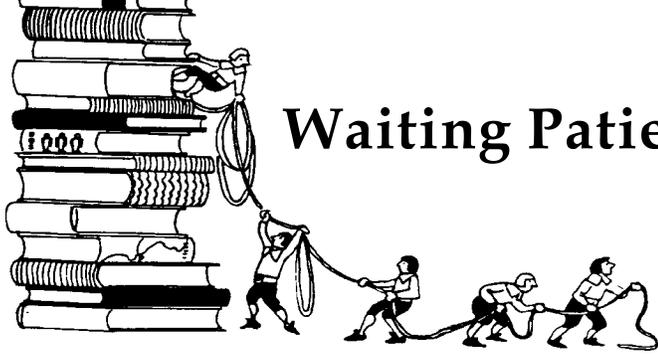
How can a man or a woman, whether that person is a saint or a sinner, recognize if this condition is working on him or her? Usually it comes as a result of being brought face to face with God's Word and will, and then choosing to go one's own way instead of God's way. Certainly, it is true that the Lord is long-suffering and patient; however, the time is coming when His mercy will no longer be extended. When God speaks, it is important that each of us moves quickly in response to His call. Remember, rejection of His appeal brings a hardening process in the heart. After a time, His faithful prodding becomes

fainter and fainter until it is no longer recognizable. This is when one becomes insensible to His voice. A man or a woman must be obedient and respond to the light while it is available.

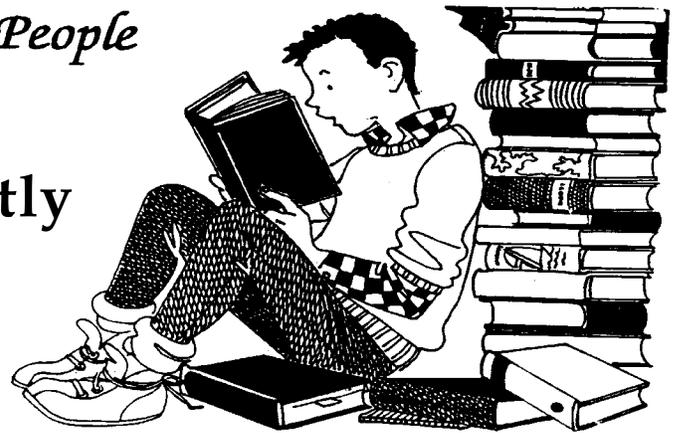
Dear friend, has the Spirit of God spoken to you regarding your need to be saved from sin? It is so important that you respond to His voice when He calls. God is not obligated to continue to woo your heart. He may decide to leave you in your lost state, never to call upon you again. Are you slipping in your experience with the Lord? Has God revealed a weak area or something that needs to change in your life? Perhaps on numerous occasions He has pointed out places where you have erred from righteous principles or veered from the old paths. He chastens those whom He loves, desiring to have them draw closer and to be all that He wishes them to be. We surely want to encourage you not to turn a deaf ear to the Lord when He speaks to your heart.

Selected

*Especially for Young People*



## Waiting Patiently



Psalm 27:14 reads, "Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD." Sometimes answers to our prayers do not come right away. During those times we must wait on the Lord, and He will help us with whatever we need or want. There have been times when I have lost some things, so I asked God to help me. I thought that I would find those items right away, but I had to wait on the Lord. He will help you too.

You may ask your father to help you find something or to give you something, but he may not come right away. You may get frustrated and ask, "What's taking so long?" There is one thing that we do not like to do, and that is to wait.

Patience is something that we need to practice in our lives. We need to be patient when things do not happen right away. For instance, if you need money for a trip that you would like to go on, it may not come right away. You should not be impatient. Sometimes waiting on the Lord is hard, but patience is a way of showing your love for God. When hard times come, just remember that patience is an act of love and kindness toward others. Do not be selfish to the point that you want something now. You need to wait until the time is right for you to have

what you need.

An example of something that I am waiting on, if it is the Lord's will, is for me to attend the camp meeting in Canby, Oregon. In order for me to go, I must get enough money for me and for whoever is going with me, but I must wait until I have enough money saved. Even though waiting is hard, you still need to practice patience. There might be times when you have to wait a long time for something, but do not worry about the time. You must keep praying about it, keep waiting, and keep reading the Bible. Taking time to do these things may help pass the time. You do not have to worry about the time being too late, because God is always on time.

The Lord will help you no matter what, but you must be patient and wait until you know that something good is happening. This is a message that you should practice, and I must do this too. If you are saved, whatever problems you face, there will be joy. At times, we must wait for the Lord's way of answering our prayers.

I had to wait for my new braille display to get fixed. I had to use my old braille display and a Bluetooth keyboard, but while I waited, I was thankful that I was able to read the Bible. I am so thankful that the Lord will help us, and I am thankful that

He brings us messages in the Bible. Waiting patiently is something He tells us to do. My dad tells me the same thing. What a joy we have in Jesus! Even though we are still facing problems and still waiting, we can praise God anyway.

