

"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.

Brother Roger L. Decker Editor
Workers Too Numerous to Mention

THE CHURCH OF GOD BELIEVES IN:

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

**SOME SPIRITUAL FACTS
PERTAINING TO THE CHURCH**

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

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CONTENTS

The Cry of Wisdom 3
 Playing Second Fiddle 7
 Especially for Young People 13
 The Peculiar Traits for Entrance Into the Kingdom of Heaven, Part 1 of 2 14
 Doubts and Fears Don't Have to Stay 18
 Radio Log 22
 What Is a Father? 23

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Guest Editorial

Gog and Magog Part 3 of 6 Identifying Magog

Ezekiel 38:1 And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

2 Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Mesick and Tubal, and prophesy against him,

3 And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Mesick and Tubal.

Ezekiel 39:1 Therefore, thou son of man, prophesy against Gog, and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal:

6 And I will send a fire on Magog, and among them that dwell carelessly in the isles: and they shall know that I am the LORD.

Revelation 20:7 And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,

8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.

Ezekiel 38:2 declares, "Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog." In Ezekiel 39:1 the Prophet was instructed to "prophesy against Gog." Ezekiel 39:6 says, "And I will send a fire on Magog." Then, in Revelation 20:8, the revealer spoke of "Gog and Magog." We can readily see that these characters are what unites these texts. They are the common denominators that bring them together for a common purpose. As we view these passages, the most immediate question that arises is, Who are these characters spoken of in these texts?

By way of review, we want to cover some vital points concerning prophecies. First, when dealing with

a prophecy, we must follow distinct rules to gain the proper understanding of the Scriptures. One rule is that we must consider the prophetic time frame in which the prophecy was to occur. Without doing this, some errantly relegate Scriptures to the past that do not belong there, while others place them in an unreasonable, futuristic realm. As 2 Timothy 2:15 admonishes, you must rightly divide it, you must understand the time scheme of any prophetic subject under consideration.

The Prophet gave insight to the time frame in which this prophecy was to occur. He declared in Ezekiel 38:16, "And thou shalt come up against my people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land; it shall be in the latter days." The Greek English Septuagint, the Old Testament writings in use at the time of Christ's First Advent, says "in the last days."

The Apostle Peter let us know very explicitly when these last days commenced. In Acts, Chapter 2, we can see that on the Day of Pentecost, in A.D. 33, Peter declared in verses 16-17: "But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel [quoting Joel 2:28]; And it shall come to pass in the last days" This lets us know that when he said "this is that" that the last days had commenced with the Holy Spirit coming down on that day. Therefore, a new era commenced (the Holy Ghost Dispensation, or the Gospel Day), and the church was instituted.

As we look at our prophetic text, we find that the time frame is this Gospel Day in which we are privileged to live. Many try to look into these truths concerning Gog and Magog and devise many concocted ideas to try to explain what occurred in these passages. Others look for historical occurrences, but no historical occurrence matches the description employed in this prophetic reading. The reason is that it was not for the Old Testament time period, but for the latter days, the Christian Dispensation in

[continued on page 24]

Proverbs 1:20 Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets:

21 She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words, saying,

22 How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?

23 Turn you at my reproof behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.

24 Because I have called, and ye

refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded;

25 But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof.

26 I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh;

27 When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you.

28 Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me:

29 For that they hated knowledge,

and did not choose the fear of the LORD:

30 They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof.

31 Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.

32 For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.

33 But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil.



The Cry of Wisdom

Brother Roger L. Decker

The Danger of Not Harkening to Wisdom's Call

To me, this is one of the saddest and most fearful portions of Scripture in the Bible, but I like the way it ends. After all those sad verses, the last verse says, "But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil." The wise man began verse 20 speaking of the cry of wisdom. He said, "Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets." Every child of God knows how dangerous it is to hearken to the temptations of Satan. You do not have to serve God long to realize that giving heed to Satan's impressions is very dangerous, but in the Scripture text Solomon tells how dangerous it is not to hearken to the call of wisdom.

The wisdom that the wise man was talking about is the instruction that God gives to man concerning his relationship with his Creator. These teachings are given to man through his conscience, through the Holy Spirit, through His Word, and through divine revelation. The voice of wisdom is heard everywhere. The wise man said wisdom is heard in public and in private: it is heard in the streets, in the cities, and in the homes. You cannot shut out the cry of wisdom. You may not acknowledge it, or listen, but that will not shut out the cry of wisdom.

Again, verses 20-22 of the Scripture text read: "Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets: She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her

words, saying, [Wisdom is heard everywhere—in every nation, by every nationality. Throughout this world, wisdom cries without, and it reaches out to every class of people. You can read of that in the Scriptures.] How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?" Wisdom is asking, "How long is this going to continue?" It reaches out to all classes of people—to the simple ones, the scorers, and the fools.

The word *simple* comes from a Hebrew word that means "silly," and that makes that verse of Scripture much easier to understand. It could read, "How long will you silly ones love your silliness?" In other words, the Lord is saying, "When are you going to quit acting as if

servicing God is a big joke? How long are you going to take God for granted and play church? How long are you going to keep fooling around?"

Our Scripture text mentions the scorner. Verse 22 reads, "The scorn-ers delight in their scorning." The word *scorner* means "mock-er." Wis- dom is crying out, "How long are you scorn-ers going to delight in scorning? How long are you mock-ers going to try to mock the things of God?" Galatians 6:7 says, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Scoffers and mockers scoff at holiness; they run down everything sacred and seri- ous. Often they tell the Christian, "You don't have to do that to be a Christian." Friend, you do have to line up with the Word of God and obey Him to be a Christian.

Next, the wise man mentioned fools that hate knowledge. They hate to be taught, and they dislike godly living. You read in Psalm 14:1, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good." Wis- dom cries out to the sinner, "Turn at My reproof." In other words, God is saying, "Do not continue to be a scorner, a fool, or a simple one. Turn at My reproof." It is really sad when God does not hear one's cry. It was sad when the rich, young ruler walked away, but God would have heard his cry had he been obedient to what God required of him.

The Call of God

Let us consider what all God did to turn those people away from destruction. He did not just give up on them. He said they were simple, scorn-ers, and fools. Those are three strong words to describe the actions of people. Verse 23 says, "Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you." In other words, God was saying, "Turn at My convincing. Let Me convince

you that you are wrong." How was God going to convince them that they were wrong? He said, "I will pour out My Spirit to you, I will make known My words to you." God uses His Spirit and His Word to try to convince you that you are wrong, not just any word. God's Word and His Spirit will help you if you will let Him.

In our Scripture lesson, what do His Spirit and His Word do? Verse 24 tells you, "Because I have called, and ye refused [the call comes through the Gospel]; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded." God's Spirit and His Word call. Friend, have you been convinced by the Spirit of God that you are wrong, even though you thought you were right and others have told you that you are right? Verse 25 reads, "But ye have set at nought all my counsel, [Has God given you counsel and troubled your thoughts? If so, you ought to straighten out the thing.] and would none of my reproof."

What does it mean when God says, "I have called"? Romans 1:6-7 tells you: "Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ: To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ." You are called by the voice of God in the Gospel to believe in Jesus Christ for the salvation of your soul. You are called to live as a saint ought to live. You ought to live holy and truly represent the body of Christ.

Many people claim to have ac- cepted the first call that Paul men- tioned (the call to be a saint), but the proof of that call is lacking in their lives. When one has truly accepted the call of God, he will live holy. Holiness and sanctification are ever present in the Christian's life. You may say, "I don't understand sancti- fication." Study the word *sanctifica- tion*. It means "set apart." You begin to be set apart from the world when the Spirit of God and the Word work on you and show you your need of salvation. The only way

God is going to save you is if you are willing to separate yourself from the world, or from sin; then you can be justified. The process of sanctifi- cation involves many works of grace. You may need two, three, four, or a dozen works. The Lord will work on you as long as you live.

