

THE GOSPEL TRUMPETER

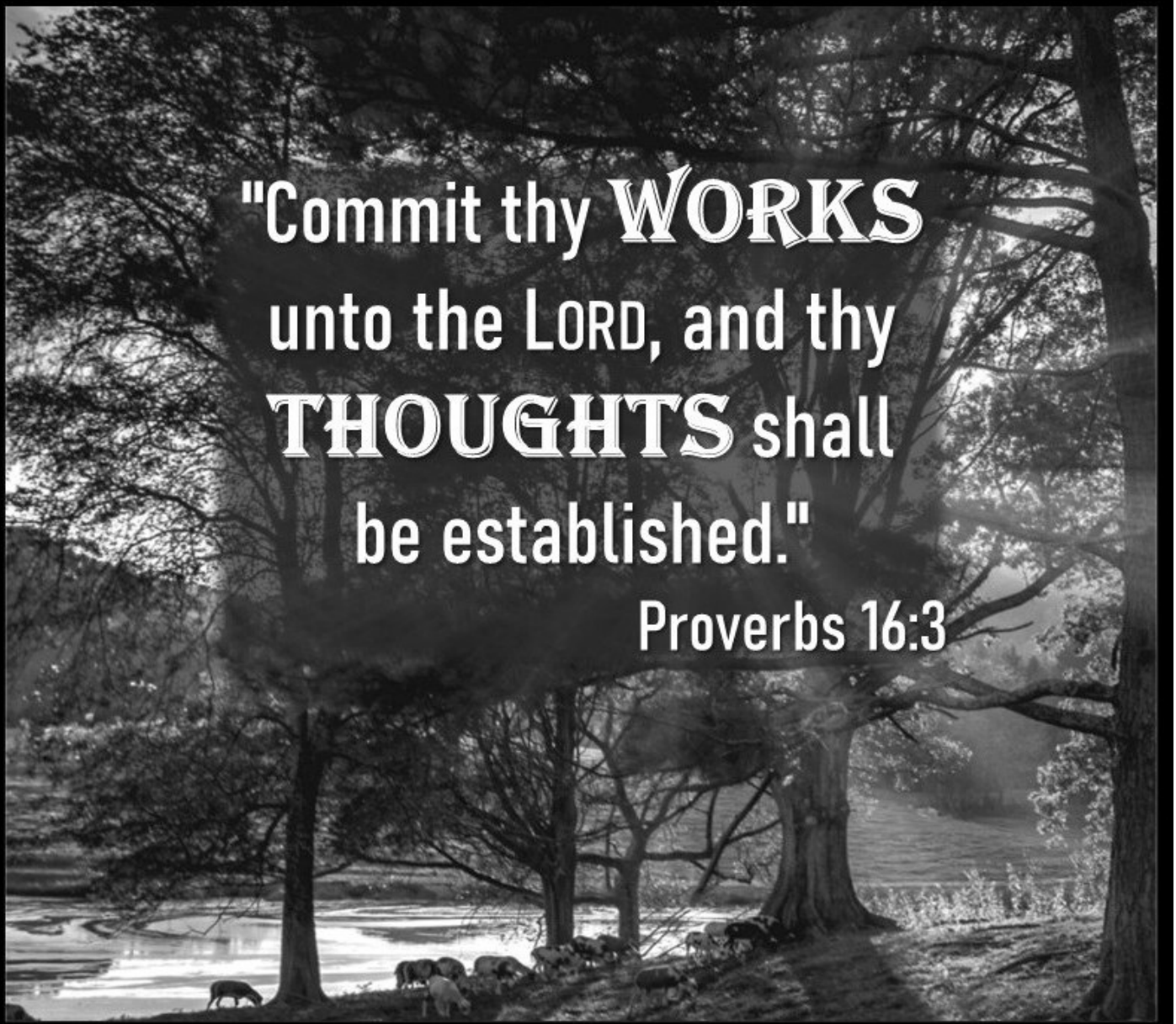


SOUNDING FORTH THE SEVENTH AND LAST TRUMPET

Vol. 55 October 2025 No. 10

"Commit thy **WORKS**
unto the LORD, and thy
THOUGHTS shall
be established."

Proverbs 16:3



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

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

THE CHURCH OF GOD BELIEVES IN

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

SOME SPIRITUAL FACTS PERTAINING TO THE CHURCH

- Jesus organized it (Matthew 16:18)
- It is built on a good foundation (Ephesians 2:20; 1 Corinthians 3:11)
- Christ governs it (Ephesians 1:22-23; Isaiah 9:6)
- God admits the members (1 Corinthians 12:13-18)
- Sin puts you out of it (Romans 11:22; Exodus 32:33)
- Only the saved are members (John 15:2-6)
- Membership is offered to all (Revelation 22:17)
- There are final rewards (Revelation 20:12-15; 21:3-4; 22:14)
- The Bible name is the Church of God (Acts 20:28; Galatians 1:13; John 17:11)

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JUST ONE MORE SOUL

Souls, Lord

*Souls, Lord; souls, Lord
Give me a passion for souls,
I pray
Help me to open this mouth
of mine
Tell of Your wonderful love
divine
Souls, Lord; souls, Lord
Help me to win them for Thee
Help me to be a witness for Thee
Give me a passion for souls.*

Vivian Frykman Katter

Certainly, this song could be attributed as the central theme of our August camp meeting. Days before our meeting began, a faithful and devoted sister from the Newark congregation passed on to her final reward. Sister Helen Henry left a legacy of her life's work, as she was known to say, "Just one more soul." Jesus said in Matthew 18:11, "For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost." Sister Henry exemplified this Scripture as she ran her race and kept the faith, keeping her eyes on the goal: "Souls, Lord."

The camp meeting was filled with anointed Holy Ghost preaching, teaching, and, most importantly, pleading with lost souls. God was faithful to draw in ones near and far, saint and sinner. This oft-used Scripture text resonated throughout the meeting: "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should

come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).

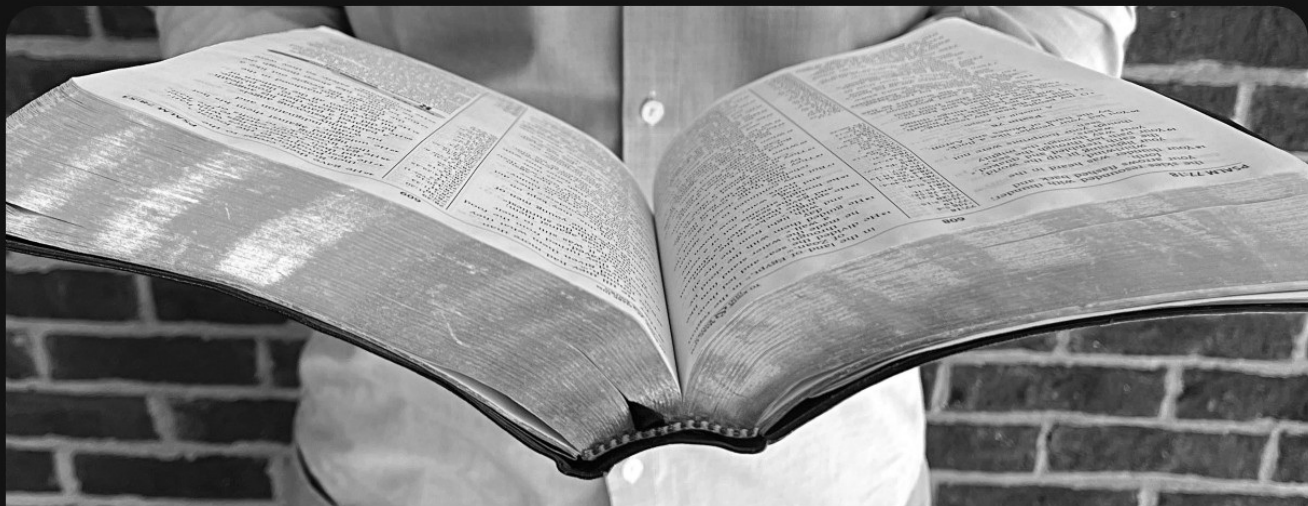
The labor of the saints was not in vain. God heard and answered prayer and honored Sister Henry's passionate plea for "just one more soul." Souls were gloriously saved and their names written in the Lamb's Book of Life, praise God! The church rejoiced as the Kingdom of God was proclaimed. God honored us with His presence and allowed us to sit in heavenly places.

The Apostle Paul wrote about this in the early church in Ephesians 2:5-7: "Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus."

What riches! What grace! What kindness! In Ephesians 3:20, Paul said, "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." God stirred the church to examine ourselves. Are we willing to work for Him? Are we willing to be His hands and feet and take the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the lost-and-dying world?

Brother Larry Dishman concluded the camp meeting with the message, "Eternity Is Too Long to Be Wrong." Certainly, it was a call to the sinner but also served as admonition to the church. We have a work to do for God. "Just one more soul" will be forever

[continued on page 8]



WHERE DID THE DEVIL COME FROM?

Brother Roger L. Decker

It is necessary to bring out the fallacy of teachings that confuse the minds of people. The Word of God is the foundation for the truth and the final answer for all doctrines and theories. Second Timothy 2:15 says, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." Another translation says, "Do your best to present yourself to God as an approved worker who has nothing to be ashamed of, handling the word of truth with precision."

The word *dividing* in the Greek means "to cut it straight." We need to cut the Word of God straight. The Holy Spirit does not teach multiple-choice options when it comes to the doctrines in the Word of God. You cannot choose the one that suits you best. The local newspaper may say to attend the church of your choice, but that is not what the Bible teaches. Second Timothy 2:24 reads, "And the servant of

the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient."

The Devil's Power

Many people give too much credit to the devil. They say, "The devil made me do this or that." Some people believe he moves on people according to his will. Let us consider the conversation that took place in the Word of God between the devil and the Lord. Job 1:10 states, "Hast not thou made an hedge about him [God is no respecter of persons, and if there was a hedge around Job, there is a hedge around you and me who have salvation], and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land."

The devil knew all about Job, but he could not touch Job until he got permission from God. The devil only has power over the natural man, those who are void

of the Spirit of God, but not the child of God. He can tempt the child of God, but Christians have the power through the Spirit of God to resist the temptation.

The devil would like us to yield to temptations, but we do not have to yield to them. Temptation is *not* sin. False religion may teach differently, but I would rather look to the Word of God for answers. First Corinthians 10:13 says, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape [if you escape, you need not give in], that ye may be able to bear it."

How powerful is the devil compared to God? The devil has power when it comes to temptation, deceit, and evil. Some say we cannot live free from sin. If you say you cannot live free from sin by the power of God, then you are actually saying the devil is stronger than God and can

make you do something against your will. The devil has no power except what the Lord gives him.

Luke 8:26-33 reads: "And they arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, which is over against Galilee. And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man, which had devils long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs [he was homeless, wandering through the tombs]. When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God most high? I beseech thee, torment me not. (For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For oftentimes it had caught him: and he was kept bound with chains and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and was driven of the devil into the wilderness.)

"And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? And he said, Legion: because many devils were entered into him. And they besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep. And there was there an herd of many swine feeding on the mountain: and they besought him that he would suffer them to enter into them. And he suffered them. Then went the devils out of the man, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked."

The Bible says Jesus cast out many devils. In Luke 11:20, Jesus said, "But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you." The devil's power is darkness. He loves to keep people in the dark. In Colossians 1:13, Paul said, "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." *Darkness* in this Scripture represents power,

authority, and sway over an individual. All people, regardless of their culture, who have not embraced the Gospel are under the devil's authority and power. Only the power of God can redeem a man from darkness, sin, and unbelief. Darkness keeps men in ignorance and under the control of vices and misery.