Sister Perseus Decker

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### *Another Year With Jesus*

*I do not know what God in love  
Has planned for me this coming  
year,  
But this I know, come weal  
Or woe, with Him I will not fear.*

*I do not know what rugged paths  
I'll have to tread or highways drear,  
But this I know, where'er I go,  
God will be ever near.*

*I do not know what coming days  
Will hold for me, of joy or pain,  
But this I know, God loves me so,  
And all He sends is gain.*

Author Unknown

Do you have a power shortage?  
In Acts 1:8 Jesus said, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you."

*Numbers 32:20 And Moses said unto them, If ye will do this thing, if ye will go armed before the LORD to war,*

*21 And will go all of you armed over Jordan before the LORD, until he hath driven out his enemies from before him,*

*22 And the land be subdued*

*before the LORD: then afterward ye shall return, and be guiltless before the LORD, and before Israel; and this land shall be your possession before the LORD.*

*23 But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out.*

*24 Build you cities for your little ones, and folds for your sheep; and do that which hath proceeded out of your mouth.*

*25 And the children of Gad and the children of Reuben spake unto Moses, saying, Thy servants will do as my lord commandeth.*

# "Be Sure Your Sin Will Find You Out"



*Brother Reggie Stegmeier*

## **Nothing Is Hidden From God**

In our Scripture text, we find that Moses was addressing the children of Israel concerning the Lord's requirements for them and what would happen if they disobeyed. I want to draw your attention to verse 23, which reads, "But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against

the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out." This verse begins with a conjunction, introducing a contrasting statement. What was the contrasting statement? In essence, Moses said, "If you are disobedient, your sin will find you out."

I want to talk to you about one of the oldest lies in the devil's toolbox, a trick that he

still uses on young people today. That lie and that trick is, no one will ever find out what you did. This lie has worked to deceive humanity since the dawn of time, and yet the truth remains the same. You can be sure that your sin will find you out.

Since the onset of time, when people committed sin, they found that their sin was not hid-

den from God. Beginning in the Garden of Eden, you can read that sin was exposed. We read in Genesis 3:6-11: "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food [the lust of the flesh], and that it was pleasant to the eyes [the lust of the eyes], and a tree to be desired to make one wise [the pride of life], she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

"And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves [because their sin was being exposed] from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?"

Genesis 3:16-17 continues: "Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply [the price that she would pay for sin] thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life." Genesis 3:21 reads, "Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them."

Adam and Eve transgressed

the commandment of God, committed sin, and then hid themselves. Why? Because they knew they had done wrong. Their covering was not good enough. It does not matter what good you do in your life on your own to try to make your life better and to make it good, no covering truly covers sin like the blood of Jesus. You need to be saved. You need your sins washed away, and then you will have the covering you need. You will have a clean record, a clean conscience, and freedom from guilt, which every-one desires.

Regardless of whether or not anyone finds out about your sin, nothing is hidden from God. He sees all things, and He surely will repay every evil deed. Hebrews 2:2-3 states: "For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward [God does not overlook anything; He sees everything]; How shall we escape; if we neglect [or put off] so great salvation?" Hebrews 4:13 tells us, "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened [the Amplified Bible says 'exposed, naked and defenseless'] unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."

This brings a story to my mind. When my son was five years of age, he was in my study, and he was doing something that I did not think was good. I said, "I told you not to do that anymore."

He said, "Okay." I left the room and came back, and he was doing it again.

I said, "I told you not to do that."

He said, "Well, you weren't in here."

I said: "Wait a minute! God sees everything."

He looked up and said, "But there's a roof over my head."

I said, "God sees through the

roof."

He said: "Wow! God must have awesome eyes." God does have awesome eyes. He sees everything, and you cannot hide anything from the Lord.

### Consider the Latter End

Our Scripture text says in verse 23, "But if ye will not do so [if you will not obey God], behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out." God has built certain principles into this world, and man's ingenuity cannot escape these principles. One of them is that you cannot sin and get by with it. Young person, this comes as a warning. I am going to give you a true life example of someone who did not heed the message and follow God.

There is a true story, written in the form of a poem about the life of Eugene Aram. He lived in the eighteenth century, but the poem is a beautiful illustration about this very point. Eugene Aram lived in the 1700s. He thought that he could commit the perfect crime. He murdered a man and threw the body in the river, but the river was sluggish. It was black as ink, and the depth was extreme.

The next morning the man went down to the riverbank where he had committed the crime only to find that the river had dried up. He then tried to cover the body with a huge pile of leaves, but that night a great wind blew through the area, leaving the cold corpse plainly visible. The poem entitled "The Dream of Eugene Aram" was written about this account. One stanza reads:

*Then down I cast me on my face,  
And first began to weep,  
For I knew my secret then was one  
That earth refused to keep:  
Or land, or sea, though he should be  
Ten thousand fathoms deep.*

Finally, he buried his victim in a remote cave, but years later the skeleton was discovered. He was tried for the crime and executed. You see, his sin had found him out.

