

Revelation 15:1 And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.

2 And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.

3 And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of

saints.

4 Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.

5 And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened:

6 And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles.

7 And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who live-

th for ever and ever.

8 And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.

16:1 And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.

2 And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image.

THE PLAGUES

Brother Emerson A. Wilson

A Great and Marvelous Sign

As we continue our study, let us keep in mind that this is the vision which was given to John on the Isle of Patmos. When he begins to say that he saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, he merely is saying that as he looked at this vision, there appeared a sign great and marvelous. That great, and marvelous sign was these seven angels, or messengers, with the seven last plagues.

Now the reason John said this sign was great and marvelous was because of what it produced. He didn't get any thrill out of seeing plagues poured out; he didn't get any thrill out of seeing God put judgment on people, but the great and marvelous part of these seven angels appearing with the plagues was what it produced. Notice verses two and three: it produced a people with victory over the beast, his image, his number and his name.

Too many people under the spir-

it of the age are looking for results without meeting the conditions to see results. This is one of the great failures of our time. We are living in a time when people are sowing thorns and thistles and expecting to reap grapes and figs. They are forgetting that we reap just what we sow. We can make our life beautiful and fruitful, or we can make it full of thorns and thistles. The devil's big move today is to cause man to go out here and seek something that will never come to pass. Why? Because they never meet the requirements for it to happen.

We will never see a people standing on the sea of glass, shouting victory over the beast, Roman Catholicism, his image, Protestantism, and all the marks and numbers of names, until we see the appearing of this marvelous sign in heaven. Why? People must be told the truth. The judgments must be put on false religion before people will even gain victory over false religion.

There are too many who do not

know that what they are in is false. Too many do not know that what they are in is an abomination to God. They are deceived in feeling that God is working through it. I'm not saying in any way that there are no saved people in Babylon, because there are. If they are saved, the Spirit of God is working through their life to the extent that He can. But as far as the Holy Ghost blessing Babylon, He is not blessing it.

The two witnesses (the Word and Spirit) came out of there in the eleventh chapter of Revelation, and they have never gone back there. God is not calling preachers to go preach in Babylon. God is not leading people to go join human organizations, but men in their deception feel that He is.

Someone may say, "I'd like to see that eighth verse fulfilled like it used to be: the temple filled with smoke from the glory of God until men can't stand to minister and nobody can come into the temple until the vials are poured out." We

can see it if we are willing to pay the price. We can see it if we are willing to get right back and build the temple according to the blueprint. When did the glory of God and smoke move into the old tabernacle, into the old temple? As soon as it was built according to the blueprint. The power and the glory of God filled the place until the priests couldn't stand to minister.

The reason they couldn't stand to minister was because the blood of bulls and goats, the sacrifices they were offering, couldn't take away sin. It is the same reason that no man can enter the temple until these vials are poured out. Until these vials are poured out, or until the truth is laid bare unto people, they can't see the error of what they are in. They can't see that God is calling them out of there.

The reason we don't see more people come out of Babylon and take a stand for truth is because there is not enough judgment laid on Babylon when strangers are around. Judgment has to be put on Babylon before men can enter into the temple. "Why," someone may say, "they are a part of the Church of God." Yes, every born-again person is a member of the church, but they are not in the functional, working temple until they come out of Babylon and get placed in a local, working phase of the Church of God. They are not going to enter into it until somebody pours out the plagues, until somebody tells them what Babylon is. What a terrible condition they are in out here in man-made religion.

The Bride, the Lamb's Wife

Someone may feel that we are putting too much emphasis on the one body, the church. Well, who showed John the evening-time church? Let's get right down to it. John saw the morning-time church, but he saw her go into apostasy. John wept; he thought that was the end. Who showed him that there was going to be an evening-time

church over here?

Revelation 21:9 tells us, "... one of the seven angels which had the seven vials . . . talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife [the church of the evening time]." You can't show people the Church of God by just preaching the blood of Jesus. Brother, it takes some pouring out of the vials on false religion. So, who showed John the bride of the evening time? One of the seven angels which had the seven plagues that I am preaching about. Who showed John the woman, mystery Babylon? One of the seven angels which had the seven vials.

I want you to see why this was a sign great and marvelous to John. These seven angels unfolded to John a picture of the church of the evening time. His vision changed. Through the preaching and teaching of these angels who had the seven vials, he saw who the eighth beast was, this deceptive thing that faces us today. John not only wondered after that beast, but the whole world also wondered after it. The World Council of Churches, incorporating churches of all kinds, is wondering after that beast. Very few are pouring out the vials.