Called to Holiness

First Thessalonians 4:7 states, "For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness." When you come to God, a change takes place in your life. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17). What a change! The sisters stop cutting their hair, and the brethren get hair- cuts. The sisters stop running around in shorts, and the brethren lay aside their walking shorts. Tank tops and split skirts have to go. A Christian dresses right, acts right, and talks right. Saint, you are called to holiness. Everyone who is serving God is holy. If you are not holy, you need to be saved.

You may think, "How am I going to get rid of the cigarette habit? I tried to quit smoking before but failed." Yes, but you tried to quit on your own. Since the night I got saved, by the grace of God, I have never touched a cigarette. I did not say that I was not tempted, but I did not yield to the temptation. Friend, when you get saved, you will start going home to be with your family. Your wife or your hus- band will look better to you. Salva- tion does wonderful things!

When does one quit sin and when is all sin gone? In Romans 6:4-6 the Apostle Paul wrote: "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: [He was not talking about water baptism. You cannot get in the body of Christ through water baptism. He was speaking of spiritual baptism. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 12:13, 'For by one Spirit are we all baptized into

one body.'] that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life [that takes place when you are buried with Him by baptism unto death].

"For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection [you are buried with Him by baptism unto death]: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." Saint, when did you stop serving sin? When the old man was crucified with Him, a change took place and you stopped serving sin.

Holiness is commanded throughout the Word of God, and not one soul who has been truly saved fights holiness. The word *holy* appears 611 times in the Bible in only 544 verses. God wants to make sure that you know that you are to live holy, and He does not want you to forget it. His Word is even called the Holy Bible. Throughout the Word of God, it is holy, holy, holy. The Bible mentions such things as holy ground, holy Sabbath, holy place, holy garments, holy things, holy anointing oil, just to mention a few. Many religious people are willing for the water, the altar, and the buildings to be called holy; but they are not willing to be holy. God is interested in making holy people.

What does the Bible say about living holy? Paul, writing to Timothy, said in 2 Timothy 1:9, "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." First Peter 1:15-16 states: "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy."

Refusing God's Counsel

Going back to our Scripture text, the wise man said that wisdom

reached out. Verse 24 says God stretched out His hand: "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded." To stretch out your hand to someone is to welcome that one. God stretches out His hand. When someone comes running up to you and puts his hand out, he wants to be friendly with you. When God stretches out His hand, it is an act of mercy and friendliness. God wants to be your friend. That is what He means when He reaches out His hand.

The Word goes on to say that He gave them counsel, but they set it aside: "But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof" (Proverbs 1:25). What does that mean? It simply means this: they ignored His advice. Friend, God wants to give you counsel concerning how to get your life straightened out. Often when God tries to help people, they turn aside and say, "I can run my own life." They ignore His advice and will not take His rebuke. God does His very best to turn around people who are living in sinful conditions. He stretches out His hand and tries to give them counsel. God does not just write them off; He works with them to try to turn them around. We serve a good God.

In our Scripture lesson we can see the way people expressed their attitudes when God tried to help them. The people refused and disregarded His instruction. They despised His correction, hated His knowledge, and did not accept the fear of the Lord. With all that God did, they still turned their backs on Him. Therefore, God got sick of it. God has to be really stirred before He stops offering mercy. Today some people think they can set God aside and that things will continue as they have in the past; then when they get tired of sin, they can bring their filthy lives and lay them at the feet of Jesus. They need to read the Scriptures and give good attention to what God's Word has to say about the matter. In our Scripture

lesson, things did not continue as they had for the simple ones, the scorners, the mockers, and the fools. Friend, if you are in any of these conditions, your only way out is for God to help you.

According to our Scripture lesson, the simple ones loved their foolishness and their silliness, the mockers continually mocked God, and the fools said, "There is no God; that is foolishness." They seemed to be getting along well, but two unexpected things happened to those people. Read what God said in verses 26-27: "I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you." What two things came on those people? Calamity and fear. What is calamity? It means "misfortune and destruction." Friend, if you are in the same condition as any of those mentioned in our Scripture lesson, when disaster overtakes you and that dreaded feeling of terror strikes your soul, God is going to laugh at you. That would be a terrible thing when you need Him so much. If you allow yourself to get in that condition, you will not be able to get a prayer through; that would be sad.

God's Word Is a Two-Edged Sword

Again, verses 26-28 of our Scripture text state: "I also will laugh at your calamity [your misfortune or destruction]; I will mock when your fear cometh; When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction comet has a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you.

Thenshall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me."

Sinner friend, if you keep slapping the hand of mercy, that mercy will turn to judgment. God will only put up with that for so long. Remember, God's Word is a two-edged sword. You need to read

Josephus concerning the literal destruction of Jerusalem. There is not a more gruesome account in history. It was the judgment of God. They needed the hand of God to move in their situation, but instead of God turning the situation around, He laughed at them. Those people had thought that serving God was silly, and they made fun of the things of God; so when they needed help, God laughed.

Today some people say, "Serving God and going to church all the time is silly" or "Having to dress modestly is silly." Friend, if you really say that seriously, you will not have to worry about going to church when God gets through. God has everything in control, so do not think for one moment that He cannot handle you. The Jewish people had scorned and mocked the things of God. Then when calamity and destruction came upon them, God mocked them. Life is a time of probation, and while it lasts, the vilest of sinners is in reach of mercy. However, in eternity one's doom is fixed, and those who are guilty are guilty still. Friend, please do not harden your heart against the wisdom of God. Just because God is so long suffering, do not trample His mercy under your feet. Once a soul has been cut off, he is fixed for eter-

nity. In eternity the wicked soul will see that mercy is no longer within his grasp.

Verse 32 of the Scripture text says, "For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them." The turning away of God is what will slay them, and the prospering of fools shall destroy them. I would hate to go to the Judgment knowing that I had set at naught God's counsel and turned away His helping hand. God has turned some people over to a reprobate mind, and He is not hearing their prayers because they have set at naught His counsel.

Verse 33 reads, "But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil." He simply means that whoever listens to the correcting words of the Lord will dwell safely and will be quiet from fear of evil. Why? Because they have cleansed their souls in obeying the Word of God, and they know evil is not going to come upon them because they have obeyed wisdom. "Wisdom crieth without," the wise man said. Friend, won't you give heed to wisdom and save your soul from calamity and destruction? If you are unsaved, it is time to get saved. If you merely

have an old hypocritical profession, it is time to lay down that religion of works. It is time to lay down religion without salvation. Would you like to dwell safely and to be quiet from the fear of evil? To dwell safely is to be secure and safe. You can be innocent of any wrongdoing if you heed wisdom and have your sins covered under the blood of Jesus Christ.

God's hand is reaching out to you, friend. Won't you heed His reproof? He wants to help you. It is high time that you become serious about serving God. Serving God is just not another thing in life; it is life itself. If you have a need, you ought to obey the voice of God. You are the one who is going to gain. God will still be God whether you serve Him or not, but you are not going to stay the same if you do not serve Him. Never think for one moment that you will just grow out of the burden of sin or that you can just work it out on your own. If you sinned fifty years ago and it is not under the blood, you are still charged with it, and you will face it at the Judgment. If you have a need, won't you obey the Lord?

(Cassette C-4462E)

THE COST OF CONSECRATED LIVING

It cost ABRAHAM the yielding up of his son.

It cost DANIEL to be cast in the den of lions.

It cost STEPHEN death by stoning.

It cost PETER a martyr's death.

It cost PAUL to be beheaded.

It cost JESUS to die on the Cross.

DOES IT COST YOU ANYTHING?

