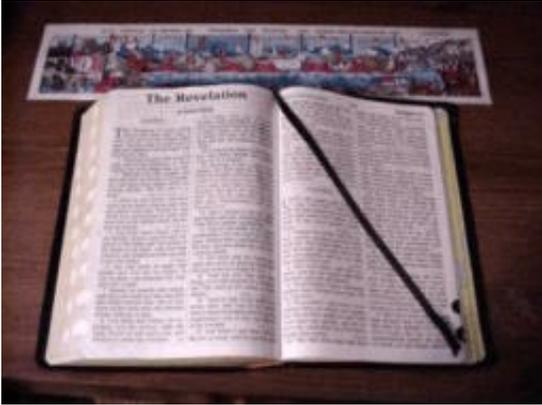


Figurative Language

Brother Emerson A. Wilson



Isaiah 11:1 And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:

2 And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD;

3 And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears:

4 But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.

5 And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.

6 The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.

7 And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

8 And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice's den.

9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

10 And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.

Habakkuk 2:14 For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

A "Now" Experience

There are some wonderful things that shine forth in these Scripture texts that are to be fully enjoyed in this day and time. False religion, through the work of Satan, has taken the "now" out of these beautiful prophecies. This is one of the devil's ways of working. He will even allow you to get on the trail of something good, but he wants to take the "now" out of it.

We are living in a day and time when many are not able to lay hold of what they really desire from God, and they allow the devil to make them feel, "Well, maybe I'll get it after awhile." This is the devil's work. Nominal religion will own the fact that Christ came to save from sin, but they teach that He does not save from sin now. Since the Bible plainly teaches that He *does* save from sin now, false religion's only option is to set up some false age in the minds of men.

The enemy has tried to take the "now" out of all the precious blessings that God ordained for us to enjoy through Jesus Christ. When we boil it right down, according to false religion, there is not much for people to enjoy now. This is why they are not finding any real enjoyment in serving God. Why? They just have to take faith in some supposed future age when they will enjoy all the blessings of salvation.

We now want to deal with this question: When and in what dispensation of time do these things find fulfillment that the prophet talked about, such as the wolf dwelling with the lamb, the leopard with the kid, the young lion with the calf, the cow and the bear feeling together, and the earth being filled with the knowledge of God?

The first five verses of our Scripture text refer directly to the coming Messiah and what He would do. He lets us know that He will judge in righteousness. He will not judge according to the eye or the ear. The Scriptures tell us that He is going to rebuke people through the very Gospel for the way that they carry on and the way they live. Those first five verses are dealing with Christ in His first coming.

Someone may ask, "How can you say that He is the rod out of the stem of Jesse, etc.?" Revelation 22:16 lets

us know that Christ is the offspring of David. Jesse was David's father, and Christ came out of that lineage. So when the Bible speaks of something growing out of Jesse's roots, it is pointing to Christ. All you have to do is read the next four verses to know that no man, at any period of time, had all these qualities which this individual will possess. It is speaking of Christ, the Messiah, in His first advent.

A Change of Nature

When Isaiah began to talk about the wolf dwelling with the lamb, etc., he was merely bringing forth the thought that through Christ's salvation men who will take the rebuke of the Gospel will have their natures changed. When Isaiah referred to wolves, leopards, lions, and bears, he was referring to the natures of individuals before they meet Christ.

The leopard is always taken through the Bible as the spotted condition of sin. Jeremiah asked the question, "Can . . . the leopard [change] his spots?" (Jeremiah 13:23). The leopard is used in the Bible as the spotted condition of sin because the leopard is the only animal whose spots go deeper than his hide. It lets us know that the spots on a leopard are deep; they are in his very nature.

God takes the spotted condition of the leopard to show the sinful condition of man. It is not something on the outside. There is no need to try to work on the outward circumstances of a man to rid him of sin, because it goes into his nature. He is spotted deep down inside. The entirety of Jeremiah 13:23 reads, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil." If the leopard ever gets his spots changed, it will take the hand of God to do it; and that is exactly what he was talking about here.