John saw this as a great and marvelous sign because the appearing of these plague angels meant that the vials of judgment were going to be poured out on false religion. For what other reason was it a great and marvelous sign? Way back in the sixth chapter of Revelation, John heard the souls under the altar over in Heaven who had been beheaded, burned, and martyred for the Word of God. They were crying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" (verse 10).

When John saw a ministry that was going to put judgment on Babylon, it was a great and marvelous sign to him. Brother, when this ministry came and began to pour out their vials, false religion was going to get what was coming to them.

The church was going to be encouraged, blessed, strengthened, and able to be the Church of God in these closing days of time.

Right here is the message that will put the power and the fire back into the church. It will do it. One of these angels showed John the evening-time church, and he showed John who Babylon is. So when these angels appear, someone is going to see something. Sometimes people see more than they want to see. There is going to be a revelation both ways as these angels pour out the vials: a revelation of false religion that will turn you away from it, and a revelation of truth that will point you to the church.

Truth Reveals the Church

Let us read Revelation 15:5: "After that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened." This is just another expression of the church. He said, "After that I looked . . ." After what? The fourth verse said, ". . . all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest." Mark it down, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven is going to be opened.

Why is the church called the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven? In Hebrews, Chapter 9, Paul taught that there was a temple built by the first testament. That first temple was just a shadow of the heavenly temple. He goes on to tell you what the heavenly temple is—the church of the Firstborn, the body of Christ, the church of the living God.

So, when the judgment was made manifest, he said, ". . . behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened." The church began to open up before the minds of men and women. People cannot come to a knowledge of the truth until they hear the truth. When they hear the truth, if they are willing to receive it and obey it, truth will call for a move. You must

"come to" that knowledge of truth that God gives you.

Why is it called the "testimony in heaven"? There was only one temple built by the Old Testament, and there is only one temple built by the New Testament. Hebrews 12:22-23 tells us: "But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God . . . and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven . . ." We read in verse 25, ". . . if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth [under the first testament], much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven." So this is the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven; God is speaking out of heaven to give divine direction to His people in this day and time.

"O Earth, Earth, Earth . . ."

Let's read Revelation 16:1-2: "And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth. And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men . . ."

For people who have not studied the Revelation, we want to make it plain that it was not poured out on the terra firma. The Bible said that it fell on men: ". . . there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men . . ." What kind of men? Why does verse one say it was to be poured out upon the earth? My friend, it is poured out on earthly-minded people, people who are bound by the things of time, disregarding the heavenly.

There has never been such a time when man was so bound by the earth as he is now. My friend, some people's minds are completely taken up with earthly things. There is no place at all within their thinking for heavenly things. Jesus came down to bring us heavenly things. His kingdom is a heavenly kingdom, called the kingdom of heaven, right here on the earth. My friend,

through real salvation we can be brought into the heavenly kingdom, right while we live here on the earth.

When this vial was poured out on the earth, it fell as a noisome and grievous sore upon men. The Prophet Jeremiah helps us to understand how this vial is poured out on the earth. In Jeremiah 22:29, he said, "O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord." Three times over, he cried to mankind of his day. Why is there a three-fold adjuration? Friend, the very thought of crying, "Earth, earth, earth," brings forth a picture of the great indifference and the great reluctance on man's part to hear God's voice of mercy.

I want you to begin to understand why the plagues are necessary. The Jews have a saying, that God spake as truly to Israel by the ten plagues on Egypt as He did by the words on Sinai. When God brought those plagues on Egypt, He not only brought them on Pharaoh and the Egyptians to punish them, but it was also teaching His people the lesson that He means what He says.

Hear the Word or Feel the Rod

The Prophet Micah said, "The Lord's voice crieth unto the city . . . hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it" (Micah 6:9). The rod is spoken of in the Old and New Testaments as being the Word of God. My friend, if we will not hear God's voice in the Word, then we will soon be made to feel the weight of the rod upon us. You had better listen to God, because the rod will come down upon you. God will get your attention that way if you will not pay any attention to Him through His Word.

God is speaking; His voice is crying in the city. Every time the Gospel truly goes forth, God is crying in the city. Every person who could have heard that Gospel, but didn't, will be just as responsible as if they had. They have been af-

forded an opportunity.