Playing Second Fiddle



Brother E. David Stegmeier

Being in a Supportive Positive

The fiddle is the same instrument as the violin. A fiddler plays folk music and usually plays at dances. My children have played violins for years, and they prefer to be called violinists. A violinist usually plays very serious music and often plays in a large symphony orchestra. Perhaps you have heard the adage, "Playing second fiddle," which means filling a subordinate position, or a secondary role; in other words, not being in the limelight, but being a support.

A typical symphony orchestra has approximately one hundred musicians. The largest section in the orchestra is the first violin section, and behind that section is the second violin section. The most

proficient of the violinists sits in the first chair. He or she is called the concertmaster. That person is the most skilled of them all and is the one who is in the limelight. However, just because he or she is in that position does not mean that person is more important than the last second violinist; that person is important as well.

Throughout the Word of God we have many illustrations of situations where two or three individuals worked together in close proximity: one was in the limelight, and the other walked in his or her shadow. In the Old Testament we have the case of Moses and Aaron. When speaking of the relationship of Moses and Aaron, God said in Exodus 4:16, "... he [speaking of Aaron] shall be thy spokesman unto the people: and

he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God." Why was this so? Moses could not speak well, but Aaron was a very eloquent and gifted speaker; therefore, Moses availed himself of Aaron's abilities. Moses said, "I am not eloquent" (Exodus 4:10). In other words, he was saying, "I cannot communicate well; I am not very charismatic."

Some people follow whatever minister is the most charismatic. That is what is going on in the world today. In many places, it is not what is being taught that most influences people; it is the charisma of the leader. Some people are naturally gifted at communicating with others, and they make good salesmen. Some such people are selling false teachings, and many people are buying what they are

saying.

I wonder sometimes why some cults are growing so rapidly and why intelligent people are imbibing those doctrines and teachings. If one asks them if they have been saved, they do not know what that person is talking about. However, it has become popular for people to claim the experience of being born again. Many politicians, movie stars, drunkards, drug addicts, and others claim to have a religious experience, but their lives are just the same as they were before they had the experience. Some people just follow the crowds and go wherever a speaker is gifted in natural abilities. Friend, you must go deeper than that.

Aaron had a gift, but he was not a leader. Did Moses need him? Yes. In the New Testament we can read of several examples of individuals working together; one taking a prominent position and the other taking a supportive role, or playing second fiddle. I thought of Paul and Silas. We hear much about Paul, but very little about Silas. In fact, as I was looking in my concordance, I saw a number of places where Silas was called and used, but we rarely hear of Silas. How many children do you know named Silas? However, you may know of several individuals named Paul. Silas was a good man and a tremendous help to Paul. He was very important to Paul's ministry. In the city of Philippi, Silas was a great source of strength and an inspiration to him. When they were beaten and put in the Philippian jail, did they sit and nurse their wounds, crying and lamenting about their plight? No, they rejoiced! They had an old-fashioned Church of God revival, and the jailer even got saved.

You might be incarcerated, physically speaking, but you can be free in the Spirit. I am reminded of a man whom I have visited in a penitentiary. While in prison, he was gloriously saved, and he sees the Church of God clearly. (Paul said he was the chief of sinners.) He

got saved when a Church of God minister went to the penitentiary. He was first led to Truth through *The Gospel Trumpeter*; that whetted his appetite. After he came to know God, he confessed to three murders. The state did not lock him up for murder; they locked him up for stealing. He was never found out; however, when he got saved, he went deep and took care of it all.

To be a Christian, you have to go deep and uncover everything. Because he did that, he has a clear vision of God, and he has peace inside. He may be locked up physically, but his spirit is free. Being locked up in this time world and being free in eternity is far better than being free here and destined to a lost eternity.

The Body of Christ

When describing the works of the body of Christ (the church), Paul used the human body as an illustration. You may be playing the second fiddle, but how well are you playing it? First Corinthians 12:1-17 reads: "Now concerning spiritual gifts [if you are saved, God has given you a gift, and one gift we surely need much of is the gift of helps], brethren, I would not have you ignorant. Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led. Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.

"Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. [What God has given to you is to be used by the whole body, to promote the cause of Christ. It should be good for the entire body of Christ. It is not your own. God gave it to you so that He could use it for the

furtherance of His cause and kingdom, and the body of Christ should be better for it.]

"For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom [some people have an extra amount of wisdom, and that comes from God]; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; [Some are very gifted to understand deep meanings and truths. Should you envy them? No. When it comes to your physical body, has the left hand ever attacked the right hand? No. The same is true of the body of Christ. No matter what position you hold, you should never attack another member of the body of Christ nor be envious of that one. You should appreciate all the members and pray for them.]

"To another faith by the same Spirit; [Some are gifted with a tremendous amount of faith. How did you come to have the faith you have? God gives it, but is there a secret to how you can avail yourself of it? The Bible says that 'faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God' (Romans 10:17). There are ways that you can grow in faith.] to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy [some have several gifts, others may have only one]; to another discerning of spirits [we all need discernment]; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:

"But all these [What is the antecedent of these? All the gifts that he mentioned. We all have at least one gift. We are to be helpful. Whatever gift you have, you should give it over to God for the furtherance of His cause.] worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he [God] will. [God knows what gifts you can handle. Some people cannot handle certain gifts, because they would get too big for themselves. God used King Saul as long as he remained humble. God chose him, but he did not stay

humble. That is the key to being used of God. You must stay humble where you can be taught, instructed, schooled, and disciplined. The more one is willing to be disciplined, the more beautiful he becomes and the more God can use him.]

"For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many.

"If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?"

God puts some in the position of being watchmen when they have good spiritual insight. Though you have a gift, God gives a pastor the greatest amount of insight concerning the operations of the local congregation and the needs of the people. The same is true in the home: the father and mother of the children know the children better than the neighbor does, or at least they ought to. If the parents are saved, they do.

Successful Functioning of the Body of Christ

First Corinthians 12:18-22 states: "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those

members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary." You never see two of the most important members of your body: your brain and your heart. Likewise, some very important members in a congregation are never seen, but their work is extremely vital to the operation of the work. We all are needed in the body of Christ. Speaking of the physical body, some individuals have lost the big toe on one foot and had a real struggle with their balance. This illustrates well that every member is important.

Verses 23-24 read: "And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked."

Christ is the head, and we each are the members. We all have gifts, not for self-glory but for the edification of the body of Christ. No member of the body should quarrel or try to compete with other members. We need each other. Also, no congregation should try to compete with another congregation. We are workers together with Christ.

The Bible says there should be no separation, no division, and no discord in the body. We should be closely united in love. Love is the adhesive that keeps the body of Christ together. If one member of your physical body suffers pain, then the whole body suffers. We all have experienced that. If you get a pebble in your shoe, it hurts to walk, and the whole body suffers until you stop to remove it. When one part of the body suffers, the whole body suffers. When one part of the body is having pleasure, the whole body enjoys it. The successful functioning of the body of Christ should be the aim of every member, not that you can be seen or heard,

but for the work of God to go forward. We are dependent upon one another. We sing a song entitled, "We Need Each Other, Brethren," which reads:

*In a world filled with violence and hatred,
Everywhere, wars and turmoil we see;
God's people face daily this struggle;
Only love will keep us free.*

*Oh, how sad to see some of our brethren,
As they strive for earth's pleasure and gold;
Become selfish and strive with each other;
Love and kindness has quickly grown cold.*

*Lord, give us true warmth and affection;
When one fails, help us rescue his soul;
"He's not heavy, for he is my brother,"
Let us cry as we carry his load.*

*Dear Saints, let us vow to each other:
"I will help, I will comfort and pray;
I will stand by your side and defend you
In this battle you're facing today."*

*We need each other, brethren!
For only love will carry us through;
Let us stand by each other, brethren;
Take courage, be faithful and true.*

Isn't that a beautiful song! We are dependent upon one another. Solomon wrote in Proverbs 18:16, "A man's gift maketh room for him. . . ." Maybe the gift that you have should be used in a particular place, perhaps a place different from what you thought, but do not be too hasty. God will make room for you. A man's gift will make room for him. You do not have to force your way. God has a place. When I was a child, my mother used to sing a song, "There is a

place for everyone in the kingdom of God," and there is. You should be happy and content where God places you. You should not envy a person who you feel occupies a greater position. You should be willing to play second fiddle.