There is another way in which sin catches up to a person. It registers itself in inner deterioration, an inner hell of not being able to respect yourself, in compelling you to live underground in blind entanglements of this world, trying to hide your life and run from your record. Even if a man's sin could somehow remain undetected in this life, it will surely overtake him in the next. Unless that sin has been cleansed through the blood of Jesus, it will be brought to light on the Day of Judgment. Whether it is acts, thoughts, motives, or intents of the heart, it will be charged against him and the penalty announced — that penalty, of course, being eternal death. Be sure your sin will find you out.

If you are bound with a sinful habit, God wants to free you from that terrible condition before it is everlastingly too late. You can be free from the habits of this life. I would rather confess my sins to God at an altar of prayer than to be found out at the Judgment; then it would be too late. You do not have to tell the whole world what you have done, but you can repent to God, and Jesus will cover it with His blood. If not for the grace of God, who knows where any of us would be. You may look at some people and say, "Well, that would never happen to me." Friend, but for God's mercy, you could be in the same position.

Some people play around with sin and get into pornography and illicit relationships until it overtakes them and they are found out. How are they found out? Perhaps a baby will be born out of wedlock. Some lose their jobs because of sinful addictions. All these things ex-

pose people's sins. I do not know about you, but I would rather find this truth out first before it found me out.

Some people live secret lives and have secret sins, but they will all come out later. If young people could only see their latter days before it is too late. If only people could wake up and recognize where the path they are currently traveling is heading. If they could see the latter end, I believe they would make some changes. Deuteronomy 32:29 reads, "O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!" The reason preaching like this goes forth is to warn you to consider where the path you are traveling is going to take you. What is the end of that path? God can show you that. You may never end up behind bars, but if you are living in sin, you are bound physically and mentally by sinful habits, and your end will be the same as every other lost soul who is chained up and bound physically. Your end will be hell. In essence, David prayed: "Bring my soul out of prison so that I may praise Thy name. Free me so that I can rightly praise You." Is that not beautiful?

### **Live a Transparent Life**

In Genesis, Chapter 2, everything was open and exposed in the presence of Adam and Eve. Husbands and wives need to be that way. They need to be transparent. My wife has access to my email. She looks at my cell phone and reads my text messages. Parents, you should be able to access your children's cell phones and look around. Young person, you may delete things, but sooner or later, they will be found out.

It is better to live a transparent life, because God sees everything. Even if your mom and dad do not know, God sees, and your life will begin to reflect

whatever you are doing. Your countenance will show. You will not be as excited to be in God's house because your countenance is not in a position to feed on God's Word. Sometimes married folks get in trouble via social media, surfing in places where they should not be. You should live an open life. Is there anything you are hiding? Be sure your sin will find you out.

I want to draw your attention to a few things. Again, Numbers 32:23 says, "But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out." The word *behold* is a verb, meaning "to see or to observe," and it is used to emphasize or to draw attention to a particular point. What is the point that follows? "Be sure your sin will find you out." You may make the choice to disobey God and choose your own path, but sooner or later, your sin will find you out.

The Bible says "be sure," or another rendering says "be certain." This means "without doubt, indeed, or certainly." The truth that is set forth is a principle, and regardless of how you try to cover things, sooner or later, they will be revealed. Isaiah 3:9 states, "The shew of their countenance doth witness against them. . . ." Some people go to church and put on a facade. Jesus called that hypocrisy, but one's countenance witnesses against him. Often a man of God can see in your face when you are struggling. Maybe he does not know the extent of it, but he can see that. The rest of Isaiah 3:9 reads, ". . . and they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not. Woe unto their soul! for they have rewarded evil unto themselves."

I know how it is with a child when he gets into things. Many times you can see it in the expression on his face. Adults are a little more adept at hiding

things. They can put on a smile when down inside they feel angry. However, God sees that thing, and He will give a pastor discernment to see that as well.

"Be sure your sin will find you out." If everyone truly understood, obeyed, and lived by this simple truth presented in the latter part of verse 23 of our Scripture text, there would not be any need for jails or prisons, because everything would be open and exposed. People would not try to hide things. Obeying this simple truth would also clean up the environment in our communities and drive away fears of theft or a threat to your own personal safety.

### **The Price of Disobedience**

Sin will always be exposed. For instance, take the Prophet Jonah. The Bible says in Jonah, Chapter 1, that God called Jonah. Young person, God is calling you. I know how it was when I was younger and making the decision to serve God. The devil is going to bend your ear and say: "You don't really want to serve God. Do you really want to dress that way? Do you really want to go to church all the time? Do you really want to stay away from the parties?" What if you end up in a terrible car accident when you have been out partying? The devil does not tell you all of that.

Jonah 1:1-3 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 [notice this part of the verse]: so he paid the fare thereof, [There is always a price to be paid for disobedience. You can read that in Hebrews, Chapter 2.

Every disobedience received the recompense of reward. How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? No matter how little or how big the disobedience, there is always a payment that must be made.] and went down [that is exactly where disobedience takes you — down] into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD."