Friend, we need to be awakened in a little greater way to the fact that when we are dealing with God, we are not dealing with some man. No, man changed his mind through different ages of time and circumstances. Man will change his mind, but God is the same yesterday, today, and forever. So the prophet Micah said, "The Lord's voice crieth unto the city . . . hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it." In other words, hear God through the Word which is spoken to you. People have been so lulled to sleep and so numbed by unbelief that they can sit right under the sound preaching of God's Word and not even hear Him speaking.

Some people can see no need for the plagues. Well, men today are met day by day in their public walk with warnings from God. There are divine impressions from God, and He is the author of them. If we go on and refuse those divine impressions and refuse to turn to God, then we might feel the weight of the rod. In every family affliction, every sudden death, every wounded affection, every disappointed ambition and ruined hope, God comes near to us and speaks to us in accents that cannot be misunderstood.

If we won't hear the voice of God, we may feel the weight of the rod. God is going to get your attention. If He can't get your attention under the sounding of the Gospel, He can get it some other way. If you won't hear the voice of His Word, you are going to feel the weight of the rod. Why? Because God knows what is ahead of you. God knows how long eternity is. God knows how great Heaven is, and how awful hell is. God will stop at nothing to awaken you.

God's voice is crying in the city every day. God moves close to us when the circumstances come, and He speaks in accents that cannot be misunderstood. When His voice cries out in the city, if you are wise you will hear what He has to say. You will not wait and make Him

use a providence to lay the weight of the rod on you to awaken you.

When God's voice cries out in the city, what does He say to man? In the Old and New Testaments God's voice cries out: "Return unto Me, for I have redeemed you." Every leaf in the Bible has a voice saying, "Return, return." All the threatenings and all the promises say one thing: "Return unto Me, and I will return unto you."

God Can Become Your Enemy

Let us read Isaiah 28:16-20: "Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste. Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place. And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it.

"From the time that it goeth forth it shall take you: for morning by morning shall it pass over, by day and by night: for it shall be a vexation only to understand the report. For the bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it: and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it." When judgment is laid to the line of your life, you will never rest any more, a bit more than a man can rest on a bed that is too short, with not enough covers to cover him up.

Verse 21 tells us, "For the Lord shall rise up as in mount Perazim [Mount Perazim was in David's time when the Lord rose up against the Philistines], he shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon [where Joshua fought and overcame the Canaanites]" God is telling us that He is going to give us a foundation if we will take it, or believe it. If you really believe it, you will not

make haste. You will not go hunting for any other foundation. If you really believe it, you will build your life according to the line and according to the plummet.

If you refuse to do it, it will take away what rest you may have had. It will be as it was at Mount Perazim when the Lord through David rose up against the Philistines, and like it was in Gibeon when the Lord rose up against the Canaanites. When we who profess to be members of God's church allow pride and scornfulness to make us just like, the Philistines and the Canaanites that God had to drive out, then God is going to move on us just as He did them back there. He is going to become our enemy, and you have something on your hands when God becomes your enemy.

God has not changed, yet there are people today who claim to be Christians acting just as the Philistines did back there. What do I mean? God wants to take some more ground in their lives. He wants to move in their lives in a greater way, and it is going to cause them to do some moving. They have to move up, but they feel like the Philistines: "I am not going to do it; this is as far as I am going." Well, God will turn against them, become their enemy, and treat them just as He did the Philistines.

Verse 21 in its entirety reads: "For the Lord shall rise up as in mount Perazim, he shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that he may do his work, his strange work; and bring to pass his act, his strange act." Why does he call this His strange act? My friend, it is a work that is backwards for Him to do. The Bible says that God delights in mercy (Micah 7:18). That is what He likes to do, have mercy. The Bible says He does not afflict willingly (Lamentations 3:33). It is a strange work, indeed, when God who is love and God who wants to have mercy on us turns and fights against us. It is called a strange work for God to have to do what He

hates to do, but He will do it.

God said, "My spirit shall not always strive with man . . ." (Genesis 6:3). The Bible also says that neither will He keep His anger for ever (Psalm 103:9). So, my friend, when we begin to talk about plagues, we begin to talk about judgment, and the Bible calls it God's strange work. It is unusual, but He does it. He can be pressed to it.