The songwriter wrote, "Oh, how sad to see some of our brethren, As they strive for earth's pleasure and gold; Become selfish and strive with each other." That is an awful thing. We need more men like Abraham, who said, "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, . . . for we be brethren." Brethren should not quarrel or strive with one another. If you and another brother have wonderful fellowship, but then someone says something to you that causes the relationship to be severed, whoever told you something that affected you against the other brother is hated by God. The Bible says in Proverbs 6:16-14: "These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: . . . he that soweth discord among brethren." God hates the person who does that.

Will He Find You in Your Place?

God's people are a music-loving people. All great men of God love music. Martin Luther said, "Next to the preaching of the Gospel, nothing has blessed the hearts of men more than music." Music plays a very important part in the work of God. We have a song that reads:

*With a happy song I will haste
along,
In his service faithful be;
All the things that fret I shall
soon forget,
When my King shall call for me.
In the valley deep, on the
mountain steep,
Tho' his face I cannot see,
With a purpose true all his will
I'll do
Till my King shall call for me.*

*He will hold me fast to the very
last,*

*For a tow'r of strength is he;
So I'll sing his praise thro' the
long, long days,
When my King shall call for me.*

*In a cheery way let me toil each
day,
Helping others lovingly.
With my work well done at the
set of sun,
When my King shall call for me.*

*May he find me in my place
When my King shall call for me;
With a loyal heart doing well my
part
When my King shall call for me.*

My prayer is that God will find me in the place where He has put me. The Bible tells us there is a place for husbands and wives. Sometimes a wife might feel that she does not get much recognition and that her husband is always in the limelight, but there would be no home without a good wife.

The Bible says in Ephesians 5:22-24: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing." Though the wife plays a supporting-role, she is just as important as the husband. Some women have a real problem with that nowadays, but it is still Bible.

A young lady once asked me, "Pastor, do you still read the portion of Scripture that says wives are to be subject to their own husbands?" I said, "Yes."

She said, "I will not ask you to perform my marriage ceremony." So I proceeded to tell her, "If you have a husband who obeys the next portion of the Scripture (Ephesians 5:25), you will be happy to let me read that first part, because if he is a good husband, he will treat you like a queen, and you will have no problem submitting." I have seen

some exceptions to the rule. I have seen women with very dear husbands, yet the wives refused to submit because rebellion was working down inside them. I have seen the reverse as well.

A pastor's wife may be living in the shadow of her husband, seldom heard of and seldom recognized, but she is a valuable resource to him. We need each other. I once heard about a couple who were both very good musicians, and they even made recordings. However, when they got married, he told her, "You'll not play the piano anymore," because he wanted the limelight. That is not God's plan. When I preach, my wife is right there and listens to every word. When it is time for her to play the piano for church, I sometimes walk by her and say, "Don't tell anyone, but the pastor has a crush on the pianist." She smiles and plays so much nicer. We need each other, and we need to understand our limitations and capabilities. Some people exercise in a position where they do not belong, and they do not have the grace to be there.

Staying Where God Places You

If you are playing second fiddle, so to speak, you should play it well and be happy playing in that position. I have directed choirs for years in church and in the schools. I will say, "All right, choir, gather in. How many sopranos do we have?" "Fifty."

"Wonderful. How many altos?" "We have only two? What's the problem?" Everyone wants to sing soprano. Singing the melody is easy. They don't have to use their heads. An alto has to think about the part she is singing, and a second soprano has to really use her head. To illustrate this, if you were to break apart a four-part harmony and listen to each part separately, which part would you hum? The soprano, or the lead part. You would not hum the alto, the tenor, or the bass part. These are

supportive roles. You would not want someone to sing for you and sing the alto part. Although the alto part is important, it is a supporting part, just as playing second fiddle is. Can you play second fiddle well? We all like to sing the melody. That is like playing first violin. All violinists clamor for that chair, but some have to play the supportive roles. The soprano sings the melody. Though the other parts probably do not get the recognition the soprano receives, they are just as important. Whatever you are doing, can you play second fiddle quietly without a lot of show, without criticizing, and without being envious? Can you be supportive, not always wanting a different role or a different function in the church? It is important that you stay where God places you. Sometimes people become insubordinate. They become rebellious and begin to complain and fuss against leadership.

In the Old Testament, Aaron became discontented and began to envy Moses. What did Aaron say? (Actually, his sister Miriam was privy to this.) Numbers 12:1-2 tells us that they spoke against Moses and asked if God was only talking to Moses. God talks to all His children, but He was using Moses in a special place. God often speaks through His chosen leadership. He has given the leader a special position in the house of God. Verse 9 says, "And the anger of the LORD was kindled against them," and they suffered for it. This happened because Aaron and Miriam were not willing to play second fiddle.

Another example of a person becoming discontented and envious is found in the New Testament. Third John talks about a man by the name of Diotrephes. John wrote to the church and worked with the church, but Diotrephes withstood the Apostle John many times. He hindered John because, according to the Bible, he wanted the preeminence. We do not know what position he had in the body of

Christ, but he wanted a greater position. To want a position that God has not intended for you to have is wanting the preeminence, and that is an ugly quality. Diotrephes wanted to be the head, and he wanted to lord it over everyone. Something within Diotrephes caused him to exert himself to stand against John and cause the work of God to be thwarted. The Bible warns us to be careful of feeling that we are greater than we really are.

We read in Romans 12:1-3: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith."

Often the Word of God speaks about the church and uses the metaphor of the human body to describe the functioning of the body of Christ. My feet can do well what God has intended them to do. And so it is when God has given you the grace and the ability to do what He has called you to do.

God-given Grace According to the Measure of the Gift

Ephesians 4:1-7 states: "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father

of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ."

If you are a God-called pastor, God has given you a pastor's grace. If you have been called to be a Sunday school teacher, God has given you the grace to fulfill your position. Whatever your calling is, God gives you the strength, the wisdom, and the grace to act in that position. Another translation says, "Christ has given each of us special abilities, whatever He wants us to have out of His rich storehouse, and He will give us the grace to function in that position."

The saints are to encourage and support one another to play second fiddle well. Some preach, some sing, some can repair things well. Others are naturally gifted in knowing how things work. They can take things apart and put them back together so beautifully. Each of us is gifted in certain areas, and we need one another. You should be happy where God has placed you, and you should perform that part beautifully. God will help you to fit in where He has given you the qualifications. You may say, "I don't know what I am qualified for." You need to keep praying and work hard and joyfully for the Lord. If you are faithful, God will give you more opportunities and responsibilities.

If you are a Sunday school teacher, He can make you a better Sunday school teacher. You may say, "I wish I could be the Sunday school teacher for the senior citizens. I teach fifth grade boys, and sometimes they are so rowdy." Maybe God sees that you are best qualified there. The time may come when you will grow to where you can have another position. However, you should be content where you are. I want you to read one more hymn; hymns are so important.

*The church of God one body is,
One Spirit dwells within;*

*And all her members are redeemed,
And triumph over sin.*

*Divinely built, divinely ruled,
To God she doth submit;
His will her law, his truth her
guide,
Her path is glory lit.*

*God sets her members each in place,
According to his will
Apostles, prophets, teachers, all.
His purpose to fulfill.*

*Salvation is her holy walls,
The cross her sign of pow'r;
Her captain is the mighty God,
Who guards her every hour.*

*In beauty stand, O Church of God,
With righteousness arrayed;
Put on thy strength and face thy
foes
With courage undismayed.*

*O Church of God! I love thy courts,
Thou mother of the free;
Thou blessed home of all the saved,
I dwell content in thee.*

When God made man, He made the greatest creation in the universe; he is the apex of God's creative work. David said we are fearfully and wonderfully made. The church should be just that beautiful; and it is, when each of us is in his or her place.