Jonah learned this truth the hard way. When God asked him to take a message to Nineveh, he fled to Tarshish, which was the most remote of the Phoenician trading places then-known. Jonah thought he could hide from God. He was a prophet, so he knew better. However, he tried, and the Bible says "he paid the fare thereof." In other words, he disobeyed and paid dearly for his sins. Every man and woman who commits sin pays a dear price for that disobedience.

As remote and distant as Tarshish was, Jonah never truly left the presence of God in the sense of hiding from God. The Bible says in Jonah 1:4, "But the LORD sent out a great wind into the sea. . . ." Jonah ending up in the belly of a great fish was God's mercy. God could have let him go and left him alone, but God sent all those things to give him one more opportunity to go to Nineveh and deliver the message that He had for those people.

Jonah thought he could hide from God and cover his transgression, or sin. However, he soon found that his sin would be exposed. In Jeremiah 23:24 we find the words, "Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the LORD. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD." Jonah soon found that God would have the final say. Jonah sinned and paid the fare thereof. He was found out when God sent out a great wind into the sea that caused a mighty tempest. It was about to

destroy the vessel that Jonah was hiding in and all the men with him. However, Jonah recognized it and told the men to throw him overboard. Jonah made an honest confession.

As a parent, if there are sins in your life, you need to confess them before they prove to be the ruin of your entire family. Sometimes children pay for the sins of their parents. However, if Mom and Dad live right, the children will be blessed. The Bible says in Isaiah 29:15, "Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the LORD." Jonah found that even the deep ocean cannot hide from God's presence. In fact, that was the time he needed the Lord the most. God can reach down and bring you out no matter how deep in sin you are.

### **The Way of the Transgressor Is Hard**

Thousands of men and women are found out when they are discovered by our justice system and thrown into prison. The price of the tobacco habit can take its toll on a man or a woman after many years of chewing or smoking tobacco. They may end up with cancer. The drinker of alcohol or other strong drinks may end up being diagnosed with cirrhosis of the liver and given only a few months to live. The lustful individual may be found out when someone who is not their own spouse is found to be with child from promiscuous activity. The liar and the cheater will be found out when the truth is revealed. The hypocrite is found out when another saint sees him in the community away from church and engaging in sinful activities and dressing immodestly.

Some people get the idea that this is the temple of God and all they have to do is act saintly and

dress saintly at church and they are good. No, the body is the temple of God, and no matter where the temple goes, it needs to be holy, clean, pure, and modest. You take God everywhere you go. You had better believe the Gospel. Proverbs 13:15 reads, "Good understanding giveth favour: but the way of transgressors is hard."

Young person, I want to warn you. You may think that this message is silly and that prison is silly. You might have no comprehension, but it comes as a warning that the way of the transgressor is hard. Those who are involved in relationships with individuals who are not saved will tell you that home life is difficult. Raising children in a divided home is difficult, but it does not have to be that way. You may weep and cry over this choice and that decision and this end, but it does not have to be that way. God has a remedy. He has a way to escape that. There is still a healing balm in Gilead.

How about social media? Posts on social media witness against and find and expose people's sins all the time. You need to be careful of what posts you like and the comments you make. Be careful of commenting on pictures where people are dressed immodestly and saying, "Beautiful picture." You are encouraging that behavior, and God will hold you responsible. You should be very careful of what you like, what you agree with, and what you comment on because people are watching, and that could destroy your influence and your testimony. The greatest power you have as a Christian is in your own personal testimony. You ought to weigh your words wisely, but you certainly should not want to encourage wrong behavior.

A big fad today is tattoos. People get them all over and then dress immodestly so they can

expose the tattoos. Does God want you to do that? No, your body is His temple. He does not want you to mark your body. That is desecrating the temple; it is putting graffiti on God's temple.

### The Day of Opportunity

Your sin will expose you. Like Cain, your sin might have been done in secret. Like Esau, it might have been done under the impulse of a moment. Like Joseph's brothers, it may be years before it is discovered. Like Aaron, it might have been done to please people or some so-called friends. Like Achan, it might be covered up. Like Samson, it might have been done reluctantly. Like Ahab, it might have been prompted by others. Like Belshazzar, it might have been done under the influence of strong drink. Like Herod, it might have been the result of a foolish promise. Like Judas, it might have had the approval of the authorities. Like Pilate, it might have been done to gratify the public. Regardless of how the sin is committed, sooner or later, it will be exposed.

The answer is, live an open, clean, upright, and wholesome life. The Bible says to shun the very appearance of evil. You must stay away from things that appear sinful and evil. Some things may not be sinful, but even if they look sinful, you need to stay away from them so you can keep your record clean.

Sin will wrap itself around you one cord at a time, until the rope is too thick to be broken. Sin will take you further than you want to go, and it will keep you longer than you want to stay. If you are not willing to reveal your sin to God and expose your life, sooner or later, it will be exposed, but it may be too late. At the great Judgment, that will be too late to make things right.