Who Is the Devil?

The devil is a spirit, not a person. Ephesians 2:2 reads, "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." When Jesus cast the devils out of the man who dwelt in the tombs, they were spirits. Luke 8:29 says, "For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man." John 13:2 states, "And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him." An evil spirit entered into Judas.

How did the devil come to exist? There is much confusion about the beginning of the devil. You may hear many different teachings about where the devil came from, but the Bible makes it clear. First Corinthians 14:33 tells us, "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints." Since the beginning, the plan and work of Satan has been to come against man and the work of God to distort, confuse, and deceive. His main goal is to lead men and women away from the divine plan of present and eternal salvation.

Daniel 9:7-8 states: "O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day; to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, that are near, and that are far off,

through all the countries whither thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against thee. O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee."

Sin always brings confusion. In many instances, its work has effectively taken the divinely inspired Word of God and misinterpreted and misapplied the meaning and message. Second Timothy 3:16 says, "All scripture [not part of it] is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."

One false theory circulating the world teaches that the devil was one of God's angels and abode in God's eternal Heaven. Supposedly, he was tempted (you cannot sin without temptation) and was lifted in pride, exalted himself, and created a war. So, God had to kick him out, or expel him, from Heaven. That may sound good to the carnal mind, but let us study the Scriptures used to support this theory.

The Devil's Beginning

Let us see what Jesus said about the devil. Was the devil a fallen angel? Did he get lifted with pride, which caused God to cast him out of Heaven? Jesus knows more about the devil than anyone. He explained where he got his start. In John 8:37-38, Jesus spoke to the Jews who told Jesus they were Abraham's seed. Notice throughout the Gospels, two names are mentioned quite frequently: Abraham and Moses. Whenever they questioned Jesus, the Jews would bring up Father Abraham or Moses.

We read in John 8:39-44: "They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the

THE DEVIL

1. He was a murderer from the beginning.
2. He abode not in the truth.
3. He is a liar.
4. He is the father of lies.

works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God.

"Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it."

Four things stand out in this Scripture about the devil, letting us know he could not have been an angel kicked out of Heaven. One, he was a murderer from the beginning. First John 3:15 says, "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." Second, He "abode not in the truth." He never had the truth and lost out. Revelation 21:27 states, "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."

Finally, the devil is a liar and the father of lies. He had all these characteristics *from the beginning*. You cannot go back any farther than the beginning. *Beginning*

means "at the first estate; origin." In the beginning, the devil worked through a serpent. Today, he uses people. He is a destroyer of souls. How does he work through people? When a man or woman gets crosswise with God, they destroy other souls who will listen and go along with them. The devil uses darkness and deception.

Angels in the Bible

The devil was not an angel in Heaven. The Bible lets us know what angels are. Hebrews 1:14 reads, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" To *minister* means "to wait upon; to serve; to take care of." How do they minister? Matthew 4:11 says, "Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him." God only knows how many times angels have ministered unto you. Maybe you never saw an angel, but one was there, stopping you from having that car wreck, or keeping something bad from happening when you were doing wrong. God sent angels to take care of Jesus, and He will send angels to take care of you and me.

An angel ministered unto Peter when he was in prison. Acts 12:7 states: "And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands." We read about angels in Luke 16:22. "And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried." Psalm 34:7 says, "The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them."

Luke 20:34-36 reads, "And Jesus answering said unto them,

The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection." Angels never die; they are immortal. They do not marry and have no free moral agency. If they did, they would have had a plan of salvation, too.

The word *angel* is also used for ministers of the Gospel. The seven letters to the seven churches in Revelation were all addressed to the "angel," or pastor, of that particular congregation. Second Peter 2:4 says, "For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment." This Scripture is not talking about angels sinning, but about ministers who lived ungodly lives before the Flood and at the time of Sodom and Gomorrah. Peter called them "wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest [driven by the wind]" (verse 17).

Who Was Cast Out of Heaven?

Let us read some Scriptures used to prop up the false theory that the devil was in Heaven. Isaiah 14:12 states, "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!" It looks as though Isaiah was looking into a telescopic view of the devil falling from Heaven, but let us consider what this chapter is truly about. Remember, Satan had already been around for many years before Isaiah wrote these Scriptures. Two main subjects in this chapter are the kingdom of Israel and the kingdom of Babylon.

Isaiah 14:1-4 reads: "For the LORD will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land: and the strangers shall be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob. And the people shall take them, and bring them to their place: and the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of the LORD for servants and handmaids: and they shall take them captives, whose captives they were; and they shall rule over their oppressors.

"And it shall come to pass in the day that the LORD shall give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve, That thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased!" The proverb was a saying, parable, taunting speech, or insulting remark against "the king of Babylon." Isaiah prophesied about the downfall of a mighty, powerful, and exalted king of Babylon.

Who was "the king of Babylon" and what caused him to lose his throne? Where was "the golden city"? In Daniel, Chapter 2, we read about the king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, who had a dream, and only Daniel could tell the dream and interpret it. Verse 38 says: "And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold." Nebuchadnezzar saw an image in his dream. Daniel said he was the "head of gold," letting us know "the golden city" was Babylon.

Let us read Isaiah 14:5-12 to see the truth and get the whole context. "The LORD hath broken the staff of the wicked, and the sceptre of the rulers. He who smote the people in wrath with a continual stroke, he that ruled

the nations in anger, is persecuted, and none hindereth. The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet: they break forth into singing. Yea, the fir trees rejoice at thee, and the cedars of Lebanon, saying, Since thou art laid down, no feller is come up against us. Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations.



A Proverb Against King Nebuchadnezzar

"All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us? Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee [talking about the fall of Babylon and its leader]. How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!"

False teachers change these verses from King Nebuchadnezzar to the devil, but that is not so. Some read the words "fallen," "heaven," and "Lucifer" and connect them with the devil. Before verse 12, it was a different narrative. *Lucifer* is a Latin word that means "day star." It is not talking about Satan. Again, this was a proverb against Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon.

Verses 13-16 state: "For thou

hast said in thine heart [he was not there; it was 'in thine heart'], I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High [he was filled with pride]. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. They that see thee [Can you see the devil? No, the devil is a spirit.] shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms." Isaiah was talking about Babylon, King Nebuchadnezzar, and how he was lifted with all his pomp and splendor.

Notice, the one who fell was on the earth. Let us read about King Nebuchadnezzar's fall in Daniel 4:28-31 and see what Isaiah was referring to. "All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar. At the end of twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon. The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty [here that great tree was cut down]? While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee." God struck him down from all his pomp and glory.

The Overthrow of Satan

Let us look at other Scriptures that are misused. Luke 10:17-18 reads: "And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name [imagine the great joy of casting out devils and healing the sick]. And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." The

seventy returned with joy for the victories they had won. They had gone out in Jesus' name and rejoiced because the devils were subject to them.

Jesus did not say Satan fell from Heaven, but he fell "*as lightning*" falls from the aerial heaven, not the Heaven where God dwells. The overthrow of Satan in an individual's life compares to lightning falling from the sky. That is how quickly Satan can be cast out. As you see a flash of light when lightning lights up the sky, you can quickly see someone change when the devil is cast out of their life. When a person prays at an altar of prayer, they are "translated" from the kingdom of darkness "into the kingdom of his dear Son" (Colossians 1:13).

John 3:3 says, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Many people read the Book of Revelation and fail to understand it. A couple came to the camp meeting years ago in the old barn, and we talked about the Scriptures. The woman said: "The way I read it in the Bible is the way I understand it. I literalize every Scripture." I asked her about the "great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet" (Revelation 12:1), and she said, "I believe it the way it reads." People lack understanding because they lack salvation. The Spirit of God will lead you into all truth when you are born again.

Revelation 12:7-9 reads: "And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him."

Michael is Jesus Christ. Dan-

iel 12:1 states, "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book."

Jude 9 says, "Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee." First Thessalonians 4:16 reads, "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first."

The dragon in Revelation 12:7 represents pagan Rome. The "war in heaven" is not where God dwells. No war will ever break out where God is because evil cannot get into God's Heaven. That is why you must be born again according to the Scriptures to get into Heaven. What heaven was the Revelation writer talking about? It was the same heaven as in Isaiah, Chapter 14. It is an exalted position in the minds of people, and the same heaven to which Nebuchadnezzar was exalted. It was the place of control pagan Rome had when it was in conflict with Christianity.

A war broke out, not a war with guns, bows, and arrows, but a spiritual warfare. Revelation 6:2 says, "And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer." The bow represents the new covenant.

We preach about the new covenant. Acts 17:22-23 states: "Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld

your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you."

The war or battle is a spiritual conflict. In 2 Timothy 4:7, Paul, at the end of his life, said, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." That is what it will take to see the inside of God's Heaven. Second Timothy 2:4 states, "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier."

Why Was the Devil Created?

God created the devil. Isaiah 45:5-7 reads: "I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the LORD, and there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things."

Some people do not believe God would create evil. Colossians 1:16 says, "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." John 1:1-3 states: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."

Why did God create the devil? We are creatures of choice. You can choose whether you want to serve God or not. For there to be a choice, there must be two ways. There has to be a wrong way and a right way. The

only true way to serve God is to *choose* to serve Him because you love Him. "We love him, because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19).

The devil uses darkness, deception, and destruction to lead you to be lost forever. He is a spirit. He always leads his captives into trouble, but he never leads them out. There is no mercy with the devil. He wants to leave you in a hopeless state forever. There is hope! When you turn to Jesus Christ, He will give you power to overcome the devil. I trust you can see where the devil came from. You cannot have a choice unless there are at least two options. There had to be evil. The devil was a liar from the beginning when he appeared

to Eve. Eve had a choice, and so do you.

(Compact Disc TR-3187)

Brother Roger L. Decker is the pastor of the Church of God in Newark, OH.

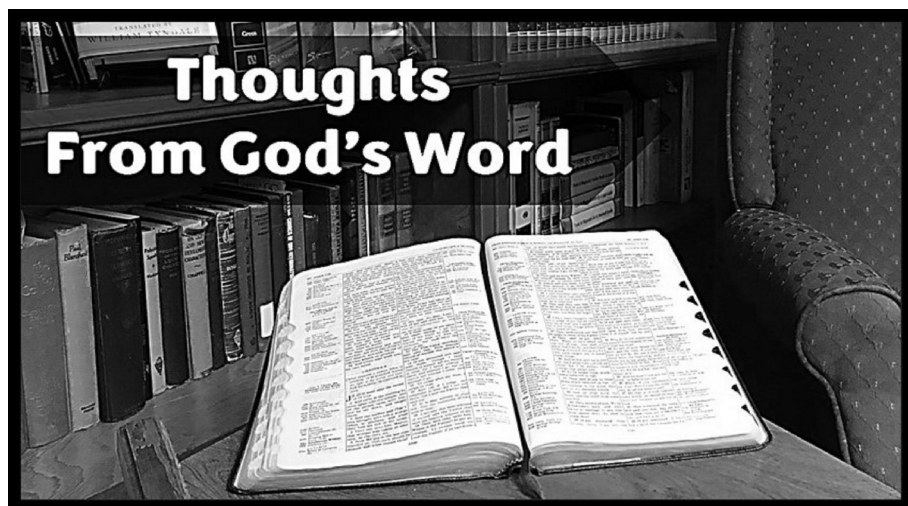
[Camp Meeting Report continued from pg. 2] ingrained in our hearts and minds. Thank God for saints such as Sister Helen Henry, whose life's work serves as an example for us today.