If you are not a pastor, are you content in doing a good job where God has placed you? When the pastor asks you to do something, do you do it without causing problems, allowing the pastor to be the leader? God has a place for each of us; therefore, you ought to be content and work together. You should not try to push yourself into a position that God has not intended you to have. How well are you playing second fiddle?

(Cassette C-4154M)

The Way of the Cross Leads Home

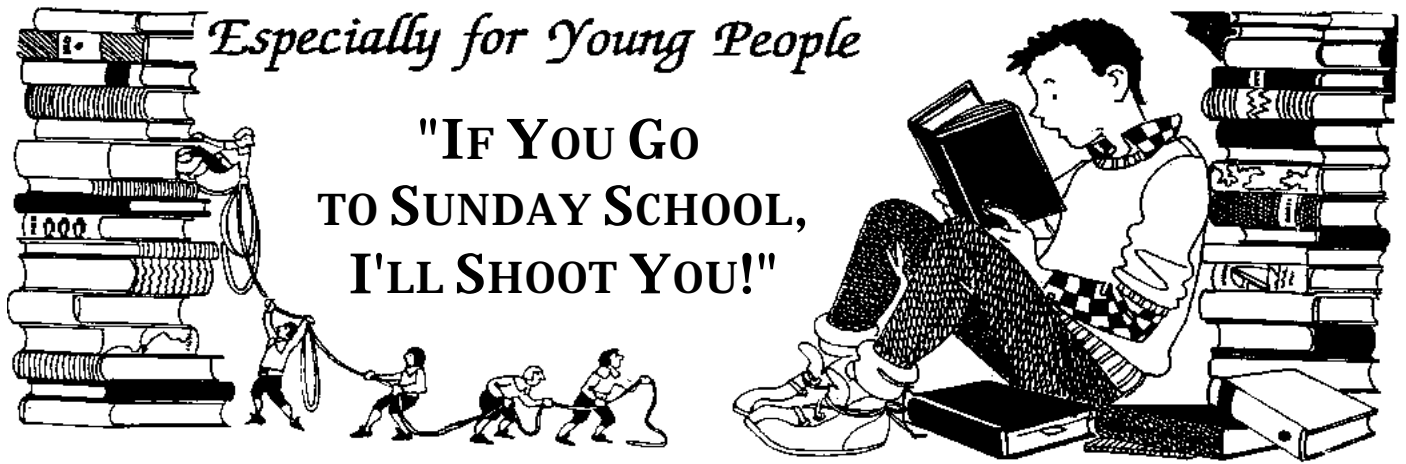
I must needs go home by the way of the
cross,

There's no other way but this;
I shall ne'er get sight of the Gates of
Light,
If the way of the cross I miss.

I must needs go on in the blood-
sprinkled way,
The path that the Savior trod,
If I ever climb to the heights sublime,
Where the soul is at home with God.

Then I bid farewell to the way of the
world,
To walk in it never more;
For my Lord says "Come," and I seek
my home,
Where He waits at the open door.

The way of the cross leads home,
The way of the cross leads home;
It is sweet to know, as I onward go,
The way of the cross leads home.



Mary was brought to a saving knowledge of the Lord when she was only eight years old. A year after her conversion, her father, who was a very wicked man, fell out with the class leader in her church. The following Sunday morning, after Mary had dressed herself to go to church, her father said to her, "Mary, where are you going?"

"I am going to class, Father," replied the little girl meekly.

"You can't go to Sunday school class; I'm going to put a stop to it. You may not go anymore," replied the father in very harsh tones.

"Oh, Father, do please let me go to class. The Lord will be displeased with me if I don't go. You know, Father, that I love you, and try to please you; but I must not displease the Lord."

"If you go to Sunday school, I'll whip you; see if I don't," said the father.

What was the poor little girl to do? She felt that she would sin against the Lord if she did not go, yet if she went, she would displease her father and get a whipping.

The Apostle Paul said, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right," but this wicked old parent was not "in the Lord." Still, he should be obeyed unless he set his authority against that of the Lord. "Honor thy father and thy mother" is the law, but a

child can never do that by dishonoring God. Mary clearly saw that her father's command was in opposition to God's commands, and that it was her duty to "obey God rather than men." But what could Mary do, a little girl of only nine summers, when her father said, "If you go to class, I'll whip you"?

In the midst of her tears she said, "Father, I would rather take a whipping than offend the Lord. I am your little girl, and you know that I want to be good."

That should have moved a father's heart, but it only enraged him the more, and in a most violent tone he said, "You saucy imp! If you go to Sunday school, I'll shoot you."

"Well, Father," said Mary, "I would rather be shot than sin against the Lord"; and then immediately she started on her way to class.

The wicked father followed her outside and struck her with a branch of a thorn bush; but she went on, and he returned to the house.

When Mary returned with her heart full of the love of Jesus, her mother met her at the gate and said, "Oh, Mary, don't go in. Your father loaded the gun, and I am afraid he will shoot you."

The mother wept but did not try to restrain her from going in the house. She went in singing one of her sweet hymns, for she had a

melodious voice.

As she sang, her father called, "Mary, come in here." Immediately she obeyed, expecting to be shot by her enraged father. She had a martyr's spirit, as everyone ought to have, and was not afraid to die. When she reached her father, he said, "Mary, that is a very pretty song. Sing some more." Then, overcome with emotion, he said as he dropped on his knees, "Mary, will you forgive your wicked, old father?"

"Oh, yes, Father," exclaimed Mary as she put her arms around his neck, "I forgive you with all my heart."

"Mary, pray for me!" said he. "Oh, pray that God will forgive my sins."

She knelt by his side and prayed with tears streaming from her eyes and the wicked father received into his heart the same Savior whom Mary so loved and served.

Selected

**THE BEGINNING
OF ANXIETY IS THE
END OF FAITH,
AND THE
BEGINNING OF
TRUE FAITH IS THE
END OF ANXIETY.**

—GEORGE MUELLER

Matthew 11:8 But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses.

9 But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet.

10 For this is he, of whom it is

written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

11 Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is

greater than he.

12 And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.

13 For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.

The Peculiar Traits for Entrance Into the Kingdom of Heaven

Part 1 of 2



Brother Esau Brooks

"The Violent Take It By Force"

I want to focus on verse 12 of the Scripture text: "And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." The masses of our time have much overlooked this statement coming from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Jesus was making a very strong declaration concerning what God requires for entering the Kingdom of Heaven. The Bible uses different expressions concerning entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven. When Jesus was speaking to Nicodemus, He said, "Ye must be born again." Another time when He was speaking to His disciples, He

said, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3).

In our Scripture text Jesus was stating that the Kingdom of Heaven is under violent attack and that the only way to enter is to become violent. Now, that may sound strange, for we all like to believe that anything violent is wrong, out of order, and out of place. Nevertheless, Jesus was saying that the Kingdom of Heaven is under violent attack, and He went on to let us know that the violent take it by force. Jesus was not speaking of an invasion, a nation rising against another nation. Though in Matthew 24:7 He spoke about kingdom rising

against kingdom, there is no similarity between the two verses. In one verse of Scripture He stressed what it will take to make it into the kingdom, and in the other verse he talked about the threats and the dangers to which the Kingdom of Heaven is exposed.

The Kingdom of Heaven is not for wishy-washy people. Man has joined the devil in an attempt to cause others to believe that when it comes to an experience with God, it is merely a matter of taking on a pious appearance. Jesus was not talking about that here. He made it plain that the kingdom is an object of violent assaults, and it is still so. Friend, you may not understand it, but that is exactly what is going on.