Now is the day of opportunity. Second Corinthians 6:2 reads: "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." How is it in your own personal, secret life? The key to being a saint is to be a saint in secret. If you are not a Christian at home, acting as you should, dressing as you should, posting only what you should, "liking" only posts that you should, you are not going to be a Christian in public. The only thing that can cover your sins is the blood of Jesus. A song entitled "The Blood of Jesus" reads:

*You may have some hidden sin  
You've tried to cover deep within,  
And everybody thinks your life  
is in control.*

*You can run, but you can't hide,  
God sees everything inside,  
But forgiveness waits at the  
foot of Calvary's Cross.*

Most people want to cling to just one sin. Like the rich, young ruler, they will tell you, "I will follow You, Lord, but I cannot give up this one thing." We must forsake all to serve God. That one sin is all that it will take to keep you out of Heaven. It only takes one sin to thwart your progress in the Kingdom of God. Just one sin can wipe you out. You need to yield to God and let Him clean up your life.

Is there anything in your life that you know you should not be doing, but you are doing it anyway because you are bound? Are you trying to hide it? Maybe it is a relationship that you know you should not be in. Maybe it is a social media thing that you are involved with that you should not be involved with. Now is the day of opportunity and the time to expose things before they find you out. Do you have a need? Again, the Scripture says, "Be sure your sin will find you out."

*(Compact Disc TR-1960)*

*Psalm 13:5 But I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation.*

*6 I will sing unto the LORD, because he hath dealt bountifully*

*with me.*

*Psalm 48:9 We have thought of thy lovingkindness, O God, in the midst of thy temple.*

*Psalm 143:8 Cause me to hear*

*thy lovingkindness in the morning; for in thee do I trust: cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto thee.*

# Watch for Resentful Spirits



*Brother Irwin Sesher*

## **God's Word Is Against Covetousness**

We live in such a competitive world. People look at others and desire their looks, their wealth, their homes, their cars, their jobs, and anything else you can think of. Many people are dissatisfied with what the Lord has blessed them with. When I see pictures of the devastation in places where they had bad storms come through, I am thankful that God spared me from going through that. We are not thankful enough for what God has given us and for what He has spared us from. We have a God who watches

over us and protects us and sees exactly what we need in this world. The Lord has blessed us with many things. A man once said, "Personal insecurity can breed a host of jealous strife when it comes to resentful spirits."

Oftentimes people base their security on the opinions, the affirmation, and the acceptance of other people. When they feel rejected or unloved, they become dangerously insecure, leading them to perceive the strength of other people as threats to their own well-being. To battle these insecurities, they need to turn to the Lord and His Word to show

them His unfailing love and acceptance. Friend, if you are struggling along this line, you should not dwell on what you do not have, but instead you should be thankful for what you already possess. Many wish they had so many other things, but they are not thankful for what God has already given them.

Covetousness is a deep desire to obtain a possession belonging to another person. This leads to aggressive jealousy that is often spoken against in the Word of God. The Ten Commandments addressed this issue in Exodus 20:17, which states, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house,

thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's." Covetousness invades when you are dissatisfied with the blessings that God has bestowed upon you.

The Lord is concerned with how you use the material things that are given to you. Are you truly thankful for what God has blessed you with? If not, you ought to be. What you possess is what the Lord thinks you can handle. Many people cannot handle a lot of things. Some people say, "I wish I had this, this, and this." The Lord may not think you can handle any more. He gives you exactly what you need. The reason many people have trouble with their possessions is, they want theirs and they reach out to try to secure others from friends and neighbors. May God help us to be thankful for what we have. Life is too short and eternity is too long to covet something that you really cannot have. You should be thankful for what God has given you.

### **"Godliness With Contentment Is Great Gain"**

God wants to use you to make a difference in this world. You may say, "Oh, I am just a little person." Look how God used people in the Word of God to spread His message. God used different individuals who were small in the sight of God; nevertheless, God used these individuals to spread His Word. He wants to work through you. What matters is not the duration of your life, but the donation of it. It is not how long you have lived that matters, but *how* you live that makes the difference. You need to be content with what the Lord has blessed you with.

Often envy wants to rear its ugly head, so to speak, when people become lean in their

souls. Some people are just not happy. They really do not know what true happiness is. As a Christian, are you showing what true happiness is to the world? There is a lost and dying world out there, and many people would love to have peace in their souls. They go to bed at night wanting peace and contentment, and they think they can find it in a drug, a bottle, a cigarette, or something else. Peace and contentment cannot be found in vices. They can only be found in salvation. That is the reason you ought to tell others what God has done for you.

First Timothy 6:6-7 reads: "But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out." I have never seen a U-Haul trailer on the back of a hearse. Some people do not even know there is a Heaven and a hell. They just think that once a person is dead, that is the end of him. No, there is something after death, and it is called eternity. After death is the Judgment, and a man is going to be judged by what he did in this life.