Thank God, through the saving grace of Jesus Christ, through the precious blood of Christ, one whose sin is deep in his nature, as spots are in a leopard, will come forth looking like a lamb—pure, white, and clean.

The Prophet was prophesying to us how the grace of God in this glorious dispensation came to destroy these devouring natures of men. He can make the most lionhearted and ferocious character, docile and harmless. Real salvation brings a change, and this is the picture that Isaiah portrayed to us. It also teaches the glorious love and unity that exist among the people of God in the Kingdom of God, or the Church of God. There is no wrangling, backbiting, or deceit, but there is peace that nothing can offend.

God's Holy Mountain

Millennialists will tell you that this is going to take place in the whole world at Christ's second coming, but the Bible will let us know that it will only take place in God's holy mountain. The place of the fulfillment of all this prophecy is in God's holy mountain. Let us find where God's holy mountain is and also when it came into being.

We read in Isaiah 2:2, "And it shall come to pass in the last days [the Holy Ghost dispensation, from Pentecost to the end of time], that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it." This speaks of Mount Zion, the mountain of the Lord's house, standing high above all the hills of Babylon (false religion). This does not refer to Old Testament Zion. All nations flow into this; only one nation came into literal Zion.

It is called a mountain because from the days of Noah clear on through, men thought they were closer to God by being high on a literal mountain. Thank God, though, you and I can understand in New Testament analogy and by the working of the Spirit of God that we can get just as close to God in a basement as we can on the rooftop. They did not think they could pray unless they went up on a mountain, and this thought of a mountain is carried over to the New Testament. We have the mountain of the Lord's house, the church of the Living God, Mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem, the church of the Firstborn.

Also, this Scripture could not refer to old Mount Sinai or old Mount Zion because those mountains were not established in the last days. This mountain of the Lord is to be established in the last days, somewhere this side of Calvary.

So, Isaiah said that the mountain of the Lord's house will be established in the top of the mountains. He also prophesied that the mountain would be exalted above the hills. *Hills*, in the Revelation, symbolize some kind of human religion. The reason they are symbolized as hills and mountains is because they are above just nominal, earthly living. Here is a mountain, however, which is exalted above the hills because God has exalted her.

Every human organization was started by some man or group of men, and man can lift anything only as high as humanity can go. That is why the standard of living out there is just at the level of humanity. They teach you to do the best you can do, but that is a million miles from what Jesus can do with you. These hills merely symbolize human religion where man has exalted himself to a position of guiding and directing supposed-to-be Christians.

Isaiah 2:3 says, "And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem." This Scripture talks about Zion, the church of the Living God. Why do people want you to come up to Zion? So that God will teach you His ways!

We now know that the mountain of the Lord's house is Zion. What is Zion? The Zion that was set up in the New Testament (Hebrews 12:22) is the church of the Firstborn, the church of the Living God. The Word of the Lord will go forth in Zion. You do not receive too many straight words of the Lord from Babylon (false religion) these days. God never even designed for it to come forth from Babylon. What does Babylon teach? They teach their own creeds, their own dogmas, and their own ideas. Why? They have one thing in mind: to get you added to their religious organization.

When you find Zion, however, you will find people who are teaching the Word of God. They are interested in your soul, and they want you to hear what saith the Lord so that your life can be directed. When you find Zion, you will find a people who will walk in His way.

Obedience Is the Key

Let us now consider Isaiah 2:4, which reads, "And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." What does Christ use to judge among the nations? His Word! When the Word of God goes forth, it is judgment. How does He judge by the Word of God? Brother, sister, obedience to God's Word is what puts you in or puts you out. Obedience to God's Word is what makes you a saint or a sinner. It is not joining some church.

Mark 16:15-16 tells us: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." The Gospel, the Word of God, is the thing that judges among the nations. It is not how many schools or catechism classes you attend, how many churches you join, or how many times you are baptized that makes you a Christian. The thing that makes you a Christian is that you believe and obey the Word of God and walk in the light of it. If you refuse any of the light of God's Word, brother, sister, you are on the outside, no matter what you profess.