Dear one, may God lead you as you listen to His Spirit and fully follow Jesus' example found in Matthew 9:35-38: "Jesus went about all the cities and villages,

teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest." May God bless you.

Sister Gerri Lynn Bremer

Sister Gerri Lynn Bremer attends the Church of God in Newark, OH.



Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established.

Proverbs 16:3

Some time ago, a group of us went hiking in the mountains to enjoy the weather and God's amazing creation. Being unfamil-

iar with the area and the trails, we would have been very unwise to go without a map or a guide. Possibly, it could have been dangerous.

Likewise, we should not be so careless with our lives as to trust ourselves completely to make decisions and go through places

in life without trusting God to be our guide. He can be trusted because He has trod the way before us. He knows the dangers out ahead, way before we can see them.

Proverbs 3:5-6 says: "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

Another translation of Proverbs 16:3 says, "Commit to the LORD whatever you do, and he will establish your plans."

We can never go wrong when we commit our days to God. We can trust the Lord to guide us every step of the way.

Brother Alex Orr

Brother Alex Orr attends the Church of God in Newark, OH.

1 Timothy 1:12 And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry;

13 Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.

14 And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

15 This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

The Word of God has answers to all our problems, even the hardest of problems. God is ready to help us when we repent of our sins. A real clearing of yourself and making things right is a good foundation for Christian living. Paul made the statement, and many of us felt the same way: "I am chief" of sinners. Paul was a hard case in his time. He was strong and influential, using his influence against the people of God.

A few months ago, I read an article that I disagreed with. It made a statement that said Paul, as a minister, was telling people he was still a sinner. Christians are no longer sinners; they no longer follow after sin. Paul said he *was* the chief of sinners because he *was* "a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious." He hurt the people of God. He was not telling people that as a minister, he traveled to the synagogue on the Sabbath and to the tavern during the week. He was not saying he was the biggest drunk, liar, adulterer, or thief of them all. He taught people to live differently.

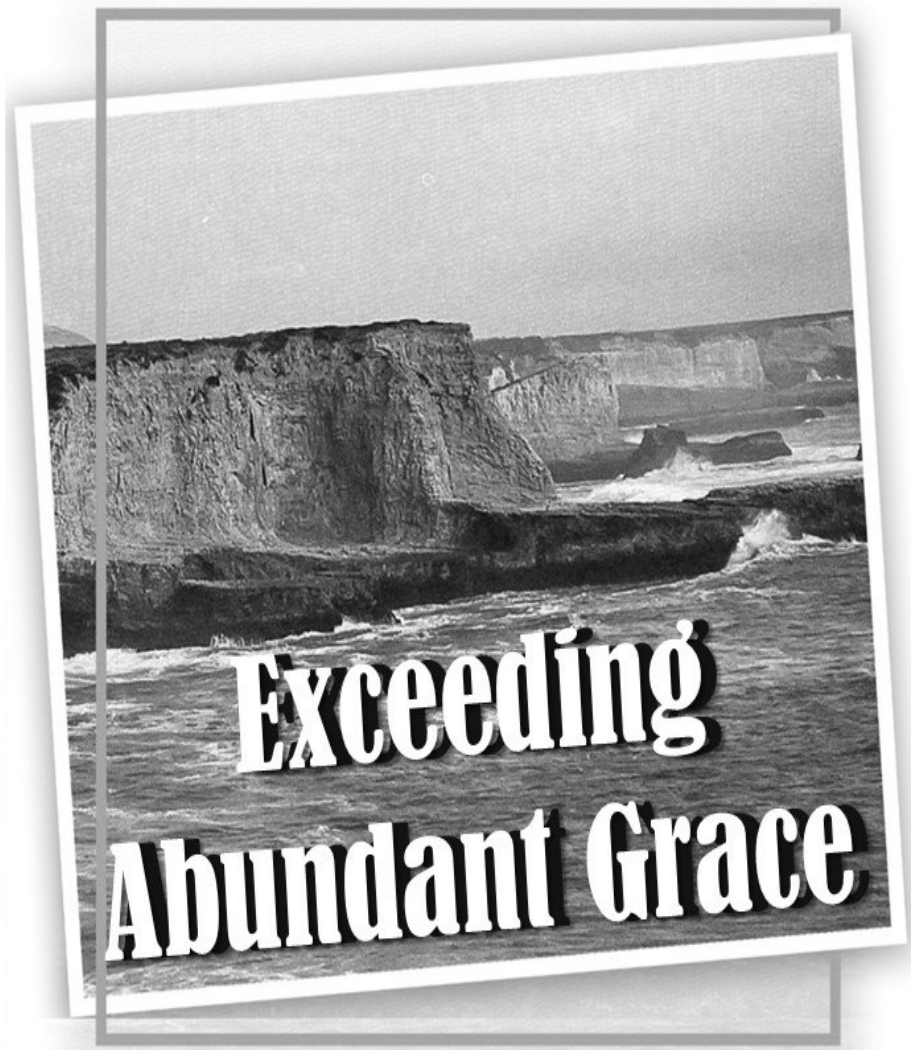
If Paul were still a chief sinner after he became a minister, then he would have been the big-

gest hypocrite of them all because he continually taught the people to live right as children of God. In Colossians 3:9-10, he wrote, "Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." Paul taught us to live a holy life, which is the standard for a child of God. Every sin should be put away and gone from our lives.

Paul gave us a long list of things that children of God ought to do in Ephesians, Chapter 4. Verse 25 says, "Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another."

As children of God, we should labor to be accurate in how we present one another and in what we say about each other because not only do we want to avoid telling lies, but we also want to avoid misrepresenting other people. If you love someone, you will avoid putting them in a bad light. We love and respect one another as children of God. We should be straightforward in our talk without misleading people. It does not pay to hide things. It pays to be open and transparent.

Paul wrote in Ephesians 4:28, "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." Brother Emerson Wilson once



Brother Josh Thilmony

said, "Do not give until it hurts, give until it quits hurting." God has called us to be generous, helpful people. I believe in helping people, but not if I think they are drinking it away. One of my co-workers saw a man on the main street in town holding a sign that said, "Will work for food," and he was leaning against a sign that said, "Now hiring, \$15.00 an hour." Paul admonished us to work. It never hurt anybody to work hard.

Students of Grace

Paul taught holiness, righteousness, and living better than you lived when you were outside of the fold of God. When you get saved, things change. Second Corinthians 5:17 says you are "a new creature," thank God! In Galatians 5:19-21, Paul said, "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Paul was in no way promoting himself to be a chief sinner while he was a minister.

John was very clear in his writings. He said in 1 John 3:8, "He that committeth sin is of the devil." First John 2:1 reads: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." The rule is to "sin not." If you profess to be a child of God, you should no longer live in sin. If you want your boyfriend to spend the night with you, you cannot call yourself a Christian. That is not how children of God live and present themselves to the world.

Paul told Timothy in 2 Timothy 1:3, "I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience." You cannot have a pure conscience if you are living in sin. If you are living an unholy life, you need to repent and get rid of the sin. We all need to be reminded of the importance of holy living.

How do we deal with people who are not living right? How should parents treat unsaved children bound by drugs, rebelliousness, and hard situations? God would have us to be like Him. He loved us when we were yet sinners. Keep loving your children and showing them favor even though they are not living right. God did that with the Apostle Paul. While Paul was intent on persecuting the church, God showed him a great deal of favor. God told Paul He wanted to use him, and He showed him exceeding abundant grace.

The children of God should be students of grace. Our congregations and families should be full of grace. Our conversations with one another should be gracious and kind. Treat people right, be kind, and give from the heart. Even if we are never paid back for what we do for others, God teaches us to keep being kind.

God impressed me a few years ago to study grace. The New Testament is full of admonitions about grace. The grace of God is everywhere. It was a major subject among the Apostles, and it should be a major subject among us. We should study and practice grace.

It is good to read about history and Biblical culture during the time the Bible was written. In the Greco-Roman world, it was difficult to get started in life. Generous men called *patrons* would reach out to young couples and give them a small piece of land or other scarce resources to help their families get started.

The Greek word for showing favor is *charis*. The Apostles called it *grace*.

It is a beautiful picture of what God does for us. We had no way of getting started in a righteous and holy walk. God opened the door for us and gave us abundantly and freely of His Spirit to help us get started. That is the grace of God. He is generous and gracious toward you and me. Oh, what a precious Heavenly Father we have!

Matthew 23:9 says, "And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven." Some religions call their priests "father." We have a dear Heavenly Father who created the heavens and the earth. Our Father is wonderful and wealthy beyond compare. Jesus said not to call anyone "father" on earth. We have *one* Father in Heaven.

Better Than We Deserve

Our Father looked past all our sins and saw something in us. God came looking for us when we were lost because He was never lost. We were wandering aimlessly, not looking for Him, but He found us! None of us deserves what God gave us. God has favored you beyond measure if you were born into a Christian Church of God home with godly parents who taught you the truth.

I was thirteen or fourteen years old before I gained an understanding about deliverance from sin. We were out in other beliefs, but when the truth came, what a change it wrought in our lives! I can remember my dad was a Navy man who would get angry and swear. He literally "cussed like a sailor." The day he got saved, it was like a switch. He was changed! God delivered him and cleaned up his mouth. I never saw him fly off the handle or heard him take God's name in



vain again. Thank God for the work He does.

God is a gracious God who gives more than we deserve. When Moses was on the mountain with God, the Israelites sinned, and God was going to destroy the whole nation, and rightly so. If any people should have been punished for idolatry, it was the Israelites. They should have known better. They saw the Red Sea divide and the plagues put on Egypt. God brought them out of Egyptian bondage and wrought many miracles for them. They even heard the voice of God. God had every right to punish them, but Moses pleaded with God.

Exodus 32:11-12 states: "And Moses besought the LORD his God, and said, LORD, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand? Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people." God spared those people. God is gracious. He treated them better than they deserved.

Our text in 1 Timothy 1:13 reads, "Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy." Paul fought against the church.

In Acts 9:4, Jesus asked Paul (who was called Saul at the time), "Why persecutest thou me?" When you fight against God's people, you are persecuting their Savior. Paul was a sinner; he had a sinful past. Thank God, when we get salvation, God forgives and forgets our sins. They are no longer held against us.

Paul's heart was touched in our Scripture text because he felt he was the "chief" of sinners. He persecuted Jesus Christ by hurting His people, consenting to their deaths, putting them into prison, and leading them to blasphemy. Oh, how that weighed on Paul's heart! He mentioned it several times in his writings. He was humbled to think of the low places he had been; yet God came looking for him. God was not waiting with a club to destroy Paul; He reached out to help Paul.

Paul was inspired to write, "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Romans 5:20). The deeper our sin, the more God's grace reaches out. If you are a child of God dealing with hard cases, I encourage you to be gracious toward the sinners in your life. Be like our Heavenly Father and reach out, giving more love, understanding, and forgiveness than what they deserve.

God's Grace Goes Beyond Our Failures

Jesus encouraged us in His Sermon on the Mount to be gracious. In Matthew 5:44-45, Jesus said, "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." God

taught us to be kind to those who are hurtful.

If you are struggling to gain victory in your life, I want to encourage you. God has a future for you. He does not call any of us to live in defeat. God calls us to be victorious. If you are discouraged or if you have tried and failed, God has a plan for you as He did for Paul. God may not call you into the ministry, but He has a place for you in His kingdom. Whether you are an addict, an adulterer, or from a broken home, God has a plan for your life.

In 1 Corinthians 15:9, Paul said he was "the least of the apostles" and unworthy "to be called an apostle" because he "persecuted the church of God." Many people struggle with the same feelings. If they have had trouble keeping the victory and have dealt with failure in their lives, they feel unworthy. None of us are worthy of what God does for us. God owed us nothing, but He gave us exceeding abundant grace. His exceeding grace goes beyond the list of failures amplified in your mind.