Brother, the abomination of false religion that man has lifted to the sky is full of darkness. There is no light in it, no God in it, but it has been exalted until man accepts it on a level right with true Christianity. Well, God has become stirred. He is not only stirred with those people who are putting up with that, but He is also getting stirred with us when we do not take the right stand against it as we ought. So, judgment is God's strange work. He would lots rather have mercy, but when it is necessary, He will bring judgment. He will pour out the plagues.

Hear the Word of the Lord

Jeremiah 22:29 says, "O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord." In Revelation 15:3, it says that these people sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb. Did you know that Moses sang his song on three different occasions? Each time he sang it, it had different verses. The Book of Revelation, in symbols, takes up these old truths that happened back in ancient Israel to give us understanding of the truth that is hidden in this Revelation in symbolic language.

The first place Moses sang his song was at the Red Sea. In Exodus 15:1-6, we read a portion of that song: "I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea The Lord is a man of war Thy right hand, O Lord . . . hath dashed in pieces the enemy."

The second place he sang the

song was at the borders of Canaan, forty years later, when Israel could have gone straight into Canaan without crossing any stream whatsoever, but unbelief took hold of them. They sent spies in to spy out and see if what God had said was true. Brother, unbelief has us when we cannot believe what God says is true without getting somebody to spy it out for us. Come on, this is where we are. This is why we are hung up on divine healing. You cannot believe God for healing simply because His Book says so—you want me to show you someone who has been healed who had the same condition that you have. That is spying out. What kind of faith is that?

When those spies went in, they never found one thing different from what God had told them. I am here to tell you, when you step out on faith in God's Word, you will not find anything different from what God has told you in His Word. Old unbelief, my friend, is just the same today; we want someone else to try it out. If they make it all right, then we are going to believe God.

Well, God will not work through the spies. He will do with you just as He did with Israel: He let them send the spies in, and they came back with the reports of the bountiful land. Well, God did not let them go in then; they had to go back to the wilderness of sin and die. Why? We are not going anywhere unless we go by faith, and when, you go by faith, you do not need a spy to spy it out for you. God hates unbelief. Why? It makes Him out a liar.

Well, forty years later from the time they crossed the Red Sea, Moses was singing again: "Now therefore write ye this song for you, and teach it the children of Israel: put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for me against the children of Israel . . . For I know that after my death ye will utterly corrupt yourselves, and turn aside from the way [Moses saw an apostasy coming. What brought it about? Unbelief, failing to move on

when God said to move.] which I have commanded you; and evil will befall you in the latter days; because ye will do evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger through the work of your hands. And Moses spake in the ears of all the congregation of Israel the words of this song, until they were ended" (Deuteronomy 31:19, 29-30). They were at Canaan's border, and he was talking to them.

God Is Jealous

As we go into the 32nd chapter, just before he died, we read Moses' words to the whole world. He sang a song at the Red Sea, he sang one at the border of Canaan, and now he is singing one to the whole world. This is for us: "Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth. [Here he is speaking to the earth. This first vial was poured on the earth. I want you to see whom it was for: it was for earthly-minded people, people who refused to think on the things of God, or people who were losing hope in the things of God. It was for people who were allowing unbelief to get into their lives.]

"My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew . . . Because I will publish the name of the Lord: ascribe ye greatness unto our God. He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he. [But what have the people done?] They have corrupted themselves, their spot is not the spot of his children: they are a perverse and crooked generation . . . They provoked him to jealousy with strange gods, with abominations provoked they him to anger" (Deuteronomy 32:1-5, 16). They provoked God with strange gods and abominations.

We see the same picture in the Revelation message. Revelation 17:5, speaking of the harlot who is riding the eighth beast, says that she

is the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth. Now, God has never changed. Just as Israel provoked Him to anger back there by worshiping false gods and by abominations, so do people provoke Him today. Remember, we are reading from a song of Moses. This is what the people who are standing on the sea of glass sing, the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb.

Let us read further: "They provoked him to jealousy with strange gods, with abominations provoked they him to anger. They sacrificed unto devils, not to God; [That is what is going on. God is not receiving the sacrifices offered upon the altars of false religion. They are sacrificing to devils.] to gods whom they knew not, to new gods that came newly up, whom your fathers feared not.