Christ will not only judge among the nations, but He will also rebuke many. The Gospel is a rebuke to sinners. This is why sinners who do not want to clean up will not stay around where the Word is preached. You cannot keep on sinning and sit where the Word is preached without taking a rebuke. There are people who will take the rebuke. When the Word of God puts a rebuke on their lives, they own it, repent, and get straightened out. Isaiah 2:4 tells us that they who take the rebuke "shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: [There will be a change in their lives. They will get rid of their implements of war, and they will begin to mold plowshares. They become Gospel plowers and plow the ground so the seed can be planted.] nation shall not lift up sword against nation."

What nation? All nations that flow into this mountain. Hold the fact that this is only going to happen in this mountain. When you flow into this mountain through a real experience of salvation, the races will not rise up against each other. Someone may ask, "Why don't the races respect each other as they ought?" Whenever a man will not respect God, there is no need to expect him to respect anyone else; but when he gets to the place where he respects God and God's Word, he will have respect for every one of God's creatures.

Isaiah 2:5 reads, "O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the LORD." Thank God for the light today.

The Day of Salvation

So, the place of the fulfillment of Isaiah, Chapter 11, according to Isaiah, Chapter 2, is not in the literal, material world, but in God's holy mountain. Now, let us find the time of its fulfillment, definitely when it was supposed to take place. Isaiah 11:10 tells us, "And in that day [Not only is this period of time spoken of in the

Bible as the last days, but it is spoken of as the Gospel Day, the accepted time, and the day of salvation. From Pentecost on through until Jesus comes is the day of salvation. When Jesus leaves His mediatorial throne, where He sits at the right hand and intercedes for you as a sinner, He will move to a throne of judgment. When He leaves that mediatorial throne, time will be no more, and there will be no more salvation.] there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign [a standard] of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious."

Romans, Chapter 15, tells of the fulfillment of this Scripture. Let us read verses 8-14: "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: And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written [Psalm 18:49], For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name. And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people [the literal Jews]. And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people.

"And again, Esaias saith [referring to the eleventh chapter of Isaiah], There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign [Christ started to reign when He arose from the dead] over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust [now, Paul addressed the Gentiles]. Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost. And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another. "

In so many words, Paul was saying, "The very thing that Isaiah prophesied has been fulfilled." Isaiah had prophesied that a root would come out of the stem of Jesse and that the Gentiles would seek unto Him. He would lift up an ensign for them, and even the Gentiles would be brought into this great mountain of the Lord's house, as Ephesians the second chapter teaches us. So, the place of its fulfillment is in the mountain of the Lord's house. The time of its fulfillment is in the last days, or the days from Pentecost to the Second Coming of Christ.

Isaiah closed out that portion in the tenth verse (Chapter 11) by saying, ". . . and his rest shall be glorious." You may wonder, "What is His glorious rest?" Matthew 11:28-29 tells us: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me." Now, why don't we learn war anymore? Because we are learning of Him. Thank God, you not only find rest, but you also find peace, and you do not learn war anymore. Through salvation, all those implements of war are beaten into productive implements to build up, and not to destroy or to hurt.

The reason His rest is glorious is that it brings rest to the soul. Oh, how many are short of real rest out here in our world! They are ever weary. It is a sad state we are in when teenagers become weary with living and despair of life. What is the trouble? They need rest. We have been so constructed by God that our souls need rest. I know the body needs rest, but you can get all the rest your body needs and still have an unrest stirring on the inside.

The load of sin, even if it is just one sin, is too heavy to carry. The weight of it builds up day by day, until you become heavy laden with it. The thing that inspires me to keep on preaching is the fact that there are heavy-laden souls over the country who want released from their sins.

The Way of Salvation

Isaiah 35:1-4 tells us: "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them [note the word 'them']; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the LORD, and the excellency of our God. Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you."

Isaiah was talking about Christ in His first advent, and he was talking about people who are like the desert, or out in the wilderness. The Scripture said that the wilderness shall be glad for "them." What are the "them" that Isaiah was talking about? They are the waters. Where did the waters of the Gospel first break out? In the wilderness. John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness; there is where the waters broke out.