Again, I encourage you to remember where you have been. In 2 Peter 1:5-9, Peter said: "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins." Peter taught us not to forget the pit from which God brought us out.

If you have secret sins you are embarrassed about, God

knows about them. He wants to reach out and give you victory over your sins so you can leave them in your past. God wants you to be able to say, "I am not what I used to be." In 1 Corinthians 15:10, Paul said, "But by the grace of God I am what I am." God visited him while he was a persecutor and a blasphemer. Paul was a hurtful person, but God loved him. Instead of destroying him, in so many words, God said: "Paul, I want to adopt you into My family and make you a child of God. I have a job for you to do. I want you to show others the right way."

God's wonderful grace makes us new creatures. We could not do it for ourselves. God performs spiritual heart surgery. Verse 10 continues, "And his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain." God's grace is not in vain. You may say: "Brother Josh, I am not worth fighting for. I am too much of a failure." Do not

believe that, for it is the devil talking to you. God's grace will reach out to you, and it will not be in vain. God can pick you up and change your life. If you decide to follow Jesus, He will transform your life and put your sins behind you.

It will not be in vain for you to be gracious toward others, to love people who are unworthy of your love, and to love the one who fights against you. I knew a dear brother who worked at the Swan Rubber Factory in Bucyrus, Ohio. He was gloriously saved. When he went back to work, one of his co-workers said: "Something is different about you. You are changed. I will give you a week or two."

Some of his co-workers literally blew smoke in his face and gave him a hard time. He was always kind. He told me, "Some days I had to pray all day, 'God, help me to keep my spirit right for these people.'" He had to

work at it, but he was gracious. He said that when he retired, he got the biggest retirement gift the factory had ever given out.

God has a future for you, for the family who is struggling, and for the hard cases. Some families deal with drug addiction, and they are requesting prayer, sharing their burdens, because they are at their wit's end. I knew of two brothers who were deeply addicted to drugs when they were young, but God delivered them, and now they are clean. God can do that. He can change things. God has a ministry for you, unlike anyone else's ministry, including your dad or mom. God gives everyone spiritual gifts. God will bless you with a ministry and use you if you seek Him.

(Compact Disc TR-2755)

Brother Josh Thilmony is the pastor of the Church of God in Findlay, OH.

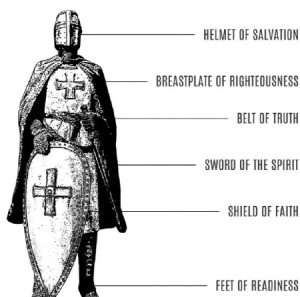
2025 JUNE AND AUGUST CAMP MEETINGS TEACHING SERVICES

JUNE - "THE ARMOR OF GOD"

by Brother Reggie Stegmeier

ARMOR OF GOD

EPHESIANS 6:12-17



- Belt of Truth
- Breastplate of Righteousness
- Shoes of Peace
- Shield of Faith
- Helmet of Salvation
- Sword of the Spirit

AUGUST - "THE LITTLE FOXES"

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- Introduction
- Loose Lips
- Laziness
- Little Faith
- Little Leaven
- Lopsided Living



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Psalm 37:23-31 states: "The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth him with his hand. I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.

"He is ever merciful, and lendeth; and his seed is blessed. Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell for evermore. For the LORD loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off. The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever. The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment. The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide."

These Scriptures let us know God's way is the right way. His way blesses the soul. As a young man, I did many things I am not proud of. I was brought up to serve the Lord, but my dad knew nothing about the Church of God. I wish he had. I would have loved to have had the opportunity to be raised in the Church of God and hear the Scriptures rightly divided, service after service, and attend revival meetings and enjoy the fellowship of other saints. Many religious organizations have rules and regulations that do not even pertain to the Bible, causing a great deal of confusion in the minds of young people.

"The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD." Young per-

son, you need to figure out if God is in the move you are making, or are you planning something for your own preference or benefit? You will have tough decisions to make from time to time. It helps if you can discern the difference between your flesh and the leading of God's Holy Spirit. It is best to back away from the decision you are making until you are sure the Lord is in it. Wait upon the Lord. He will come by and let you know what to do. He will never hold it against you for waiting upon Him. One of my favorite Scriptures is, "But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint" (Isaiah 40:31).

God will keep you while you are waiting and wanting to do the right thing. Let Him order your steps. You will be making many decisions as you grow older. When seeking a companion, do it prayerfully, fearfully, and tearfully. It is one of the biggest decisions you will ever make. There is more heartache in failing in that area than in any other. You must be willing to live with the consequences of your decision for the next twenty-five, thirty, or forty years. It is very serious. I counsel young people to get the mind of their parents, youth leaders, and pastors. Your help will come from the people whom God uses to perfect our experiences.

You can be in a world full of people and still be lonely. Sometimes, you need to put forth more effort to draw near to God. Show

yourself to be a friend to Him, and He will help you choose your friends. Friends are important, but you want to have the right kind of friends. Some friends will pull you away from the things of God and distract you from living a holy life. The world fights holiness, but the young person who wants to grow old in the things of God allows the Lord to order his steps.

Mark 14:3 says, "And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he [Jesus] sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head." The alabaster box was a chalky, carbon-based vessel, like a vase for flowers without handles. It was sealed with a precious ointment on the inside. Our lives are temporal vessels, like an alabaster box. The woman took the alabaster box, broke it in Simon the leper's house, and poured it out upon the Lord.

Young person, you should pour out your life for the Lord from your youth. The alabaster box had no handles because once it was broken, they could not use the remaining portion. It is a reminder to us. God wants our all, not our portions. God is more interested in the breaths you take from here to the time you leave this world than He is in your last breath. All our breaths are important. God is judging our actions, thoughts, and deeds.

Putting random acts of love into practice while you are young will be a stepping stone for you and inspire

you to encourage others to follow the Lord and desire to be a part of the Church of the Living God. I have never "seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."

When I was in the world, I was in the partying and drug scene. I left home and did not call my parents for six years to let them know if I was alive or dead. I did not want to talk to them. I cared about nothing. I wanted to find out what the world had for me. One of the most disappointing decisions I ever made was not keeping an open conversation with my parents. I still feel hurt from that decision to this day. I wanted to follow my flesh. It was not a very pretty trip. I did many things that I still shake my head at and wonder why. You do not have to do that, young people. I can tell you from experience, and so can many others, that the devil is a liar. If you want to be forsaken and desolate, serve your flesh. If the Lord orders your steps, I guarantee He will never forsake you.

I want to tell you how the Lord brought me to Him. The enemy said, "Now, if you had this particular vehicle, you would be happy." I worked

like a mule to get that vehicle, but it did not make me happy. Then he said, "If you had this spot down on the beach, you would be happy." I worked until finally, I had that house on the beach. It did not make me happy. All the things he kept promising me never brought me joy.

I loved the beach, and I spent a lot of time there. One morning while I was on the beach using drugs, the Lord spoke to me. How precious that was! He showed me the ocean and the waves coming in and said: "Joeie, that is the way My love is toward you, son. My love keeps crashing on the shores of your soul, but you are letting it return to Me void. You have to do something."

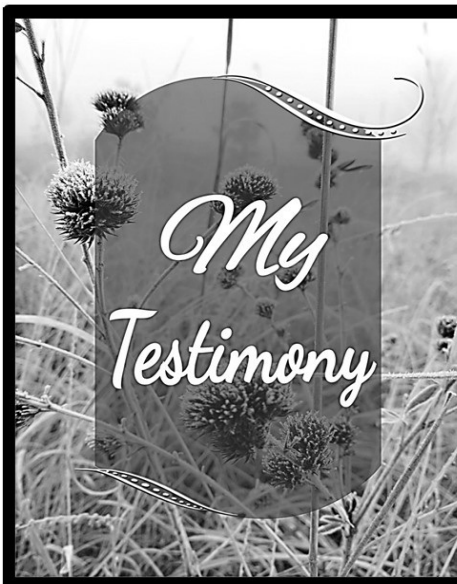
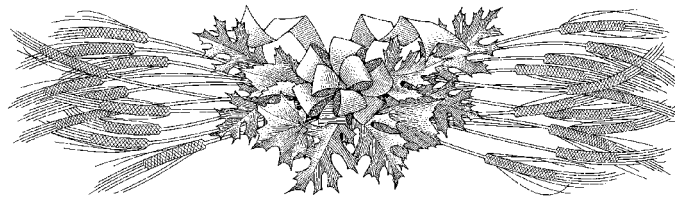
I went home thinking about these things. God had never spoken to me before. I thought: "That was not Mom and Dad. What was that all about?" I went to my bedroom, lay across my bed, and looked down at the floor. There were twelve-inch tiles on the floor, and in those tiles were multi-colored dots. That voice came back and said, "Count the dots in just one block." I thought that was strange. I started counting but soon

lost track. God said: "Joeie, that is the way hell is. It is full of countless millions of people, and that is exactly where you are headed. You have to do something."

When God brought me under conviction in that way, I called my dad and asked him to pray for me. I had not talked to him for many years. I do not know what he thought, but there I saw what I had. Young person, if you have Christian parents, you need to love them. They are on your side. My dad said, "Son, I never stopped praying for you." My dad prayed, and his son got saved. God brought me into the Church of God. I can say I was once young and now I am old, but I have never "seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging [for] bread." I love young people, and I want God to bless you richly. Support your youth leaders, and God will bless you for it.

Brother Joeie Brewer

Brother Joeie Brewer went to be with the Lord on November 6, 2022.



My Desire to Live for God

Sister Diana Talbot

My daddy got saved when I was three years old. At that time, he did not know the truth we have today, or even close to it, but every time he heard of a revival taking place, he was on his way there. There were eight of us children, and we did not have a vehicle big enough to carry all ten of us. So, we had to walk to where we were going. Sometimes it was a whole five miles to get there, but my daddy was determined to hear as much of the Word of God as he could. Many times, my daddy carried me on his shoulders.

Sometimes we had to walk

through water over a creek to get there, but we made it. It did not matter. If Daddy was off from work, we went to a revival. I am thankful for that because it instilled in me the desire to serve God in the way He wants us to and the determination to be in as many services as possible.

A few years after Daddy was saved, he met Brother Jack Dunlap, a great man of God. He helped my dad quite a bit in his growth in the Lord. When I was fourteen, we had a pastor who went astray. My dad had his eyes on that pastor and went down with him. It was really devastating because Daddy would not go to church anywhere after that. It took eleven years before I was allowed to go to church again. I was the only one who wanted to go to church, and Daddy said, "Are you sure you want to go down there to the services?"

I said: "Yes, I do. I need food too, Daddy."

At that time, I was claiming to be saved. I am not sure exactly how deep I was, but I felt I was living all God had given me to live. I would get up on Sunday morning, get dressed, and come out to the living room to say, "Daddy, I am ready to go," and he would take me to church. Then, he came back and picked me up after the service was over.

One day, I went, and they were having a revival. The Lord talked to my heart and really got hold of me. When I came back home, I told Mom and Daddy about it. At the time for the evening service, I went in, got dressed, and came back out. I told Daddy, "I am ready to go."

He said, "You are not going tonight."

I asked, "Why?"

And he said, "I do not want you going there anymore."

During that meeting, the Lord had really talked to my heart, and I think Daddy felt that. Anyway, I told him, "Daddy, I have

to go." I was under such deep conviction that morning, and I knew I needed to get back and complete the job.

He said, "I am not going to take you."