The Kingdom of Heaven is being violently assaulted, and if you are going to make it in, you have to become more aggressive. Someone may say, "Don't you suppose we have enough aggressiveness around the church?" Well, you said it right, when you said "around the church." I am not talking about what is around the church, but rather what it is going to take to get in the church.

The kingdom is under violent attack. You may think it is strange when things begin to happen around the church; but that is the way it has been since the beginning, and it is going to be so until the end of time. For one to enter this glorious, majestic experience with God, he must have that which will match the assaults. Friend, if you do not have it, you will not make it.

You may say, "Well, preacher, I thought that all a person needed to do was go to an altar, get someone to pray for him, and that was all." Friend, that is only the beginning. Merely going to an altar does not give you the experience of salvation. It is what happens after you go to an altar of prayer that will give you this experience: when you are saved, you are just entering this experience. Neither counting rosary beads nor signing a decision card will put you into an experience with God. If you were to join every church there is in the world to join, you would still be as far from the kingdom as you were before you started.

For one to enter this experience, he must have that which will match the assaults on the kingdom. You may say, "I don't see any assaults." If you do not, you have not been quickened. Paul referred to the Christian experience as a quickening, a coming alive, an awakening. Salvation is more than the practice of going to church and carrying a Bible. It is more than having a profession of religion and talking as a Christian talks. That is about as far as some people have gone. Granted, the experience will

give you a new conversation, but salvation is more than talk. The trouble is, there is too much talk and not enough action, too much professing and not enough possessing, too many players but not enough prayers.

If all you know about serving God is shaking a preacher's hand or waiting until they open the church doors to take you in as one of their members, then it is no wonder that you do not understand. The devil's job is to confuse the issue and to have people focus their attention on their own thing. The secret to serving God consists of getting rid of sin. God has not signed a truce with the devil concerning sin. There is no such thing as a peaceful coexistence between God and the devil. God yet hates sin, and to be a friend of the world is to be an enemy of God.

The Need For Greater Devotion and Greater Determination

In our Scripture text Jesus made it quite plain that the Kingdom of Heaven is not for well-meaning people. You could be well meaning in your intentions, in all your actions, in all your performances and still be lost. If we are going to take this expression of our Lord seriously, the Kingdom of Heaven is for the desperate. If you are not desperate enough to get out of sin, if you are not desperate enough to get rid of wickedness, you cannot enter the kingdom. People who are trying to hold on to sin have caused all the mess today around so-called Christianity. Sin is sin. The Bible says that sin is a transgression of God's law. God still means that. Division is sin. One must come to grips with what is wrong if he is ever going to get right.

I want to assure you beyond any doubt that when you are dealing with the devil, it is a fight. Never in my lifetime have I seen more assaults against the church than today. The church is getting it from the world, the devil, and religious

professors (that is where the greatest danger lies).

Jesus was saying that from the days of John the Baptist until now, the Kingdom of Heaven has been under violent attack, and those who enter this experience must become violent and take it. Christianity is not going to just happen to you; you are not going to stumble into it. To become a Christian, you must be born again. God must do a work in your heart and life, and this work is as complete as the work performed in bringing you into physical existence. Jesus said if you are not born of water and of the Spirit, you cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven (John 3:5). That goes against the thought of merely joining a church and joining the church of your choice. Heaven and eternal life are not at the end of such action. You must be born again; you must be delivered from sin, not merely have it covered up in your life. No one can drift into an experience with God.

In our Scripture text we have a warning and a challenge, not only of the violence to come but also of a devotion stronger than the violent attack from which the kingdom is suffering. If you do not become as violent as the violence, you will not make it. Let us look back to the days when our Savior was on this earth. When Jesus came to establish His Kingdom, it was the most hated and despised of everything called religion. Who was more hated, more despised, and more reproached than the Christians?

In the short period of time called the Dark Ages, more than sixty million Christians lost their lives for professing Christ, or for accepting Him. Have you ever read Fox's Book of Martyrs? The book is all about people who were burned at the stake, thrown to wild beasts, and so on, not merely because of hatred, but because those were assaults from the devil on the Kingdom of Heaven.

I like to read from the Book of Acts of the Apostles. When the

Apostles were threatened, beaten, locked in jail, and commanded not to speak in the name of Jesus anymore, Peter said, "For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20). At one time some Apostles were put away in the maximum security block of the prison, but it was not long before their jailers were wondering, "How did those men get free?" The prison doors were still locked, but no Christians were behind them. Not only were the Apostles free, but they were out on the streets preaching.

Until more people get serious about serving God today, the world will not see what the church is all about. The saints need a devotion to God and the work of God that is stronger than the violent attacks from which the church is suffering. No doubt, some may say, "We have enough violence now in the world. We don't need to advocate any more. It sounds like you are advocating a belligerent spirit." I am not advocating a belligerent spirit; I am advocating a determined spirit to serve God.

Unless you get to the place where you love God above the world's pleasure, above your own family, and above your own life, Jesus said you are not worthy of Him. Jesus left the splendor of Glory, knowing His destiny, and poured out His life for you and me. Yet, look at people today. They do not even want to walk across the street for Him. I am saying this as humbly as I know how. You need to look into this matter seriously and closely.

Something is wrong somewhere with what the world is calling Christianity. The Christianity exemplified in the Word of God is not of a people at ease, but of a people who came to grips against wrong. Our world would not be in the shape it is today if people had kept that spirit down through the years. Today if more men were of the caliber of the great pioneers of this country, who loved virtue and

principles, we would have a better nation and a better world.

Fiery Trials

Jesus said in verse 12 of the Scripture text that "the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence." Surely there are those who are striving to abuse and crush the church, but thank God, there are those who are rising and standing against the intrusion of the devil. The violent are taking it by force. They have ever done that.

Young person, you are not going to get anywhere in this world flirting with sin and the devil and experimenting with drugs. To make any practical advancement in your life and in the work of God, you must take the same route that the Apostles took: you must be born again. Also, those who will take this way need to be prepared for the worst.

Living for God is real; it is divine. Nevertheless, more and more, people are losing sight of the divinity of this thing, and they are satisfying themselves with the natural course of the flesh. Church, we need to become a little more violent for God.

Saul made up his mind that he was going to drive the church into the ground if it was the last thing he did. He stood by and consented to the stoning death of Stephen. No doubt, he thought, "That is one Christian gone." Then Saul went to the priests to get a letter. In essence, he said, "If you will give me a letter, I will go down to Damascus, a stronghold of the Christians, and bind every man, woman, and child who professes Christ. I will bring them back here, and you can do what you want with them." Without a doubt, the Jews were glad to write that letter.

Saul headed for Damascus armed with the letters and a determination to make an end of this thing of people becoming followers of Christ. However, as he drew near to Damascus, a light

shone round about him, and it was of such brilliance that he fell to the ground. He heard a voice saying in the Hebrew language, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Saul said, "Who art thou, Lord?" and the voice said, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." Saul said, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Not long after that, Saul testified, "I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it" (Galatians 1:13). The faith that Paul once sought to destroy, he then built up.

Verse 12 of our Scripture text says, "And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence." First Peter 4:12 tells us, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you." This is the way the saints of yore walked. Sinner friend, I want to invite you to make Heaven your home. To do so, you must come into this experience with God. The violent have to take it by force. Only those who are determined and prepared for the worst can get in. Today, as back in the morning time, the saints need a love that will make them fight the world rather than let salvation go.

I have read stories of martyrs. In one instance, the night before some Christians were to be burned, they talked and decided, "If there is anything to this, while we are burning at the stake, we will raise our hands and clap three times. If you don't see us raise our hands, it will be because there is nothing to this way of life." The next day they were tied to the stake. As the fire began to burn, some fellow Christians saw the fire take hold of their garments, and their legs and their hands began to burn. When their hands were gone, the martyrs held up the stubs and knocked them against each other. The onlookers were convinced that they had something real.