Did you know you can kill people with your words? Yes, you can. Also, you can kill your influence by how you act, by what you say to others, and by how you react to a situation. You must realize that being content takes effort. Sometimes you may go through life thinking that things are going to be just fine, and then the trials and the storms hit you, and you may tend to panic.

Being content with what you have and what you do will increase your faith. You may pray for material things, but that will not make you happy. God knows this and He knows you. He knows you better than anyone. He knows your desires and your thoughts even before they become thoughts. Even though you

go through difficult times, if you ponder the Scriptures, you can be contented. Paul never gave up. He kept going no matter how much pain he suffered. Why? He trusted Jesus and knew that one day the Lord would make it right for him.

### **King Ahab Coveted Naboth's Vineyard**

I want you to consider a very familiar story in the Bible. Envy and covetousness can be a fatal demise to people who let it control them. We read in 1 Kings 21:1-16: "And it came to pass after these things, that Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard, which was in Jezreel, hard by the palace of Ahab king of Samaria. And Ahab spake unto Naboth, saying, Give me thy vineyard, that I may have it for a garden of herbs, because it is near unto my house: and I will give thee for it a better vineyard than it; or, if it seem good to thee, I will give thee the worth of it in money. And Naboth said to Ahab, The LORD forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee. [Naboth was telling King Ahab exactly how it was. Naboth was not going to back off and that is what you need to do when people question your salvation. You need to stand up for God and for the Word of God. This is the time to stand as children of God.]

"And Ahab came into his house heavy and displeased because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him: for he had said, I will not give thee the inheritance of my fathers. And he laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread. But Jezebel his wife came to him, and said unto him, Why is thy spirit so sad, that thou eatest no bread? And he said unto her, Because I spake unto Naboth the Jezreelite, and said unto him,

Give me thy vineyard for money; or else, if it please thee, I will give thee another vineyard for it: and he answered, I will not give thee my vineyard [Ahab had a lot of control, but he pouted; He wanted something that he could not have].

"And Jezebel his wife said unto him, Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel? arise, and eat bread, and let thine heart be merry: I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite. So she wrote letters in Ahab's name, and sealed them with his seal, and sent the letters unto the elders and to the nobles that were in his city, dwelling with Naboth. And she wrote in the letters, saying, Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people: And set two men, sons of Belial, before him, to bear witness against him, saying, Thou didst blaspheme God and the king. And then carry him out, and stone him, that he may die.

"And the men of his city, even the elders and the nobles who were the inhabitants in his city, did as Jezebel had sent unto them, and as it was written in the letters which she had sent unto them. They proclaimed a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people. And there came in two men, children of Belial, and sat before him: and the men of Belial witnessed against him, even against Naboth, in the presence of the people, saying, Naboth did blaspheme God and the king. Then they carried him forth out of the city, and stoned him with stones, that he died. Then they sent to Jezebel, saying, Naboth is stoned, and is dead.

"And it came to pass, when Jezebel heard that Naboth was stoned, and was dead, that Jezebel said to Ahab, Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give thee for money: for Naboth is not alive, but dead. And it came to pass, when Ahab

heard that Naboth was dead, that Ahab rose up to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, to take possession of it." You can see how sad this account was.

### Accepting Godly Counsel

Sin will cause you to do things that you really do not want to do, but if you have covetousness in your heart, there is no telling what you might do. A very good lesson is taught there about an individual who wanted something so desperately that his wife had someone killed so he could possess it. You see, friend, a lot of people do not like to hear the word no. I grew up in a time when no meant no, and that was the end of the discussion. Sometimes you hear parents and children in a store, and they sound like a negotiation team, going back and forth. When I was growing up, if I argued with my parents, I would have felt a hand across my face.

What is wrong with telling children no sometimes? It will not hurt their ego. As a parent, it is your job to do what you think is best for them. You brought them into this world, and it is your job to raise them right and to discipline them. We are living in a world where many children do not want to be told no. As I was growing up, I heard the word no plenty of times, and I turned out all right.

Sometimes when people seek godly counsel, they do not like to hear the word no. They just do exactly what they want to do. The Lord places the pastor in a position to give godly counsel, and as a part of that congregation, you ought to accept that godly counsel. Why would you want to ask about a certain thing if you are going to do what you want to do anyway?

Too many people have selective hearing. Their minds

are only geared for themselves. They do not think about how they will affect others. As the watchman on the wall, the pastor can see further down the road than you can. The Greek word for pastor is *poimen*. The literal meaning of the word is "shepherd." The Greek word is translated as shepherd seventeen times in the New Testament: Four times it is used of literal shepherds caring for literal sheep. Eight times it refers to Jesus as the Great Shepherd of the church. Four times it refers to the leadership of true believers as either true or false leaders. One time it is used as an office in the church. In all contexts, other than in Ephesians 4:11, it is used as a shepherd because God's people are viewed as the sheep of His flock.

True saints of God are not faultfinders or backstabbers. They do not find fault with one another, with the song leader, with the choir director, with the special singers, with the Sunday school teachers, or with the players on the instruments. A faultfinding spirit will lead to other spirits. If you have one bad spirit, you will pick up another one.