Isaiah goes on to say, "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert" (Isaiah 35:5-6). Here, he pictured salvation. You and I are like a desert: we cannot bring forth the first sprout of holiness or righteousness without these waters. But if

we will allow these waters to infiltrate our hearts and souls, then He will come and save us.

Isaiah 35:8 says, "And an highway shall be there [right where He comes and saves you], and a way, [Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. When you come through Jesus, you get on the highway of holiness.] and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; [There are no cleansing stations on the highway of holiness. You get cleaned up before you get on it.] but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein."

God writes this new law on our hearts and on our minds. You may not be able to read or write, but if you are a child of God, you can understand spiritual truth and walk with the Lord. Why? Because it comes through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Friend, we have no excuse for not being able to see light and walk in it. When God sheds the light abroad, if your heart is right and the zeal of your heart is to walk in the light of God's Word, God will get the message to you.

Verses 9-10 ought to clear up some things for us: "No lion shall be there, [Not even a straw-eating lion! Why? Because this highway is a spiritual highway, and literal animals cannot walk on a spiritual highway. Neither can literal animals live in Mount Zion; it is a spiritual church, a spiritual body. He was merely saying that there will be no men or women there with lion-like natures. God changes your nature before you get on the highway.] nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there: And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

He was saying that men who have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb will come to Zion. When people are really converted, they are on their way to Zion. If they hold their experience, you will see them showing up in the Church of God, because that is where the Holy Ghost leads them.

Good Tidings to All People

Let us now consider Habakkuk 2:14 of our Scripture text, which states, "For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea." Millennialists want to say there is a time when the literal world will be covered with righteousness. Isaiah actually said that the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. Please keep in mind that Isaiah 11:1-5 deals with the coming of the Messiah.

Before the coming of the Messiah, the true God was only known by one nation, Israel. Other nations had their own gods. All other nations, with their teeming millions of inhabitants, were at that time without the knowledge of God. Each nation recognized their god as a national god. Literal Israel in the Old Testament recognized Jehovah God as a national God; He was only the God of Israel. Now, Isaiah was speaking of a greater day than that. Both Isaiah and Habakkuk prophesied of a time when Jehovah would be recognized as a God of not merely one nation (speaking of literal nations) but of the whole earth.

Habakkuk prophesied that the whole earth would be filled with this knowledge. When did that happen? Let us read Luke 2:10. It says, "I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." Here was a breaking loose from one nationality, or one nation—literal Israel. Here was a declaration of good tidings to all people. He let us know what the good tidings were: a Savior was born. This Root of Jesse had come as a living reality and was going to bring good tidings to all people.

In Acts 1:8 Jesus told us that "ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." The commission of the Gospel in Matthew 28:19 says, "Go . . . and teach all nations." Mark 16:15 tells us to "preach the gospel to every creature." The commission of the church today is to diffuse the knowledge of God to all nations. We are living right now in the time of the fulfillment of this prophecy. It has to happen before the end.

Matthew 24:14 reads, "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." We are presently in that era of time when the earth is filled with the knowledge of God. He was not talking about people being saved; He merely was letting you know that you have the opportunity of knowing God. Everywhere the Gospel has gone, the opportunity has been afforded for men and women to have a knowledge of God.

The Gospel makes plain the fact that He is not a God of the Jews only. This knowledge of God is for all nations, all people, to the uttermost parts of the earth. Before Jesus comes, the earth will be full of the knowledge of God. People will have enough knowledge of God either to repent and get saved, or to turn it

down and be lost. Then God will be able to bring you to a just judgment because you cannot say that you did not know.

The Last Dispensation

Let us read Habakkuk 2:1-3: "I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved. And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak . . ." This does not refer to the end of time.

In Daniel 12:4 God told Daniel the same thing, saying, "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." When is it going to take place? At the time of the end, many are going to run to and fro with the Gospel, and wherever God sends people to preach the Gospel, knowledge will be increased and people will have a knowledge of God.