Child of God, when you are being persecuted for your love for Truth, you can raise your hand and

tell your fellow brethren, "Praise God, this experience is real!" After the martyrs died, the remaining Christians went back to their cells rejoicing, more determined than ever to serve God, even if it caused them to lose their lives for Christ.

Again, I remind you that the kingdom has suffered violence and is still suffering violence; but thank God for the violent, those who are taking it, holding onto it, and upholding it. Friend, if you are

going to make it to Heaven, you must have a testimony. One old song says, "I would be among that number who could show some battle scars, telling how they have fought for Jesus, and they won their robe and crown." Saint, where are you going to stand when you arrive in Heaven? Are you going to be able to stand beside Paul and Stephen and the other martyrs or will you be looking for somewhere to hide? What you are being called to suffer

today is nothing compared with what others have suffered for the cause of Christ. Will you dare to be different? Will you dare to be a Daniel? Will you dare to stand alone, to have a purpose firm, and to make it known? Beyond every shadow of doubt, this is the day for whoever is going to stand for Jesus to rise and stand. God bless you.

(Cassette C-4144E)

Love, Hope, and Prayer

That's how she always signed her letters—Love, Hope, and Prayer, Florence. I often wondered how she ever started to sign herself that way. Certainly you or I would not consider that she had much love directed her way or reason for hope, but anyone could see she had need of our prayers. I had written to her for some time before I finally went to see her. She was sitting in a cheerless, high-ceilinged room in the county home. All the little possessions she had been permitted to keep were in plain sight. She could not hear, but pretended a little. It took a lot of shouting to get anything across, so I mostly listened. She would tell me all about her family, her life, and sometimes about the goings on at the home. I visited because I felt it my duty, but her letters I really enjoyed.

When I came back to God after much fruitless wandering around in worldly things, I felt the need to do something. I did not drive and my children were

small, so I decided I would do some writing to shut-ins. Mother had kept in touch with this Florence. I remembered her slightly as years ago our youth group had gone to her home to hold a meeting. She had a nice, neat, little home and a kindly husband. Later he died, and she was alone. Much later she had become ill and could not care for herself. Her neighbors helped for some time, and then decided she needed constant care. Her home was sold, and she was shipped out to the county home.

Florence fooled everyone and got much better. She still could not take complete care of herself, but she improved. She had several pen pals, like myself. She would take the tracts and encouraging words out of one letter and send it onto someone else. Her letters were full of encouragements and the envelopes always carried a message of faith. When anyone from our church would go to see her around Christmas or Easter, she would hand over an

envelope. In it would be several dollars. It was just about all she got of her pension. Once when I was quite discouraged about finances, or the lack of them, Florence handed me her Easter gift for the church. I was truly ashamed of myself. Here I had been thinking of what the children would like. I had forgotten to count my blessings. Florence had no new clothes; she had few friends except for some from our church who kept in touch. She had really given all that she had. She brought me up short in my selfishness.

There is a beautiful new county home now. However, Florence never got to see it. One day I saw her name in the death notices. She had lived many years in that drab, cheerless place. Her life seemed to be useless. Still she could sign herself—Love, Hope, and Prayer, Florence.

Selected

2 Corinthians 10:3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh:

4 (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds.)

Doubts and Fears Don't Have to Stay



Brother Irwin Seshier

Keep Your Eyes on Truth

There are many strongholds today that need to be torn down. Christian friend, we are in a spiritual battle. Many people talk about a future battle called Armageddon, but we are in that battle right now. It is a battle of right versus wrong, or light against darkness. Many people believe that a future battle and kingdom are to come. Some say, "I just can't wait until that great battle." Well, the battle is raging now.

Sad to say, people who once stood against the false doctrine of a futuristic battle are going back and picking up that false teaching. Some people take certain teachings and manipulate them to the degree that people are confused in their thinking, and confusion leads to doubts and fears. So many people are con-

fused. We are living in a confused nation. I thank the Lord that I am in the true Church of God where there is no confusion. We have One who leads us away from confusion.

Some false teachings may look good on the outside, but when you start analyzing them with the help of the Holy Spirit, you can clearly see that they are as false as they ever were. You may think, "I will never get caught up in false teachings." Some people who are caught up in them now probably thought that would never happen to them, but they were overtaken.

Dear one, you need to stay with Jesus Christ. Stay with the Truth and do not waver. You cannot go wrong when you obey Truth. You can stay in the center of God's will when you keep your eyes on Truth and allow God to direct your life. If you deviate from Truth, you will be

left wide open to false teachings and the enemy's snares. If you are wide open to the enemy's snares, you will have nothing upon which to build your life, and you will not have any stability. You need something solid to hold to today.

Too many people are holding onto something, but it is not the right thing. Some people grasp anything, thinking it is the right way. If you are not holding onto Jesus Christ, that which you are holding onto is false; it will not stand when the trials come. Truth will not leave you on your own. If you stay in the center of God's will, Truth will lead you forward, and it will be right there with you all the way.

It is amazing to me in the day in which we live that some people do not want Truth. At one time they shouted and ran the aisles, rejoicing in Truth, and they testified openly

to other people about it. What happened? The enemy put a "gag order" on them and shut them up. They cooled off in their Christian experience. Some of them would rather talk about anything but Truth. They talk about the weather, their favorite sports teams, or politics; but you cannot bring up Truth because it will ruffle their feathers, so to speak.

Truth is something that should never grow old to you. It should be fresh and new every day. It is something to rejoice about and tell others. You should not let the enemy silence you. When you start to doubt and fear, the enemy knows what he can use to silence you so that you do not tell anyone else about the goodness of God. As a Christian, you are to tell others about His goodness. If they do not hear it from you, who are they going to hear it from? They are not going to hear it from the world.

Keep Pressing Forward for God

Sad to say, many have become lukewarm. Lukewarmness means that one has cooled off when it comes to the things of God. Often the enemy places doubts in a person's mind about Truth and the goodness of God. When a person first gets saved, he cannot wait to tell others about it, because he knows personally that something has happened to him. He does not do sinful things anymore. However, if he is not careful, the enemy will put doubts and fears in his mind, and lukewarmness will slowly creep in.

Revelation 3:16 says, "So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." Lukewarmness makes God sick. It does not happen overnight. It occurs gradually, and it leads to other things such as becoming critical of others, possessing a faultfinding spirit, finger pointing, and backbiting. It does not lead to anything good or positive; it always leads to the negative.

Doubting can cause you to have

a questioning spirit. You will always want to question things. When the pastor makes a decision, a doubter will often say, "I wonder why he did it that way?" Well, first of all, God did not call you to be the pastor. Doubting always puts you on the defense instead of the offense. A doubter never moves forward with the Lord.

To get anywhere in this Christian race, you must move forward spiritually. Also, you cannot wear your feelings on your sleeve, so to speak. Some people need to grow spiritually. If you are a Christian, people are going to say things about you and do things to you. Nevertheless, you need to grow in the things of God and move forward with God so that you can eliminate doubts and fears. When you stay in one place spiritually and become wrapped up in your own thoughts and feelings, doubts and fears will work on you. You are either moving up the spiritual ladder or not moving at all. When you keep moving up, the spiritual view keeps getting better, because you are moving to a higher plane of holiness. If you stay in one place for too long, you may start finding fault with other people.

What have you done for the Lord lately? Too many are waiting for the Lord to give them the most important job. They think, "I just know the Lord is going to let me do this, so I am not going to do anything else. I am going to wait until He has me do this one particular job that I want to do." So they wait and wait and wait some more. Then when the Lord does not call them to do anything, they wonder why they cannot move forward with God. Friend, if that is the case with you, you might as well forget doing the things that you want to do.