Envy and strife would love to come and camp out on your doorstep, so to speak. The enemy of souls wants to get you to the point where you do not want to praise God or testify. There is more to serving God than just taking up a seat in a church service. You have a job to do as a saint of God. I want to be a witness in this old world. I want to tell others what Jesus Christ has done for me. If He can do it for me, He can do it for you. Saint of God, you have something to get excited about! I am a firm believer that whatever is down inside is going to radiate to the outward man. If you have salvation down inside, others are going to see it outwardly.

## Having an Envious Spirit

Getting back to our Scripture lesson, Naboth had a vineyard, and I am sure it was very nice. Those people took care of their vineyards, just as we need to take care of our salvation. Sometimes you need to get in your vineyard and weed out what should not be there. You need to take care of your salvation. If you do not take care of it, you will lose it quickly.

Ahab, the king of Samaria, desired Naboth's vineyard for his own. King Ahab tried to bargain with Naboth. He said he would either pay him for it or give him another vineyard. Naboth refused the king's offer because his vineyard had been passed down to him as an inheritance, and he was forbidden to do so.

As I was studying about this, I thought, if the devil wants something dear to your soul, you should not give in. As a child of God, you have something that the devil wants. He wants your soul. You dare not give in to the enemy. God gave His best when He sent His only Son to die on the Cross for your salvation. Do not give it up. Life is too short and eternity is too long for you to give up your soul for something frivolous. The enemy wants you to sell out your salvation for the trinkets of this old world. He is out to kill your confidence and destroy your character, your mind, and your body. The devil wants to destroy everything about you. He wants control. He wants to determine your destiny in life. He wants to steal the life that God has given you. He wants you to feel as if you are doomed. Your salvation is very precious.

Naboth's vineyard was a dear inheritance. He did not want to give it up at any cost. Do you know what happens when the enemy is turned away? He gets angry. When you turn away the enemy, he goes back and re-

evaluates, and sometimes he comes back at you with something even worse. He gets upset, stomps, and snorts. He goes through the planning stages of revenge. King Ahab laid down on his bed and faced the wall and pouted and would not eat. Can you imagine a king doing that? What a pathetic sight to see a king pouting because he could not have his own way! That is what happens today to some people who cannot get their own way. Sometimes people can be easily turned over to an envious spirit.

King Ahab's wife tried to console him, and what a wicked woman she was! She wrote letters to set up Naboth. When people do wrong, there are usually others who want to support the wrong. She got two men to witness against Naboth and accuse him of blaspheming against God and the king. They carried him out of the city and stoned him. Think of that! The blood of an innocent man was on their skirts. Everything seemed fine with Naboth out of the way. Queen Jezebel told King Ahab in 1 Kings 21:15, "Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give thee for money: for Naboth is not alive, but dead."

### God Sees All Things

How many people today want to play a game with God? They are out trying to play a game, thinking that they have pulled a fast one and no one will ever see or hear about it. Friend, you cannot hide anything from God's eyes. He knows if you try to take advantage of someone else. You may say: "Well, that car has faulty brakes, but I am going to sell it to this brother. I'll give him a good deal, but I won't tell him about the brake problem." You had better be honest with

people. How would you feel if he bought that car and had an accident because of brake failure? You would feel terrible, would you not? If you are truly a Christian, you will be honest. You will not try to hide things or be dishonest in your business transactions.

The Lord knows if you have been dishonest in your tax preparations. Someone may say: "Well, I think I will claim the dog and the cat and the hamster. The government will not know anything about it." God knows. Do you claim things you should not be claiming?

Getting back to our earlier Scripture reading, we found that God sent Elijah down to pay a visit to King Ahab. God knows how to get people's attention. He started asking King Ahab some questions, and King Ahab took offense to the questioning. Just as some people today will rise up when caught between a rock and a hard place, so to speak. They may say, "Well, I don't think it is any of your business." Well, God exposed it for what it really was. Do you realize that God is still in control today?

When King Ahab was caught, he humbled himself. However, the fate of his wife was a different ending. God accepted the humbleness of King Ahab, but because of what he did, it had long-lasting effects down to his son. Dear one, you reap what you sow. You might feel that the Lord overlooks things, but others could suffer because of your actions. First Kings 21:27 says, "And it came to pass, when Ahab heard those words, that he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly."

You might think that God overlooks what you do, but that is not so. Sometimes people overstep and think everything is just fine, but God knows all about them. As a Christian, you need to

stay strong. You should not give in to envious spirits that try to cause you to do things that you will wish that you had not done. When the enemy comes at you to try to get you to do the wrong thing, you need to first analyze the situation to see how the action might affect you, and then consider how it could affect others. Remember, temptation is not sin, but it only becomes sin if you give in to the temptation. As someone once stated, "You cannot keep the devil from suggesting thoughts, but you can choose not to dwell on those thoughts or to act on them."