"For a fire is kindled in mine anger [God is speaking here], and shall burn unto the lowest hell, [Now, don't tell me that God has changed His mind. These abominations stir God's anger, and He is never going to get over it. False religion today would make you feel that God has changed His mind about lots of things. His anger is going to burn until it burns into the lowest hell. The Bible lets us know that there are categories of hell, and who is going to suffer the lowest degree? People who carry on in hypocrisy in religion, not truly worshiping God. God has more respect for the drunkard or adulterer who never dawns a church door, than for people who go on under the garbs of religion with old hateful spirits.] and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains" (Deuteronomy 32:16-17, 22).

The Omnipotent God

The first message that God used Moses to declare to Pharaoh was a song of creation glory. It declared that the earth is the Lord's, that the Lord is Ruler over all the earth, even Pharaoh. The root and foundation of

that song is a truth that needs to be declared today. I want you to see why this is poured out on the earth. It was a song of creation glory.

In Exodus 9:16-17, God speaking through Moses to Pharaoh, says: "And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to shew in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth. As yet exaltest thou thyself against my people, that thou wilt not let them go?" Why was God against Pharaoh? My friend, God wants all creation to serve Him. Anything that hinders man from serving Him alone, God is pouring plagues out on it. Mark it down, He began with Pharaoh, and He has never changed His mind.

Verse 29 says, "And Moses said unto him, As soon as I am gone out of the city, I will spread abroad my hands unto the Lord; and the thunder shall cease, neither shall there be any more hail; that thou mayest know how that the earth is the Lord's."

Brother, the first song he sang to Pharaoh was that the earth is the Lord's, that all creation was made to serve God, and God wanted Israel to serve Him. Pharaoh had them down in bondage. Moses asked him to let them go, but since he wouldn't let them go, he was going to get plague after plague until he did let them go.

The very essence of Moses' first song was teaching Pharaoh and us of God's creation glory. He created the world, and you belong to it. People must get rid of that old rebellious attitude: "I will do what I want." We are creatures; we belong to God. All souls are His. He made us for His glory, and we were created to serve Him. Anything that won't let you serve Him, God is going to put plagues on.

God's people down through the Bible got fastened up in this and that where they could not serve God, and whenever they got fastened up, God began to turn judgments loose. God began to turn plagues loose. Why? He wants men

free to serve Him and Him alone.

I want to tell you, there are going to be plagues. The very Word of truth will plague you service after service until you cut loose and let God have His way in your heart and life so that you can truly serve Him. The very preaching of God's Word will plague you.

This may seem a long way to getting around to the plagues, but I want you to understand why the plagues are necessary. God sent Moses down as a man to intercede with Pharaoh. If he would have let them go, there would not have been any problem, but when Pharaoh rose up and refused the will of God, then God poured out the plagues.

We Belong to God

The same thing is true with you. God's first intercession with you is just like a man, saying that you belong to Him. You are serving the devil, but he is not your Creator. God created you to serve Him, but you are bound. How did we become bound? Well, one of the things that many people are bound with is the flesh. First Peter, the third chapter, talks about spirits in prison. There is a spirit, a never-dying soul within us. We are a two-fold being, an inward man and an outward man.

My friend, God wants you to worship Him in spirit and truth, and in many cases, the very spirit within you would like to serve God. Down within the heart of every creature which God ever made is the desire to serve God. He made you that way, but you allow your flesh to rise up. The flesh does not want to go God's way; the flesh wants to go another way and take the spirit away from God, keep it in prison and keep it in bondage. Well, don't get excited if God begins to plague that flesh. You are liable to break out with cancer or anything else imaginable.

Now get the message, God is going to plague what keeps His people from serving Him. Why?

That is all we are here for. We are not here to get rich. We are not here to live in fine mansions. No, we are here to serve God. That's all we are here for. The other things are secondary things, and He has promised to bless you and work them out, if you truly from the heart will serve Him.

But, friend, when we get ourselves fastened in bondage, we can't serve God. How many times have you met people in Babylon, in Protestantism, and shown them right in the Word what God wants them to do as a servant of God. They tell you, "Yes, I see that. I ought to do that, but our church does not teach it." God has to put a plague on Babylon and give it judgment. God wants people to serve Him.

That was the only cry He had against Pharaoh. And, oh, how the Egyptians had to suffer from the hand of God because a man wanted to be rebellious and would not let a people loose to go serve God. He said in Exodus 4:23, "And I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me: and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn."