And I told him, "Then, Daddy, I will walk." From my house to that church was almost five miles, but I did it. I walked as fast as I could go, and I got there just as the preacher stepped into the pulpit. I got saved that night.

When I came home, Daddy was sitting in the same chair he had been sitting in when I left, the recliner. As I walked in the door, I said, "Daddy, I am home." No answer, and that was unlike Daddy. You had to go past his chair to get into the hallway to go back into the bedrooms. I got up alongside him, and I looked down.

Tears were running down his face, and he looked up at me and said, "Sis, you will never do that again." He had been touched because I had been so strong in my desire to get to church. I had never defied my dad. That was the only time in my life I ever defied what he said. It was really hard on me, and it was hard on him, but it opened his eyes.

Just about three months later, he got saved. I want to encourage you, young people. If you feel God is telling you to talk to someone, even your parents, to do something to help them, do it, regardless of the cost you may have to pay. You may be yelled at by your parents or by the person you are talking to, but it is well worth it to listen to what God tells you to do and receive the blessing. Even though they may not listen to you, at least you know you have tried, and you know you have done your best.

My dad was a good person. I took care of him for the last seven months of his life. When he died, he died peacefully. He had bone cancer, and they say that is the worst you can have, the most

painful. At the end, he said: "Sis, go lie down. You are tired, and you need your rest, too." So, I laid down, and in a few hours, something woke me up. I was in the room next to the living room, where his hospital bed was. When I entered the hallway, I could not go through it. I stepped three times and pushed my hand against it, but there was a barrier there. The only thing I can count on is that God was taking him home, and He did not want any interference.

When Daddy told me to go to bed, the last thing I heard him do was pray for my siblings, that they would find God. Two of them have since found the Lord, and I am thankful to have been able to witness it. You know, when we have parents who truly love us, they are willing to do anything for us, and we ought to be willing to do the same for them.

As time went on, I started praying for a companion. I was not getting old, but I had been praying because I had some dealings with brothers-in-law who were not saved and did not want anything to do with God whatsoever. I did not want a man like that. I wanted somebody who loved God and served God just as I did. I dated a guy and was engaged to him for a while. God told me, "That is not the one I have for you." He spoke to me as if somebody were sitting right there in the car beside me. I broke it off with that guy, and it was not long until I started dating my husband.

My husband and I were best friends in the congregation; his dad was my pastor. We attended revivals together, lived and worked in the same town. As soon as we got off work, we would get something to eat and travel to wherever there was a revival. I never gave it a thought because he had girlfriends, and I had dated some guys occasion-

ally, and there was no connection there at all. But then one time, I do not know what happened, but I caught him. And I am thankful for him.

Another thing is that I was always very backward. When I was little, I would sit on the stairway going up to our living room at mealtime. Half of the basement was made into a complete kitchen because there were ten of us. When my mother went to church, she would invite at least two families to come home with us. She loved company, and she loved to cook, so I was just used to that. However, I was so bashful that I did not want to sit with or talk to anyone. So, I would sit on the stairway and eat my meal.

When God called my husband to the ministry, I had a struggle because I thought: "I am not the type of person to be a pastor's wife. I cannot do this." But you know, God can put in you what you do not have. I am thankful I have had several people from our days of pastoring who have come to me and thanked me for the counsel I had given them. They said it was exactly what they needed, and I take no credit for that. It was God. God put those thoughts in my mind about what to tell them, and I am just thankful that God was willing to use this vessel that was once worthless.

God has given me the best husband in the world. I do not know what I would do without him. When you are dating and thinking about marrying someone, consider where they came from and how they were raised. I was a farm girl, and my husband was a city slicker. I will probably never be outside of that farm girl state, but I know God put us together for a purpose. He has a purpose for everyone. You may not know what it is yet. You need to pattern your life according to God's will.

When you are looking for a

job, companion, or place to live, if you decide, knowing it will require you to move somewhere else, make sure there is a true Church of God there. If it were not for Brother Dunlap, I do not know where I would be today. He instructed my dad to stay with the truth.

If you want a truly happy, successful, and worthwhile life, turn your life completely over to God. No holding back. Whatever He wants, be willing to do. Wherever He wants you to go, be willing to go. Some people stick with: "Well, this is where I grew up. This is my family's home." I had to leave all that. When I got married, we lived in Essex, Maryland, for a while. Then, we moved to a couple of congregations in the upper part of Maryland to pastor. Eventually, we ended up in Ovapa, West Virginia, where we pastored for over forty years. God has been really good.

Another thing is, I want you to realize how much you need to depend on God for everything. That includes the healing of your body. When I was seven years old, my mom and dad were saved, and they believed in divine healing. I had rickets, a disease that causes your bones to twist and does a great deal of damage to your body and frame. I have no signs of it whatsoever today. Every bit of it was taken care of by God. The doctors would look at me and say, "I do not believe you had that."

Right before we left Ovapa, I went to the gynecologist, and he said, "I want to tell you something I have not told you all the years you have come here."

I said, "Well, what is that?"

He said, "Your female organs were so damaged and messed up, you should not have carried a baby, but you have carried three."

I said: "That is God. It is the only thing it can be."

God has been with me through everything. Several years ago, I had five bypasses done on my heart. My doctor did not expect me to come out of that surgery alive. When I did, he said, "I am a Christian too, and I believe God can do anything."

I said, "He brought me out of this because I still have work to do for Him."

The doctor also told me, "I do not think you will live more than seven years." It has been more than twenty-two years.

I feel the Lord has gone overboard for little old me. I am worth nothing without Him. I love Him with all my heart. I love God's people. I desire to be an encourager. I want to encourage people to stay on the firing line, to keep moving in the direction they are going, and to let God direct their path.

Sister Diana Talbot went to be with the Lord on September 6, 2021.



WATCH YOUR THOUGHTS

Watch your thoughts,
Keep them **STRONG**;
High resolve
Thinks no wrong.

Watch your thoughts,
Keep them **CLEAR**;
Perfect love
Casts out fear.

Watch your thoughts,
Keep them **RIGHT**;
Faith and wisdom
Give you light.

Watch your thoughts,
Keep them **TRUE**;
Look to God
He'll govern you.

Grenville Kleiser



Brother Reggie Stegmeier

1 Corinthians 16:15 I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the first-fruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints.)

Here we see an absolutely beautiful expression of devotion noted by the great Apostle Paul concerning the house of Stephanas. "They have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints" is a positive statement of commendation, but the negative, more common connotation of addiction is what we want to consider. The following typewritten poem was found in a telephone booth by Officer Bill Hessler of the Long Beach Police Department. It is called "The Psalm of the Addict." It reads:

*King Heroin is my shepherd, I shall always want.
He maketh me to lie down in the gutters.*

*He leadeth me beside the troubled waters.
He destroyeth my soul.
He leadeth me in the paths of wickedness for the effort's sake.
Yea, I shall walk through the valley of poverty
And will fear all evil, for thou, Heroin, art with me.
Thy needle and capsule try to comfort me.
Thou strippeth the table of groceries in the presence of my family.
Thou robbest my head of reason.
My cup of sorrow runneth over.
Surely heroin addiction shall stalk me all the days of my life,
And I will dwell in the house of the damned forever.*

Dear heart, this is the sad, sobering, and serious commentary of the pitiful person addicted to the habits of life. Every one of us is but a few bad choices away from some addiction. If you think otherwise, be careful lest you become deceived, captivated, and captured by the devil. Addic-

tion is "the fact or condition of being addicted to a particular substance, thing, or activity." Some synonyms are: "dependency, dependence, craving, habit, weakness, compulsion, fixation, and enslavement."

People with an addiction use substances or engage in behaviors that become compulsive and often continue despite harmful consequences. Have you watched someone who is addicted to the habits of life continue despite it deteriorating their health, and wondered why? They continue because they are enslaved. Our intent is not to exhaust the subject or hurt anyone, but rather to provide helpful tools for dealing with addictions and ultimately avoid them altogether.

The good news is you can have a testimony like the house of Stephanas. You need not be addicted to the harmful habits of this world. You can be addicted to the ministry of the saints of God. I like being addicted to the Gospel! I love going to church, reading my Bible, worshiping God, and fellowshiping with the saints of God. I am addicted to these things. How about you?

Corinth, the capital of Achaia, was perhaps the richest and most important city in Greece. It was also the most corrupt. A center for trade, Corinth was inundated with all kinds of religions and philosophies. Paul founded the Corinthian church during his second missionary journey and ministered there for a year and a half, but serious problems developed after he left. Paul planted a congregation, God gave the increase, but the city had gotten into the church and worked among the members.

The Power of Choice

Paul's letter was not all negative. We read about the house of Stephanas, a family who made the wise decision to addict (or

the Greek word means "devote") "themselves to the ministry of the saints." Sadly, many choose other things to which they become addicted or devote themselves. Consequently, they become slaves to their unwise and unwholesome decisions. We were created to worship God. If we are not worshiping God, we will worship something. Some athletes sign contracts for millions of dollars to play sports. Sadly, someone is worshiping the athlete who gets paid millions of dollars.

In Exodus, Chapter 20, God gave the Ten Commandments. The first commandment deals with worship and where our devotion should be. Verses 1-3 say: "And God spake all these words, saying, I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage [or slavery]. Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

Revelation 4:11 reads, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." God put the desire to worship within the heart and soul of mankind. We must guard that desire, or we will worship something or someone else. In the song called "Fire in the Soul," D. S. Warner wrote, "If thy all is on the altar laid, Guard it from each vain desire."

Every individual has the power of choice. We choose what or whom we will serve. In Romans 6:16, the Apostle Paul expressed our power of choice in this manner, "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" We all have the same members—hands, feet, ears, mouth, and eyes. The difference between a saint and a sinner is the indwelling of the Holy

Ghost and how we yield or use these members.

While in sin, we lacked the grace or strength of God (2 Corinthians 12:9) and yielded our members to sin. When we are saved, we are redeemed or bought back with the same members. Now, we yield them unto righteousness and holiness through "the power of Christ" resting in us. What are you yielding yourself to? The lust, strong desire, or sinful pleasure you obey will eventually develop into an addiction. In 1 Corinthians 16:16, Paul said, "That ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth." We are either submitting ourselves to the world and its ways or to God.

Joshua, the successor of Moses, brought it down to a daily choice. In Joshua 24:15, he said, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve." Some experts believe we make about thirty-five thousand choices every day, which is roughly two thousand decisions per hour or one decision every two seconds. Our life is the summation of our choices. Daily choices determine our course of action. The summation of those choices will determine our destiny.

Yielding to Temptation

Addiction starts with a temptation. No one becomes addicted to the habits of life unless they yield to a temptation. Some struggle with their addiction after they get saved. Do not give up or quit! There is power for you to overcome. Keep exercising temperance, or self-control, through the Spirit of God. It is there when you get saved, but you have to exercise it so it will grow, develop, and strengthen you through your daily choices. You may slip and fall, but that does not determine your destiny unless you stay there. Get back

up and go on.

James 1:12-15 says: "Blessed is the man that endureth [not *encounters*, but *endureth*] temptation [many times we must fight to endure temptation]: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life [you receive the crown of life when you are victorious over your trials], which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust [or strong desire], and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished [or run its course], bringeth forth death."

Enticed in the Greek means "to bait or to bait a hook or set a trap with bait." The enemy will lure you in through your own selfish impulses. The Bible says God cannot be tempted with evil and does not tempt any man with evil. How are we tempted to sin? We are tempted when we are drawn away by our own desires.