### **God Is Concerned About Your Needs**

Have you been battling envious thoughts? Do not dwell on them. You can have the power that you need through Jesus Christ to overcome those thoughts. Do not think the Lord gets tired of hearing your cry when you are having problems

in your life. I have never met anyone who did not have any problems. We all have problems. We all go through stressful situations. Being a teacher for so many years, I went through some stressful situations, not only with children but with their parents.

As a child of God, you need to be thankful that you have someone to whom you can go. It would be terrible if you did not have anyone to go to about your needs, to hear your thoughts, and to hear your problems. The Lord wants to hear all about your problems, no matter how minute they might be. He wants to help you with your problems. Why? He is God, and He is concerned about your needs. Perhaps you are going through a time of affliction. God wants to hear about your affliction, and He will help you through that affliction. He will give you Scriptures and words of encouragement to help you go through whatever trial you are going through. That is just how God works. I am

thankful for that.

The Lord's patience is remarkable. Sometimes if you had to depend upon the patience of others, it would not work, but thank God He has patience with each of us. I thank God for His patience, His power, and His grace to work through circumstances. He will be right there for you. Do not be hesitant to ask Him for the power to do the right thing. He is all powerful. No matter what circumstance or job you face, large or small, He can help you to overcome it. He will guide you through the most difficult situations that you face in your life.

If you have a need in your heart or if you are lacking this experience in your life, you need to pray. God is faithful, and He will be right there to hear your prayer if you come to Him and let Him know that you need Him in your life.

*(Compact Disc TR-1994)*

## ***Hidden Treasures***

Someone once said: "God has hidden every precious thing in such a way that it is a reward to the diligent and a prize to the earnest, but a disappointment to the slothful soul. All nature is arrayed against the lounging and the idler. The nut is hidden in its thorny case. The pearl is buried beneath the ocean waves. The gold is imprisoned in the rocky bosom of the mountain. The gem is found only after you crush the rock that encloses it. The very soil gives its harvest as the reward of industry to the laboring husbandman. So Truth and God must be earnestly sought. They that seek shall find and 'to him that knocketh it shall be opened.'"

Selected

# Faith

Doesn't the Lord say in Mark 11:24, "Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them"?

Does not the Bible also say in Psalm 37:4, "Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart" ?

Doesn't Christ say in Luke 11:9-10: "And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened"?

Did not the Lord say in Matthew 17:20, "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you"?

When the woman of Caanan came out of the same coasts, and cried to Jesus, saying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil." She continued her appeal, and finally, Jesus answered and said to her, "O woman, great is thy faith." He was not implying that she had enough faith to fill a bushel basket, but He did see in her by her continuing to plead her need and press her request that her faith was free of doubts. I would say, she had mustard seed faith.

As an illustration, allow me to add a personal experience of receiving help from the Lord. It was many years ago, when the main food for our family was ground wheat cereal and canned

peaches with a little sugar and skimmed milk, when available. We bought the wheat about a bushel at a time and bought overripe peaches, or culls, at the large local peach orchards for 15 to 35 cents per bushel. In peach season we canned many gallons for a year round supply. What a blessing for that wheat and those peaches! They were almost a balanced diet. Then as long as we had a little sugar and milk of some kind for seasoning, both parents and children felt that we were faring well enough, though not sumptuously.

Well, here is the kernel of the incident. I was sitting in the church one night happily enjoying the service when it seemed that Satan tapped me on the shoulder and reminded me that we had no sugar for our cereal the next morning. Immediately I felt very badly. I then remembered that only minutes before, I was happy, but now, thinking about not having sugar, I was disturbed. I quickly resolved to push those thoughts about not having sugar from my mind.

In this, I succeeded and was again happily enjoying the service. When the service was over, I yet had not thought about being out of sugar, but a big miracle happened with a small incident. An aged brother, who had never before, and never since, given me an offering, walked straight to me from his seat and shook hands with me and left a silver dollar in the palm of my hand.

Immediately, in His way of speaking, the Lord said, "Now you can have the sugar." The grocery store was only two blocks away.

The older man knew nothing of our need. I could recall an endless chain of similar incidents, small and great, but mentioned this simple one to illustrate simple faith, a faith with all doors closed and barred against doubts. David said in Psalm 37:5 and 7: "Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass. . . . Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him."

We often think we are waiting patiently for Him, when in fact we are waiting impatiently, wrapped in a chain of doubts. Job's poor wife watched Job suffer for days and days. Finally, she advised him to just give up. She said in Job 2:9, "Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die."

In verse 10 Job answered, "Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips."

I do not know how many weeks or months longer Job suffered, but Job declared in Job 23:10, "But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold."

Job 42:12 reads, "So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning."

God wants us to believe His promises regardless of pain, threats, delays, or any kind of surroundings. Remember, God's promised blessings can be kept from reaching us only by doubts or unfaithfulness.

Satan will say to you, "If God intended to answer you, He would have done so by this time." So often people give up when God is about to answer. Jesus prayed for Peter, that his faith fail not. Let us pray for one another, and remember, there is hope as long as there is life.

Selected

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