Here is God, this God who supposedly does not do things like this, saying in so many words: "Pharaoh, either let My people go so they can serve Me, or I am going to kill every firstborn in this land." So many people feel that God would not do a thing like that. I am going to tell you right now, God will plague anything that keeps His people from being free to serve Him. Hold that all through the message, or you will miss the point.

Dear ones, because Pharaoh resisted the revealed will of God, he was plagued with great plagues. Now, I want to insert this right here: it is not God's will that any perish. If God had His way, nobody would be plagued. I hold to the thought that this is His strange work. He would much rather bless you than plague you, but remember what brought the plague—Pharaoh rebelled against God's known will.

The spirit of this age wants to take the sharp edge off the sword of God's Word. It will tell you that God does not work that way now. I repeat, it is not God's will that any perish. He wants all souls to be saved and come to a knowledge of truth, and all that keeps God's souls from serving Him will be plagued.

The Blood of the Lamb

Within your mind turn to the 12th chapter of Exodus. We are still singing the song of Moses, and now we are starting to sing the story of the Lamb. I want you to see the mercy of God all the way through. God said that if he did not let His people go, He was going to strike the firstborn of everything. But thank God, He showed mercy to the Israelites. If they would kill a lamb without spot, by having enough faith in what He told them, put the blood on both doorposts and on they lintel, then when the destroying angel came through, he would pass over that house.

Now, we are getting over to the song of the Lamb. What is the song of the Lamb? My friend, it is of God's mercy shown forth to us. That lamb without spot or blemish was a type of Christ, the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. Sin is a destroyer, and there is only one way to stop the destroyer and the power of the destroyer—get the blood applied. Thank God, the Lamb of God takes away the sin of the world. They not only sang the song of Moses, but they also sang the song of the Lamb. The Lamb is in the middle to stop the plagues. Can't you see the mercy of God? It would have fallen on everybody in Egypt, but God made a way where the destroyer could pass over everyone who believed and put the blood on the doorposts. When the destroying angel came through that night, every house that had the blood on the doorposts was passed by untouched. Killing a lamb and putting the blood on the doorposts may have sounded foolish, but it kept

the hand of the destroyer away, and it will keep the hand of the destroyer away yet today.

Now, where do the plagues come in? My friend, let's come up to date a little bit more. Just as in that day, the same is true today. God has ordained one Lamb, and only His blood can save; only His blood can stop the destroyer. Well, what has happened? Today, we have the same unbelief: "I don't think we need that portion of God's Word. We'll do it this way or that way."

In John the third chapter we read about the Lamb, that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him might not perish but have everlasting life. Now, where does the wrath of God come in? John 3:36 tells us, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

Friend, if you are living in sin today without real salvation, you are already living under the wrath of God. The destroyer is working on you, and you are on the way of destruction, as the Bible calls it. Now, God has afforded a way whereby the destructive power of sin can be stopped. If you will believe in the Son, the Lamb, and accept Him as your substitute, by repenting, confessing your sins, and asking Him to come into your heart and life through the Holy Spirit, you can be set free from the destroying power of God. You can have the wrath of God lifted off of you. If you refuse to believe, how ever, the wrath of God abides on you. Now we are getting up to date.

To Whom Are You Listening?

May God help us to see how the plagues are poured out and where. In Matthew 3:7-8, John was preaching repentance and baptism, and it says: "But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath

waned you to flee from the wrath to come? [Who has warned you makes a difference on what you have done. Some people tell you that you are going to flee the wrath to come just because you were christened when you were a baby. Others will tell you that you can flee the wrath to come by just joining a church, being baptized, or by taking communion every Sunday. Who has warned you makes a big difference. Some will tell you that you will never fall under the wrath of God if you will just take a catechism class, join the assembly, and on and on we could go with religious efforts which are supposedly warning people from the wrath to come.] Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance." In other words, he said to bring forth fruits, or something to show that you have repented.

We read in 1 John 5:1 that, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God . . ." First John 3:9 lets us know that if we have been born of God, we do not commit sin. I am talking about fruits which show that you have repented. See, if you are still living in sin, you have never repented. If you are still practicing sin as you used to, you have never repented.

These preachers stand and tell you that you will sin even after you have been saved; my friend, you had better get your warning somewhere else. They are leading you astray. The fruits that you have repented is that you start living a righteous, holy, and godly life, right in this present world. When you have truly repented, you will not go on practicing sin.