Addictive behaviors are selfish. The habits of life seek to gratify, please, and satisfy the flesh. Haggai, a minor prophet, likened the flesh to "a bag with holes" (Haggai 1:6). It is never satisfied. You can keep putting money into a bag with holes, but it will keep emptying itself. Why does a smoker smoke several packs of cigarettes per day? The flesh is never satisfied. Smoking runs his bank account dry and ruins his health, even to his deathbed, yet he still smokes.

Often, addicts neglect the needs of those around them, including the pressing spiritual need of their own souls. You may have heard about parents who neglect the welfare or safety of their children and family to satisfy their addictions. One boss I worked for many years ago was

a nice man and well-liked. He was successful, but he became addicted to gambling and lost his prominent position in that company because of it.

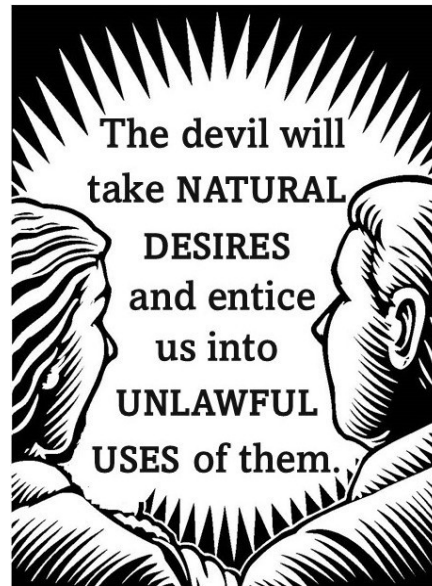
The devil tempts the souls of mankind with unlawful and ungodly substances. First John 2:16 reads, "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." The *Amplified Bible, Classic Edition*, says, "For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh [craving for sensual gratification] and the lust of the eyes [greedy longings of the mind] and the pride of life [assurance in one's own resources or in the stability of earthly things]—these do not come from the Father but are from the world [itself]."

Being "enticed," as James styled it, can develop into an addiction. It begins with a simple look, thought, and conversation, much as it did with the serpent and Eve. What follows is the binding power of sin if the temptation is yielded to. Addictive behaviors (alcohol consumption, drug abuse, food addiction, gambling, shopping, spending money, technology, television, the internet, or social media, to name a few) are attractive and alluring. If not, they would never become a temptation or an addiction.

Temperance, or self-control, is a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). There are some behaviors we must control. Spending is necessary and needful, but overspending is not. Eating is necessary and needful, but overeating is not. The nature of our flesh is to seek gratification. We want to devote or addict ourselves to something. We should strive to be addicted, as the house of Stephanas, "to the ministry of the saints." The devil will take natural desires and entice us into unlawful uses of them. The overuse and abuse of certain behaviors will cause them to become sinful.

Defiling the Temple of God

The temple of God is where God dwells. Does God dwell in beautiful buildings? What is God's temple? We read in 1 Corinthians 6:19, "What? know ye not that your body [the Greek says your flesh or your corporal body] is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" God wants to dwell in your body.



Consider the habit that causes smoke to come out of a person's mouth. If I were a firefighter and saw smoke coming from the door of a house and out of the windows, would it be wise for me to say: "You can dwell in that house. It is a safe, clean house"? God does not want to dwell in a smoke-filled house. Paul made it clear where God wants to dwell—in your body. Verse 20 reads, "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

First Corinthians 3:16-17 states: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." How do we bring

glory to God? By keeping defilement out of His temple or from our bodies. The smoking habit will pollute your body. The health industry tells us what smoking does to the liver, kidneys, and natural faculties. *Defile* means "to corrupt or to destroy." Sin destroys.

Every sinful addiction defiles or pollutes the body, which is the temple of the Holy Ghost. Strong drink, drugs, gambling, and other destructive behaviors corrupt the body, spoil relationships, and destroy marriages. They ruin families and turn the Spirit of God away from your heart and life. A Christian does not engage in such behavior or activities. Such addictions are strongly condemned in the Word of God.

First Corinthians 6:9-12 reads: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate [womanish], nor abusers of themselves with mankind [homosexuality], Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any."

The Apostle Paul wrote to people who, at one time, engaged in and battled to overcome addictions similar to those many of us battled before being saved from a life of sin. Jesus redeemed or bought them back and gave them the power to stand against the powers of the enemy. Our Scripture text says they were addicted "to the ministry of the saints." There is hope for everyone. As long as there is life and

breath and God impresses you to pray for an individual, keep praying! The congregation at Corinth was involved, engulfed, and addicted to the habits of this life, but they changed to become addicted to the ministry.

Forbidden Behaviors

Everyone is motivated by the power of influence. We are captivated either by the power of the Holy Spirit or by the power of the flesh. The Apostle Paul recognized that some activities we engage in are lawful, but we must not be brought under the control of them to the point where we are driven beyond what is necessary in our lives. We must operate with temperance.

Tobacco use is a cause or risk factor for many deadly diseases, especially those affecting the heart, liver, and lungs. In 2008, the World Health Organization named tobacco use as the world's single greatest preventable cause of death. Some people are so addicted to cigarettes that they will pick up cigarette butts someone has discarded and smoke them. Some will gather used cigarette butts, take what little tobacco that remains, and wrap their own cigarettes to smoke. They cannot let go of this disgusting behavior, or as some say, "Kick the habit." Many who have developed throat cancer or who have a hole in their esophagus or throat will continue to smoke.

Young person, the devil wants you to have these problems. Some studies say that about ninety percent of addictive behaviors begin in youth. Be careful of peer pressure. Some say, "Smoking cigarettes makes you look cool." Others take tobacco from a can and put it between their gums and front lip. It eats up their gums. Sometimes, part of their jaw needs to be removed

because they develop cancer. Would God want you to do that? The devil never shows you the end of these habits. He says: "Just try it. It tastes good. Your buddies are doing it."

Alcohol, drugs, and gambling, according to God's law, are forbidden behaviors. Anything that defiles your conscience, corrupts your morals, or robs you of your finances is unlawful. Susanna Wesley, the mother of John and Charles Wesley, spoke of sin in this manner: "Whatever weakens your reason, impairs the tenderness of your conscience, obscures your sense of God, or takes off your relish of spiritual things; in short, whatever increases the strength and authority of your body over your mind; that thing is sin to you, however innocent it may be in itself."

We need the power of God in our lives. You may be newly saved and battling a behavior you learned while you were in sin. There is power for you to overcome. In 1 Corinthians 6:12, Paul said, "I will not be brought under the power of any." Then in verse 14, he said, "And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power." Behind every temptation that develops into an addiction is the power to overcome. The Christian refuses to be brought under the power of these unwise behaviors. Instead, he chooses to submit to God. Our power rests in Christ and the decisions we make concerning Him.

The house of Stephanas, who were addicted "to the ministry of the saints," could have been involved in any one of the sins we mentioned. However, according to the Apostle Paul's writings, they found victory. Paul commended them and used them as an example. First Corinthians 16:16 states, "That ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth."

The world allows or makes excuses for what the Bible calls deceptive and unwise behaviors. They say that drinking alcohol should be done in moderation. The Bible condemns it altogether. Proverbs 20:1 reads, "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise." Refuse to be deceived by the drug of alcohol and stay away from it!

Some people say alcoholism is a sickness. It is the only sickness you can go to the store and buy. I do not know of anyone trying to buy COVID, the flu, or a cold. Alcoholism is not a disease; it is a choice. You can become addicted to these behaviors and influences, but there can be a greater power within you if you submit yourself to God. First Corinthians 6:11 says, "And such *were* some of you." A Christian does not take part in unwise behavior, nor does he or she consume that which the Bible condemns.

There is hope in Jesus. In 2 Timothy 2:22-26, Paul wrote to Timothy, a young minister in the faith, concerning the patience and wisdom needed to work with those suffering from addictions. He set forth sound instructions: "Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes."

"And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will." They cannot do the things they would because they are taken captive by the devil at his will. Verse 26

from another rendering says, "Then they will come to their senses out of the snare of the devil, having been captured by him for his will."

Overcoming Addiction

Drug and alcohol rehabilitation centers are designed to help people recover who have been overcome by the devil and taken captive by the power of addiction. Sadly, many people leave those rehabilitation centers and return to their addictions. People need more than help from man; they need power from the Spirit of God. The Apostle Paul gave instructions for deliverance from the power of sin and addiction. One, they must recognize they need God's help. An old adage says, "You can lead a horse to water, but you cannot make it drink." Many people come in from the world, needing the power to overcome sin and get saved, but they have no desire for help. They cannot be forced.

The first step in an Alcoholics Anonymous program is to admit you are powerless over alcohol. Every one of us lacked the power of God when we were in sin. We are not powerless over our choices, but over alcohol in this case. Recovering from an addiction takes more than changing your mind or following a series of man-made steps. You need God's help if you truly want to be set free from your addiction.

Second, you must repent. *Repent* in the Greek means "to change one's mind." To overcome an addiction, you must recognize that what you have been involved in is sin, and you are sorry and will change your mind towards your sin and quit sinning. Your addiction was the result of personal, poor choices. No one made you smoke, drink, or get involved in the habits of life. You made that choice yourself, and you need to truly re-

pent. We are a product of our surroundings and our rearing, but no one goes into sin because they were forced into sin. Isaiah 53:6 states, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

We must acknowledge before God we made a wrong choice, and we no longer want to fulfill the desires of our sinful flesh. Then, we must express sorrow over sin and be willing to change our course of action. Proverbs 28:13 says, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy."

Third, we must acknowledge the truth. We must be honest with God and ourselves. Again, 2 Timothy 2:25 says "acknowledging of the truth." The Greek says "to a knowledge of the truth." God's will is for "all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4). Who is the truth? Jesus Christ. John 1:17 says, "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." When we receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost, we receive Christ on the inside. In 2 Corinthians 12:9, Paul said, "He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness."

When you receive the grace of God, you get the strength of God. It is a strength or help in times of need. Hebrews 4:16 says, "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace [God's strength], that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Getting victory over an addiction does not mean you will never be tempted in the future. You will be tempted, but keep coming to the throne of grace, keep praying, asking, and seeking God for help. You can have victory if you really want it and are persistent.

Jesus Is the Answer

The Prophet Isaiah foretold of one office Christ would fulfill. Isaiah 61:1 says He will "proclaim liberty to the captives." Christ came to deliver those who are held captive by sin. In 2 Corinthians 3:17, Paul said, "Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." Where Christ's Spirit is, there is freedom from the slavery of sin.

On the back of the card on which "The Psalm of the Addict" was written was a note written in longhand. The precious young person bound by heroin said: "Truly, this is my psalm. I am a young woman, twenty years of age, and for the past year and a half, I have been wandering down the nightmare alley of the junkies. I want to quit taking dope. I try, but I cannot. Jail did not cure me, nor did hospitalization help me for long. The doctor told my family it would have been better, and indeed kinder, if the person who first got me hooked on dope had taken a gun and blown my brains out. I wish to God she had. My God, how I do wish it!"

Many people bound by the habits of life lose their desire to live. The demoniac man in Mark, Chapter 5, was in that situation. The habits of life had bound him. We read in Mark 5:4, "Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him."

The man's demoniac son was in this predicament in Matthew, Chapter 17. In both cases, these men needed Jesus. Matthew 17:15 says, "Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatick, and sore vexed: for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water." In other words, he had suicidal tendencies, and his life was

in constant peril. Those who are addicted to drugs often live in constant peril or danger.

Verses 16-18 read: "And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him. Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me. And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour."

Jesus is the answer. Jesus has the power we need for victory over the habits of life. He is still operating in His office as the Messiah. "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6). Jesus is the way of escape.