Someone may say, "That means the Second Coming of Christ." No, the time of the end began A.D. 33, on the Day of Pentecost. The Gospel Day is not only spoken of as "the last days," but also as "the time of the end." When "the end" really comes, time will be no more. This Scripture refers to the time of the end, or the "end-time" age, the Holy Ghost dispensation.

Paul, speaking of Christ and His work, said, "For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Hebrews 9:26). When did He do it? In the end of the world—A.D. 33—when He went to the Cross.

Do you realize that we are living in the end-time? We have been in the end-time age ever since Calvary. There was the patriarchal age, the age of the Law, the age of the prophets, and the age of the Gospel, or that dispensation of time right between Law and Gospel, a transition time. Then, from Calvary on we have the end-time, or the Holy Ghost dispensation. There is no dispensation to follow this one.

This is why Jesus plainly taught that if you sin against the Father, it will be forgiven you; if you sin against the Son, it will be forgiven you; but if you sin against the Holy Ghost, it will not be forgiven you in this world or in the world to come. Why? If you sinned against the Father, the Son was coming, and He could deal with you and bring forgiveness. If you sinned against the Son, Jesus talked about a greater day, the Holy Ghost dispensation. He will deal with you and forgive you. BUT, when you sin against the Holy Ghost, there is no age to follow, but the judgment. There is no other period of time when there can be any mercy extended. This is the end-time age.

Truth Calls for a Decision

Let us read Habakkuk 2:13. It states, "Behold, is it not of the LORD of hosts that the people shall labour in the very fire, and the people shall weary themselves for very vanity?" Now the fourteenth verse should have more meaning to us, "For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea." Sinner friend, I wonder if you really realize that the Gospel has reached you? Since you know there is a Gospel, you are duty-bound to honor God as God. When that message reaches you, and you refuse to honor and serve God, do you realize what judgment is going to be brought upon you?

Friend, when we are brought face to face with a knowledge of God in truth, truth calls for a decision. There is no one who can hear the truth without making a decision. In Matthew 7:13-14 Jesus said: "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction . . . Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life."

You may have been walking the broad way for a long time, but when you sit under the Gospel, you are brought to a place of decision again. You can cease to walk the broad way. You can start walking the strait and narrow way. Friend, when we refuse the knowledge of God, we are put in a terrible position.

Habakkuk asked, "Behold, is it not of the LORD of hosts that the people shall labour in the very fire, and the people shall weary themselves for very vanity?" When we refuse the knowledge of God and desire to go our way, leaving God out of the picture, we begin to labor in the very fire. When you refuse to labor at spiritual things, you are turned loose to labor at things that are going to burn at any moment. What do people do when they refuse the knowledge of God? God turns them over to worldly living, and away they go. They are out there wearying themselves, ever trying to build up things that are just going to burn in the fire.

Friend, the only things that will stand the judgment shocks of eternity are eternal things, the things that are found in God. Certainly, we must labor for the earthly things as God has taught us, but it is a terrible thing to spend all our energy and wear ourselves out for something that is going to go down the drain in a second of time, leaving us with nothing.

Refusal Brings Condemnation

People may get along pretty well and find certain pleasure and rest in living in the natural world and seeing the beauties of the world. But, let them get a knowledge of God to the place that they understand that God needs them and they need God and that Jesus came to save them. If they refuse that knowledge of God, they will weary themselves trying to find something that will fill the void and the vacuum in their hearts through earthly things. This is why Jesus cried out, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

Let us consider Habakkuk 2:4, which reads, "Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith." When God brings the opportunity of the knowledge of God and your soul lifts up against God, instead of believing and humbling yourself, right there is where you begin to get into trouble.

Verse 5 says, "Yea also, because he transgresseth by wine, he is a proud man, neither keepeth at home, who enlargeth his desire as hell . . . and cannot be satisfied . . ." This shows us how the power of sin cannot be kept at home. It breaks out, and the desire for sin becomes greater and greater. When you have been offered an experience with God and fail to lay hold of it, it is God who begins to cause you to weary yourself in things that avail nothing. Your desire will get as big as hell and never be satisfied.