Remember that the essence of Moses' first song was a song of creation glory that belonged to God as the Creator. Someone may question, "What does this have to do with the church?" Well, these people standing on the sea of glass mingled with fire sang this song of Moses. The verses of the song said that the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof. Every soul belongs to Him; you are not your own. First, you are not

your own because God made you. Second, you are not your own because Jesus bought you at Calvary.

The Preeminent One

Now consider how Paul ties it in, in Colossians 1:12-18: "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins; Who is the image of the invisible God [talking about Christ], the firstborn of every creature:

"For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church [Who is the head? The Creator.]: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence."

Consider that clause "that in all things he might have the preeminence." Paul has described Jesus as the author of the old material creation, the first creation, and then he lets us know that He is also the beginning of this new spiritual creation. The same One who is the author of moral creation is the author of spiritual creation.

Now there is no need to have any confusion here. We have men of every kind running these churches, but the Creator is the head of "the church," and He is to have preeminence. He is to have the last word in all things. When He says "all things," He means all things. I am going to tell you right now that if He is truly the head of the church and He has the preeminence in all things, there will not be any division.

You will find out, my friend, that

the Lord is going to put some plagues on the flesh, because too many are holding out on God and won't let their spirit really be free to serve God as He wants them to. In too many lives, He does not have the preeminence in all things. I will repeat again, if He definitely has the preeminence in all things, it is impossible to have division. Not only within a local body, but it is impossible to have division among congregations over the land if He has preeminence in all things.

In too many cases, however, He does not have it. This is not taken seriously as it ought to be. Why, James believed in teaching the people in his day that they should not even decide that they were going to go shopping the next day unless they said, "If the Lord is willing." I He is not even considered today. People make plans ahead without even considering God's will.

Remember, these plagues are being poured out on the earth, and this is the reason we are not more spiritual: there is too much earth. This thing of being the Church of God means more than a lot of people understand about the thing. There would be lots of things that would not be happening today if the Lord had had the preeminence in them. And there would also be lots of things that would be happening that are not if the Lord had the preeminence.

So, my friend, there is no confusion about this—there is no pope as the head of God's church. He never was and never will be. There is no bishop as the head of God's church. They all are abominations unto God. Our Creator is our head of the church. The same One who brought us forth physically is the same One who brings us forth spiritually.

From Ashes to Beauty

Thank God, He can redress all the wrecks and ruins of the old creation. What do I mean by wrecks and ruins? Well, we all comet into this world pure, clean, and innocent.

When we I come to the age of accountability, every one of us in our own rebellion, rebels and goes our own way. We know which way we ought to go, but we refuse to go the way we ought and go into sin.

From there, we go from wreck to ruin, on and on and on. We end up all bound up, corrupted, spotted, and wrecked. Sometimes even our very flesh is almost wrecked and our health gone. When we turn to Him, thank God, He can redress the wrecks and ruins and make new creatures out of us in Christ Jesus.

My friend, since He can do that and since He is the only One who can do that, we ought to be more than willing to humble ourselves and let Him have the preeminence in all things. Friend, it took Him to save us, and it takes Him to keep us. You cannot get saved by your own direction. Your human instrumentality is not enough to show you how to get up out of the gutter. It took Jesus to reach down with His mighty hand of power. He is the way, the only way. Please don't allow your flesh to rise up and take away the preeminence that is still His. Let Him direct you day by day. Thank God, He will lead you on an upward path and in an upward way, to a life of greater victory, greater glory, and greater freedom.

Someone may say, "When you are free, you can't get any freer." Yes, you can. Brother, the Son of God will save you and set you free from sin, but if you will stay under the preached Word, you will find a lot more freedom as you go along. He will free you from false religion, and He will free you from lots of customs that you can become bound by. He will free you from things that you never realized you were bound with, if you sit under the Word of His truth.

Who Is Your Governor?

So the Creator, and the Creator alone, is the head. It boils right down to this, where is your head? I can tell you whether you are in the

true Church of God or not. We only need to consider one thing to see whether you are in or not: Where is your head? What is governing your life?

Some say, "Oh, I know God has inspired men, and I have visited the Church of God, heard the Word and was stirred a little bit. I thought I ought to repent and straighten my life up, but when I went back to our church, the preacher told me that wasn't necessary." Well, where is your head? Who is giving your instructions? Who has the preeminence in your life?

You can tell whether you are in the church or not. It does not mean you are in the church because you attend God's Acres. No, sir. One of the first marks whereby we can know whether we are definitely in the church is whether we are giving Him preeminence in all things.