Finally, to overcome an addiction, you must be willing to flee the addiction and leave it behind. The reason most people never achieve victory over the habits of life is that they are unwilling to leave them behind. I heard a story of an individual who attempted to stop smoking cigarettes. He thought he had the victory, but he kept a pack of cigarettes in the cupboard just beyond his reach, just in case. Soon, he was right back into the smoking habit.

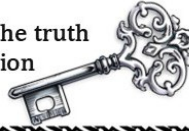
Second Timothy 2:22 says, "Flee also youthful lusts." Paul used this verbiage because most addictions start when we are young. Most people engulfed in the tobacco or drinking habit took their first smoke or first drink when they were young. Paul said to *flee*, not *feed*, youthful lusts. The Greek says "to flee, escape, or shun."

Avoiding Temptation

If you want to get rid of an appetite, you must starve it, not feed it. You must be intentional,

Keys to Overcoming an Addiction

- 1) Recognize you need God's help
- 2) Repent
- 3) Acknowledge the truth
- 4) Flee the addiction



not accidental; replace it, not ignore it. You need to learn new habits. Some will tell a smoker to chew gum because they are used to having a cigarette in their mouth. If your habit was to go to the fridge for a drink from a bottle of wine, you should get a glass of cold water instead. A different habit can be substituted, but it must be intentional. If you have issues with drinking alcohol, stay away from that aisle in the grocery store. Keep yourself away from that temptation.

Youth are more prone to trying new things and more easily swayed by peer pressure. Paul wanted to reach the youth before their temptations turned into habits and addictions. Approximately 40.2 percent of high school seniors (almost half) have reported abusing alcohol or drugs of some kind. Some have already developed drug and alcohol addictions. The key to avoiding becoming an addict and engaging in unwise behavior is never to start.

How should we handle temptations? Proverbs 4:14-15 states: "Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away." Avoid it! When it comes to temptation, find an alternative route to get away from it. Do not put yourself in questionable situations. The angels told Lot, "Escape for thy life; look not behind thee" (Genesis 19:17). Lot's wife disobeyed the message.

Joseph was in a potentially

compromising position. He was with the opposite sex in a place of business. We must be careful where we go and who we are with. Genesis 39:11-12 reads: "And it came to pass about this time, that Joseph went into the house to do his business; and there was none of the men of the house there within. And she [Potiphar's wife] caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me: and he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out." Several translations say he "ran." He got out as fast as he could. Joseph refused to be put in a careless and compromising position, to be left alone with the opposite gender.

Temptation is not sin. Hebrews 4:15 says Jesus was tempted, but He never sinned. Yielding to temptation produces sin and subsequent addiction. Our spiritual life depends on how we handle temptations. Anything that pollutes our temple or defiles our conscience must be avoided. Some excuse their addiction by claiming it is a sickness. It adversely affects you and may act like a sickness, but if you trace it back to when it started, it was a choice.

You cannot blame others or make excuses for the condition you are in; it is because of your own decisions. The saints of God will not condemn or belittle you. We are here to help, not to hurt you. However, you must go God's way. The key to avoiding addiction is to avoid the addictive behavior altogether. God desires you never to take the first step down the road of addiction. In 1 Thessalonians 5:22, Paul wrote, "Abstain from all appearance of evil." Recognize what is behind the temptation, who is bringing it your way, and where it will lead you if you give in, and then flee rather than feed the temptation. Run for your life!

What are you addicted to? Are you addicted to the ministry

of the saints? Are you addicted to working for God? Or are you addicted to gratifying the flesh and the pleasures of this life? Your answers to these questions will determine the direction of your life and ultimately your destiny.

If you desire to be free from your sinful, worldly habits, there is plenty of power in the blood of Jesus to wash away your sins.

The Spirit of God can keep you free if you want to be free. God can still break the chains the devil has on you. If you desire to be free and you meet the Bible requirements for salvation, you can "be free indeed" (John 8:36). The question is, do you want to be free from the habits of life? You can travel this life with temptations all around you and

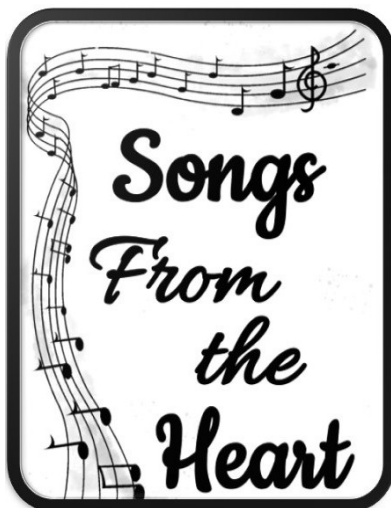
stay on the straight and narrow highway, which is awesome! God can give you the power you need for the temptation you are in right now.

(Compact Disc TR-2851)

Brother Reggie Stegmeier is the pastor of the Church of God in Canby, OR.

Weighed in the Balance

by Barney E. Warren 1907



*Weighed in the balance of justice true,
Sinful the path thou hast trod;
Weighed and found wanting—
will it be you?
Weighed by the Word of God.*

*There it will hurt like a wounding dart
When this dread answer shall fall;
"Weighed and found wanting"—
'twill pierce thy heart
At the last judgment call.*

*Weighed by the Word which is given
now,
Search it and know thou art pure;
Unto its mandates in meekness bow,
Then thou shalt be secure.*

*At the tribunal where Christ is judge,
Where ev'ry deed is made known,
"Weighed and found wanting"
each guilty soul
Stands there before His throne.*

*Weighed and found wanting, Weighed and found wanting,
Rejected at Heaven's door.*

In the course of a series of meetings held soon after the Gospel Trumpet Company moved to Anderson, Indiana, D. O. Teasley preached from the text in Daniel 5:25 and 27, which reads: "MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. . . Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting."

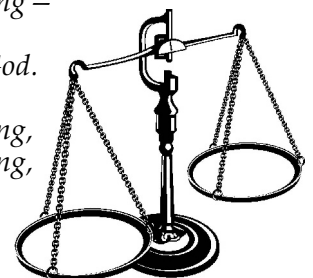
So vivid was the presentation that the congregation saw the courtly revelers, led by their king and all unaware of their impending doom, besotting themselves in drunken reveling. They saw the fingers of the handwriting on the wall and heard the solemn warning of Daniel's interpretation: "Thou art weighed in the balances of the Eternal and art found wanting." They heard the shrieks of fear and the din of arms as the Persians entered the doomed city and saw the king and his courtiers bound and dragged away.

As the speaker developed the story and pressed home its application to every conscience, the con-

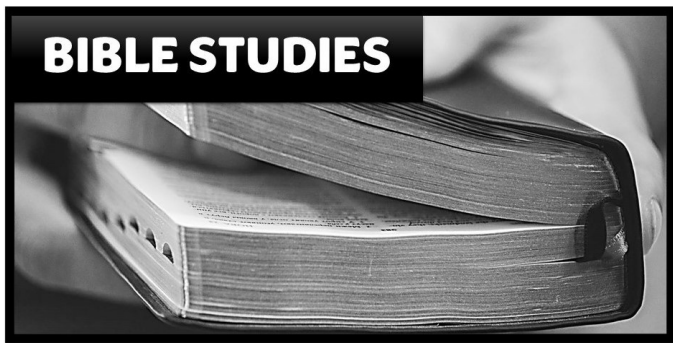
gregation sat as still as death. Everyone's emotions were aroused — Brother Warren's not the least. As was usual with him, intense emotion found outlet in poetic expression. As Brother Teasley went on, Brother Warren wrote these sobering words we still sing today:

*Weighed in the balance of justice true,
Sinful the path thou has trod;
Weighed and found wanting —
will it be you?
Weighed by the Word of God.*

*Weighed and found wanting,
Weighed and found wanting,
Rejected at Heaven's door.*



BIBLE STUDIES



AN OUTLINE OF DANIEL 12:5-6

We must first consider the preceding context and see what the overall scheme of this portion of the prophetic passage is portraying. Daniel, Chapter 12, is a typical portrayal of the Gospel Day. Verse 1 proclaims, "And at that time [the Gospel Day] shall Michael stand up, the great prince." Christ is "The Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6). The name "Michael" means "Who is like God?" (*Crudden's Complete Concordance* and *Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*).

The response to the question "Who is like God?" is found in the person of Jesus Christ, "the express image of his [God's] person" (Hebrews 1:1, 3). Christ said in John 14:9, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." When Daniel 12:1 says, "Shall Michael stand up," it refers to Christ's First Advent and the commencement of the New Testament dispensation. Throughout the chapter, the inspired penman spoke of the provisions this dispensation, through the atoning work of Christ, provides.

Daniel 12:5 Then I Daniel looked, and, behold, there stood other two, the one on this side of the bank of the river, and the other on that side of the bank of the river.

In relating his vision, Daniel wrote of two sides "of the bank of the river": (1) "the one on this side" (the same side Daniel occupied) and (2) "the other on that side" (a side Daniel had not reached in his day). The two sides represent the Old Testament and the New Testament dispensations of time. The "two" people Daniel saw represent the Hebrew people (under the old economy) and the Gentile people (under the new covenant).

Ezekiel 47:7 describes what the prophet saw "on the one side and on the other" of "the river" (verse 6). There "were very many trees [a symbol of 'the righteous'; Psalm 92:12]." The psalmist penned, "The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon" (Psalm 92:12). Isaiah 61:3 says we are "called trees of righteousness." Again, these "two" trees represent a people.

Both trees "stood" on "the bank of the river," indicating the "river" is the focal point and is what brings them together. "The river" is the "pure river of water of life" (Revelation 22:1). In John 7:38, Jesus spoke of "rivers of

living water." Verse 39 explains this "river" is "the Holy Ghost," revealing the working of the Holy Spirit, under the oversight of Christ, is of paramount importance in the operation of uniting both the Old Testament people and the New Testament people.

Daniel 12:6 And one said to the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?

"The man clothed in linen" was introduced in Daniel 10:5-6. That description has similar features to Christ's description in Revelation 1:13-16. Daniel 12:6 tells of "the man clothed in linen [Christ] . . . upon the waters of the river [the *Septuagint* says 'who was over the water of the river']." In this symbolism is a typical, prophetic depiction of how Christ, the "High Priest of our profession" (Hebrews 3:1), was working as His title applies. The Latin word for "priest" is *pontifex*, and it means "bridge builder." Christ bridged the chasm between God and man and between Heaven and earth. In these words of Daniel, the Old Testament and New Testament are brought together, as well as the Jew and Gentile.

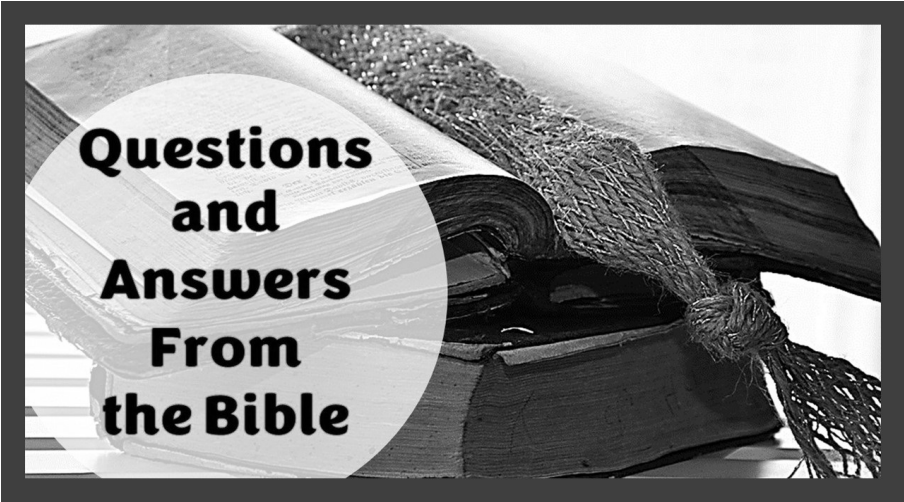
In Ephesians 1:10, Paul proclaimed, "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth." The church is represented as "the general assembly" (Hebrews 12:23). Each state in the United States has a legislative body comprised of two chambers, the Senate and the House. When both houses meet together, they are referred to as "the general assembly."