When you hear and obey the Gospel, however, it will stop the yearning. It will bring an answer to the vacuum of your heart, but if you turn it down, it will stir a greater desire within you. That is why people go from bad to worse when they turn down the Gospel. Brother, sister, there is not enough teaching on the facts of what happens to you if you turn down the Gospel.

Just mark this down—truth cost God too much to let you play with it! It cost hundreds of years, good men being killed, up to the place that Jesus laid down His life, and many other millions, so that you could hear the Gospel. Do you think, after He paid that kind of a price, that He is going to let you scorn the Gospel without suffering for it?

Only Christ Can Satisfy

Habakkuk 2:6 says, "Shall not all these take up a parable against him, and a taunting proverb against him, and say, Woe to him that increaseth that which is not his!" The devil has many people sealed for hell. They just do not feel there could be any way that they could get straightened out, and this is exactly what he wants.

There is a way they can straighten it out, but the devil has them sealed under the feeling that they cannot. He will start out and tell you that the little sin you are committing does not amount to anything. He tells you that anytime you get ready to get right with God, it will only mean confessing, and God will forgive you. He tells you that it will be easy to get everything fixed up, but all the while, he is taking you deeper into sin. He wants to take you to the point of no return. Then, he will tell you that you are too deep in sin and in too bad a shape for God to help you.

Verses 8-11 tell us: "Because thou hast spoiled many nations, all the remnant of the people shall spoil thee; because of men's blood, and for the violence of the land, of the city, and of all that dwell therein. Woe to him that coveteth an evil covetousness to his house, that he may set his nest on high, that he may be delivered from the power of evil! Thou hast consulted shame to thy house by cutting off many people, and hast sinned against thy soul [whenever we fail to turn to God and let Him be the satisfying portion, there will be a covetousness take over]. For the stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it." This merely is speaking of a condition where you cannot find peace at home or anywhere else.

Proverbs 14:14 says, "The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways: and a good man shall be satisfied from himself." Friend, if your ways are not right without God, when you turn down God, you are going to be flooded with those ways that you wish you did not have now. You multiply those wrong ways when you turn God down. Habakkuk came right on and dealt with drink and the many things that men are involved with today. Finally, men get to the place that drink is not enough, so they turn to dope.

Someone may ask, "What could be worse than that?" Well, if Jesus carries, the devil will come up with

something worse than dope. What is one looking for who is shooting himself in the arm and taking a pill? They are looking for that ecstasy, that good feeling. Well, the good feelings that Jesus Christ brings in are lasting moments with no hangovers. Friend, you do not have to use drugs to get rid of the hurt, the pain, and the misery. If you make one old-fashioned, heartfelt trip to an altar of prayer, you will never have to take another trip on drugs. Christ will fix you for time and eternity to walk in the light of His Word.

Will You Hear and Obey?

So, when is the earth going to be filled with the knowledge of the Lord? It is not going to come in some supposed millennial age; it is being filled with the knowledge of the Lord right now. It will only be a little while until this Gospel of the Kingdom will be preached unto all the world, all nations, for a witness. Everyone will have had a chance to know God. The knowledge of God will cover the sea just as the waters cover the sea from shore to shore—from one end to the other.

We are in that day. We are in that time. It is the time of the end. The end can be expected at any hour. Somewhere around this globe, as God looks down, the last soul will be reached, and He will make His decision. God will say: "That's enough. Time will be no more!" We are all going to be ushered into eternity. We will come up before a final judgment.

Someone may say, "I wonder what the judgment will hold?" You know what it holds. There will be no change between death and the Judgment. However death finds us, however Christ's appearance comes on us, that is exactly the way we will stand at the Judgment. That is why the Gospel is preached now. Now is the time of salvation.

Did not Paul say, "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2)? God will not accept you beyond death. God will not accept you in some supposed millennial age. Now is the time to be saved! Today, if you will hear His voice, harden not your heart.

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