The root foundation of the song which Moses sang was creative glory. It told even Pharaoh that there was a Lord who ruled over the whole earth, and he needed to submit and let the Lord have His way. When that man rose up against God's authority, the plagues started.

Just mark it down and get this part of the message: When you rebel against God's Word, God may be merciful to you for awhile. He will dig around you, and He will cultivate you. He will do His best to get you to move, but when you rebel and He sees that you are not going to do His will, don't get excited when the plagues start. Why? When the plagues are poured out, He is not trying to hurt you; He is trying to loose you from the things that have you tied up, where you can't get loose to serve God as He wants you to serve Him.

God is plaguing everything that keeps His people from serving Him as they are supposed to serve Him. I am going to tell you something: whenever the plagues reach the degree that you give up and know it is the right thing to do, you will be glad you did. Thank God, the blessings will start to flow. Oh, friend,

people out here are giving supposed excuses of every kind for not serving God as they ought, when the truth of the matter is, there is no excuse we can give. If we do try to hold out and give an excuse, the plagues will fall.

I am not trying to scare you; I am just dealing with sound Bible truth. The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof. All things were created by Him and for Him. You and I were created for Him, to be used of Him, to serve Him, to live for Him, to glorify Him, and to lift Him up. This is the reason for our being created.

Friend, are we doing that? Are we serving Him that way? Or do we, like Pharaoh, have the attitude: "Who is the Lord that I should obey Him?" I will tell you who He is: He is the Creator, He is the beginning and He is the end. He holds power over life and death. He can make you well or He can make you sick. He can make you alive or He can kill you. He is the Lord of the whole earth, and He is not unjust. Some people feel that God is unjust when He sends the plagues. No, He is not unjust. He is merely claiming what truly belongs to Him.

Believe-Now

You may ask, "Well, why doesn't He just take us and make us serve Him?" Because He created us with a will of choice. Someone may ask, "If I desire not to serve Him, why doesn't He just leave me be?" Well, friend, He will never make you serve Him, but He can make you willing. Don't get it in your head that God can't move you. Not only can He move you, but He also can make you willing to move on your own. In any case, it does not pay to wait for that. It is much better to hear His voice, His crying unto the city. What is it saying? Fear the rod and Him that appointeth the rod. In other words, God is speaking through the Word.

What is He speaking? "Return unto Me. Return unto Me." It

grieves the great heart of God to see man go along in sin and serve the enemy of souls who takes him down, down, down into greater bondage and deeper sin. The devil tries to seal us, if possible, into a long, lost eternity to suffer forever and ever throughout the ceaseless ages. Friend, it is much better for us to suffer some plagues from the hand of God here, if it will wake us and bring us to salvation, than it is for God to leave us alone and let us go on and fall into a lost eternity and suffer forever and ever with no hope.

Oh, hell will bring you around. Someone may ask, "Do you think people in hell are convinced?" There is not an unbeliever in hell, no not one. There are plenty who died as atheists who had testified, "I don't believe there is a God," but it only took two minutes in hell—they are believers now, but it is too late. That great gulf is fixed. The great gulf is the gulf of sin that separates between you and God. Now, in this time world, there is a way to span that gulf through Jesus Christ and get back to God, but if you let death come on you, that gulf is fixed for time and eternity.

The rich man didn't believe while he was here. God sent Lazarus, a preacher who came to his house. He had to go by him every day, but he had no thought of Lazarus, no thought of heavenly things. Why? He was too tied up in earthly things. When he reached the pit of hell, he lifted up his eyes, but it was too late.

God created one animal that can't look up—a hog. They can't lift up their heads; all they can do is look down. That is why Peter used it for us, as hogs returning to the wallow after God is good enough to pick us up. When we get like hogs, we can't look up. The only places we are looking is right and left, or what we can get out of the earth here. Well this is who the message is to—Oh, earth, earth, earth—people who are bound with earthly things, not looking up as they ought and

thinking about heavenly things.

Friend, I want to ask you, who is the head of your life? Does Christ have the preeminence in all things? If so, you are a member of the blood-washed band. You are a member of that which makes up the true body of Christ, the church of the living God. You are ready to sing the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb.

Oh, how it needs to be told to a lost-and-dying world about the creation glory of Jesus Christ. He made us. We are not our own, we belong to Him.

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