Likewise, the church is composed of two chambers. The Old Testament brethren who have left the shores of time were considered "just men," but it took Christ to come and "by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under THE FIRST TESTAMENT" (Hebrews 9:15) to make "the spirits of just men made perfect" (Hebrews 12:23). Christ brought both together into "the general assembly." He also united Jews and Gentiles. He "hath made both one," bringing them all together by making "of twain one new man" (Ephesians 2:14-15).

Daniel 12:5-6 is prophetically describing the work Christ did to bring all mankind "together in one" at the beginning of this Gospel Day. Verse 6 says He was "upon the waters of the river," or as the *Septuagint* describes, "was over the water of the river." Through Christ's exalted position, and since He was raised and now has the oversight as "the head of the church" (Ephesians 5:23) and has sent the Holy Ghost, He has provided an experience that can unite all men and all ages.

Brother Earl R. Borders

***Brother Earl R. Borders is the pastor of
the Church of God in Summersville, WV.***



Questions and Answers From the Bible

WHY ARE THERE DIFFERENCES IN THE GOSPELS CONCERNING JESUS' TEMPTATION?

Scriptures: *Matthew 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-13.*

The first three Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) are commonly referred to as *The Synoptic Gospels* because they give a synopsis ("a brief summary or general survey of something"; *Oxford Languages*) of Christ's earthly sojourn. It is important to realize these three Gospels are just that—a synopsis or summary. The Apostle John wrote, "There are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written" (John 21:25). We must be aware, in every case, we are not provided with every detail.

We must also recognize the truth that "all scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Timothy 3:16). Yet today, two ministers at two different times may be inspired to preach from the same Scripture text, but be inspired to accent two different aspects or truths—both of which are true and accurate.

The Scripture texts in question present a clear example of different summaries. The seemingly most apparent discrepancy is the comparison of Matthew's account in view of the others. Matthew 4:1-3 tells us: "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the

wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred. And when the tempter came . . ." A casual reading of this might appear to say that Jesus was not tempted until *after* the "forty days and forty nights" (verse 2).

Mark 1:13 says, "He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan." Luke 4:2 records it in a similar manner, stating, "Being forty days tempted of the devil." Notice the difference in how divine inspiration prompted the writers to relate this account. Mark and Luke both offered it exactly as "forty days tempted." However, Mark never mentioned the three specific temptations Matthew and Luke recorded.

Mark mentioned "wild beasts" (Mark 1:13) that the other writers do not mention. Because they were inspired to *accent* or *omit* certain details does not mean they did not happen or that the accounts were incorrect. Just because Mark was not impressed to mention the detail of the three specific temptations or being the only writer to mention "wild beasts" does not mean the other accounts are inaccurate or contradictory. What Mark said was true as far as it went; the other writers were merely inspired to relate more detail.

It is evident Jesus was "tempted" for "forty days." Matthew recognized

that when he wrote in Matthew 4:1, "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil." This verse acknowledges Him as being "tempted" but, as with the other accounts, mentions nothing concerning the temptations with which He had to contend during the "forty days."

One reason is due to the meaning of the Greek word for "tempted" (used in all three synoptic texts), which is *peirazo*. This word does not always mean an inducement to evil, but is broader and incorporates being tested or tried. All the events of the "forty days" are not revealed. We know the trial consisted of Jesus being "in the wilderness . . . with the wild beasts" (Mark 1:13), and "in those days he did eat nothing" (Luke 4:2) for "forty days and forty nights" (Matthew 4:2). Certainly, each of those things would try our human nature.

The description of these three specific temptations provides great insight into the nature of temptation that universally appeals to "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (1 John 2:16). This is the reason Matthew and Luke were inspired to detail what occurred "afterward" (Matthew 4:2) or "when they were ended" (Luke 4:2), the "forty days and forty nights" (Matthew 4:2). Thus, there was no contradiction or discrepancy; the writers were simply inspired to record different aspects of the event.

Luke's account closes, stating, "And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season" (Luke 4:13), revealing this was not the only occurrence of our Lord being tempted. We must always be aware that these Gospels are a summary, not giving the complete details or even mentioning everything our Lord did while here in this world.

Brother Earl R. Borders

*Brother Earl R. Borders is the
pastor of the Church of God
in Summersville, WV.*

Fall 2025 Camp Meeting Recordings

Message #	Date	Message Title	Minister
TR-3434 TR-3435	08-03-25	True Repentance God Has a Design for Problems	Bro. Roger Decker Bro. Steve Strelecky
TR-3436 TR-3437 TR-3438	08-04-25	The Antichrist The Little Foxes: Introduction Be Fruitful and Multiply	Bro. Roger Decker Bro. Reggie Stegmeier Bro. Larry Dishman
TR-3439 TR-3440	08-05-25	What Causes Division? The Little Foxes: Loose Lips	Bro. Calvin Foster Bro. Reggie Stegmeier
TR-3441 TR-3442	08-06-25	What Is Your Occupation? The Little Foxes: Laziness	Bro. Roger Nethers Bro. Reggie Stegmeier
TR-3443 TR-3444 TR-3445	08-07-25	The Gospel, the Power of God Unto Salvation The Little Foxes: Little Faith Are You Still Salty?	Bro. Marty Simpson Bro. Reggie Stegmeier Bro. Abraham Burton
TR-3446 TR-3447 TR-3448	08-08-25	Are You Being Hemmed In? The Little Foxes: Little Leaven When the Comforter Is Come	Bro. Nathan Harding Bro. Reggie Stegmeier Bro. Allen Polston
TR-3449 TR-3450 TR-3451	08-09-25	Exercise Thyself Unto Godliness The Little Foxes: Lopsided Living Strangers and Sojourners in This Life	Bro. Earl R. Borders Bro. Reggie Stegmeier Bro. Josh Thilmony
TR-3452 TR-3453	08-10-25	We Must Stay on Our Guard Eternity Is Too Long to Be Wrong	Bro. Allen Borders Bro. Larry Dishman
TM-509 TM-510 TM-511 TM-512 TM-513	2025	Fall Camp Meeting Songs #1 Fall Camp Meeting Songs #2 Fall Camp Meeting Songs #3 Fall Camp Meeting Songs #4 Fall Camp Meeting Songs #5	
	2025	Fall Camp Meeting Choirs Songs All Songs in MP3 Format All Morning Messages in MP3 Format All Afternoon Teaching Messages in MP3 Format All Evening Messages in MP3 Format	

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UPCOMING MEETINGS

- NEW CASTLE, IN**
September 29-October 5
REVIVAL: Westwood Church of God, 1518 Railroad Street, New Castle, IN 47362
Service times: Monday-Friday 7:07 p.m.; Saturday 6 p.m.; Sunday 10:45 a.m. & 5 p.m.
Evangelist: Brother Roger L. Decker, Newark, OH
For more information, contact: Pastor Allen Polston @ 765-521-8284
- WHITE PINE, TN**
October 8-12
CAMP MEETING: Church of God, 185 Highway 25/32, White Pine, TN 37890
For reservations, contact: Brother or Sister Williams @ 678-215-1540
For more information, contact: Pastor Roger Nethers @ 770-206-0786
- HAMILTON, MT**
October 8-12
REVIVAL: Church of God, 307 North 2nd Street, Hamilton, MT 59840
Service times: Wednesday-Friday 7 p.m.; Saturday & Sunday 10 a.m. & 6 p.m.
A meal will be served after the morning services.
Evangelists: Brother Steve & Sister Sheri Strelecky, Newark, OH
For more information, contact: Sister Christine Brower @ 406-381-3358
- MINERVA, OH**
October 13-19
REVIVAL: Mt. Zion Church of God, 13353 Lincoln Street SE, Minerva, OH 44657
Service times: Monday-Friday 7 p.m.; Saturday 6 p.m.; Sunday 10 a.m. & 5 p.m.
Evangelist: Brother Larry Dishman, Hurley, MS
For more information, contact: Pastor Leamon Whitehead @ 330-868-1016
- MT PLEASANT, PA**
October 20-26
REVIVAL: Church of God, 109 Salvation Lane, Mt. Pleasant, PA 15666
Service times: Monday-Saturday 7 p.m.; Sunday 10 a.m.
A meal will be served following the Sunday morning service.
Evangelist: Brother Larry Dishman, Hurley, MS
For more information, contact: Pastor Paul W. Prinkey @ 724-547-2151
- SUMMERSVILLE, WV**
October 27-November 2
REVIVAL: The Church of God, 74 Armstrong Road, Summersville, WV 26651
Service times: Monday-Friday 7 p.m.; Saturday 6 p.m.; Sunday 10:30 a.m. & 6 p.m.
Evangelist: Brother Marty Simpson, Jonesboro, GA
For more information, contact: Pastor Earl R. Borders @ 304-872-4047
- KALAMAZOO, MI**
November 1-2
WEEKEND MEETING: Comstock Ave Church of God, 5578 Comstock Avenue, Kalamazoo, MI 49048
Service times: Saturday Outreach Service 5 p.m. & Evening Service 6:30 p.m.; Sunday 10 a.m.
Meals will be provided following the Saturday night and Sunday morning services.
Evangelist: Brother Johnntrell Wright, Chicago, IL
For more information, contact: Pastor John Gill @ 850-208-1541
- FINDLAY, OH**
November 7-9
REVIVAL: Lima Street Church of God, 119 E Lima Street, Findlay, OH 45840
Service times: Friday 10:30 a.m. & 7 p.m.; Saturday & Sunday 10:30 a.m. & 5:30 p.m.
A meal will be served after each service. Lodging is \$50/night at the Findlay Inn.
To reserve a room, contact: Sister Jeri Lynn Thilmony @ 419-721-1622
For more information, contact: Pastor Josh Thilmony @ 419-721-7384
- SYLACAUGA, AL**
November 7-9
FELLOWSHIP MEETING: The Church of God, 1950 Goodwater Highway, Sylacauga, AL 35150
Service times: Friday 7 p.m.; Saturday 10:30 a.m. & 6 p.m.; Sunday 10:30 a.m.
Dinner will be provided Saturday and Sunday. Some lodging available.
For more information, contact: Pastor Mickey Mullins @ 256-487-3862
- KALAMAZOO, MI**
November 21-23
REVIVAL: Comstock Ave Church of God, 5578 Comstock Avenue, Kalamazoo, MI 49048
Service times: Friday 7:30 p.m.; Saturday 6 p.m.; Sunday 10 a.m.
Meals will be provided following the Saturday night and Sunday morning services.
Evangelist: Brother Earl R. Borders, Summersville, WV
For more information, contact: Pastor John Gill @ 850-208-1541
- CANBY, OR**
November 26-30
ANNUAL THANKSGIVING FELLOWSHIP MEETING: Church of God, 522 NW 2nd Ave, Canby, OR 97013
Services times: Wednesday 7 p.m.; Thursday 10 a.m.; Friday-Saturday 10 a.m. & 7 p.m.; Sunday 10 a.m. & 6 p.m.
Evangelist: Brother Jeremy Hupp, Newark, OH (starting on Friday night)
For more information, contact: Pastor Reggie Stegmeier @ 503-201-5622

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