What does the Lord want you to do? Do not sit around and do nothing for the Lord. See what the Lord has in store for you. Doubting works when people stay in one place spiritually. Often it causes people to think, "The pastor doesn't care for me" or "The choir director

doesn't want me to sing a special" or "The Sunday school teacher doesn't ask me to . . ." Friend, do not start to think along those lines. You need to think about the goodness of God and look where the Lord has brought you from. When you think on the good things, you will be refreshed. You should not start finding fault with others, doubting, or fearing. That is the devil working. You need to be wise to the enemy's snares. The devil will use the same tricks repeatedly to cause people to fail. Friend, you cannot see what the Lord has in store for you unless you move closer to Him. You will not be blessed of God if you do not move closer to Him.

We have a classic example of an individual in the Bible who put forth extra effort to see Jesus. He had to move up. Luke 19:3-4 says: "And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature. And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way." Zaccheus knew that he had to move up if he wanted to see Jesus. To see Jesus the way you need to see Him, you must move closer to Him. Sometimes individuals are so overtaken by the press or by people that they cannot see Jesus as they need to. Many things can get in the way and block one's view of Jesus.

Never Give Up on God

Dear one, you should not let people dictate to you concerning your soul's welfare. Many people today are saying, "Well, I would get saved if it were not for this person or that situation." Some use every excuse they can think of. The real problem is that they need Jesus Christ; they are lost. Friend, you must get beyond what people think and become more concerned about what Jesus thinks.

You need to move up to a higher plane to see Jesus. You can be so overcome by the world and its problems and worries that you lose the

real meaning of why you were placed here in the first place. The devil will use doubts, and if he sees that tactic is working, he will reinforce these doubts with fears; then you will be unable to see the light. Dear one, that is a trick of the enemy. We are living in a discouraged age, but the Christian does not have to become discouraged. Sad to say, many are in that condition.

The enemy plants seeds of doubt. It took quite a few years for the people of a certain county in Alabama to understand why a little pest called the boll weevil invaded their cotton fields. Every time they planted crops of cotton, the boll weevil devoured them. After treating the ground, they planted more cotton, but the boll weevil again devoured their crops. Did they just give up? No, they did not do that. They grew peanuts instead. (Boll weevils do not like peanuts, but they love cotton.) Do you know what happened? Their incomes doubled.

The citizens of that county in Alabama were so excited about the profits they made that they erected a monument in honor of the boll weevil. They got away from thinking, "We can't do this" and decided to try something else, and it worked. That is what more people need to do today: they need to make a change and go God's way instead of their own way. That little county in Alabama could have sat back and withered away, but they saw the need to change, and they did.

Friend, do you see a need to change? Do you realize that the way you are living is not working? Think about it. If you do not have Jesus Christ, it will not work, no matter what other people say or do. It makes no difference if you get involved in this organization or that program. If it does not have God in it, you are going to lose.

Do not become discouraged if a door is closed when you try to witness for the Lord. Sometimes you can get discouraged, thinking, "No one wants to hear the Gospel or

hear about the goodness of God." Dear one, there is more than one door out there. Many doors need to be knocked on to let people know about Jesus Christ. You might not have turned to Jesus the first time you heard Him knock. No doubt, the Lord talked to you or had someone come your way several times to tell you about Jesus Christ. Aren't you glad He did not give up on you? Perhaps at first you said, "I don't want anything to do with Jesus Christ," but someone else came your way and you listened, and the Spirit of God used that person to talk to you.

When one door is closed, often another one opens. Do not be discouraged when one door closes. Two or three other doors may open. That is the Lord working. He works through circumstances. So many people take the attitude, "There is no way that I am saved. I am not doing things the way God wants me to do them, therefore I am going to give up. There is no use living for God, because I have tried and failed." Friend, do not take that attitude. You need to press on for Jesus Christ.

In your mind, you may think, "God, why are You making things go this way?" One day He will make it plain to you. You may not know the answer, but God does. If you do not understand, you should still trust Him. Do not give up on God, because He has done so much for you. Romans 8:28 reads, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." Franklin D. Roosevelt once said, "The only thing we need to fear is fear itself."

Put Your Faith and Trust in God

Second Timothy 1:7-10 states: "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power [you can overcome the spirit of fear with the power of God], and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our

Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."

Dear one, God has done too much for you to doubt Him. The enemy will place doubts in your mind, but you do not have to let those doubts stay. Sometimes the physical man fears the unknown, but with God you ought to put your faith and trust in Him. You should not let the spirit of fear and doubt overtake you. It will affect your spirituality.

You need to let the One who placed this world in motion take care of all your needs. He is the One who put this world and the universe in place, and He can take care of you. He will be there when you need Him, and you will never get a busy signal. There is no failure with God. Proverbs 29:25 says, "The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe." That is a wonderful promise!

To combat fear, you have to stand for what is right. Do not cower down. If someone comes at you with an accusation and you know it is not right, do not cower down. Stand for what is right. The world stands for what they think is right. As a Christian, you need to stand for the right. If the world starts to throw arrows at you, that is not the time to cower down. Stand up for Jesus.

Have others seen a difference in your life since you have gotten saved? Can they hear a different talk coming from you or do they hear the same worldly conversations coming from your mouth? Do you still go to the same sinful places that you went to before you were

saved? If you are truly saved, you do not go to those places anymore and you do not talk as you once did. Why? Because you do not want to do anything that would hurt or displease the Lord.

What about your worldly friends? Dear one, when you get saved, you cannot keep company with them, listen to their foul language, and go bar hopping with them and expect to stay saved. Many of those so-called friends will only be there as long as your money is there. When your money runs out, so will they.

Sometimes the enemy puts doubts and fear in your mind by saying, "What about your friends?" You will get new Christian friends who see things the way you see things. Worldly friends do not see the things that you see now. The Lord will give you new friends, because He has given you a new family. Your new friends will have the same interests that you have. They will talk the way you talk, think the things you think, and go to the places you go. So many people today think they can still hold onto their worldly friends and God too, but it does not work that way. You may think, "Well, I will win them to Christ." That is not usually the case. You cannot get them to come up to Jesus Christ by going back down to that pit.

The enemy often gives Christian young people the thought, "If I can't do this or that, go here or there, or say this or that, I am missing all the fun." Well, it only lasts a season; then the reaping comes, and it is not much fun. I look at it this way: you will not have the scars of sin if you go God's way.

As the Lord looks down in your heart, what does He see? Does He see a heart full of envy? Do you have hatred in your heart against your brother or sister? Do you have bitterness toward your pastor? Those things will bar you from entering the gates of Heaven. Sad to say, many people are walking around today with these spiritual

diseases in their hearts, but the enemy has deceived them into thinking that they are getting along fine. Some will tell you one thing to your face and knife you in the back, so to speak, when you are gone. That spirit is not of God.

Finding one who admits to being an out-and-out sinner is difficult today. Almost everyone says he or she is ready to meet God. Some people claim to be saints of God, yet they possess a spirit that wants to tear down a brother or a sister rather than build them up. Dear one, that type of spirit is not of God. The Spirit of God wants to draw the saints together, not divide.

Dear one, you may have doubts and fears, but they do not have to stay. They can be driven from your life. Too many people want to dwell on negative thoughts and harbor ill will. That is not of God. The Lord has good things in store for His people.

Refuse to Be Discouraged

Romans 5:1-5 reads: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: [Isn't that glorious? His peace goes beyond all understanding.] By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."

I am so glad that I have found the wonderful peace given by God. When the world looks bleak, the Christian can have peace every day of the year. When you are living in sin, you cannot have peace. You may think you do, but when you lay your head on your pillow at night, you do not. You toss and turn because you do not have that deep, settled peace. The peace that God

gives goes further than you could ever realize. When the boss gets upset and expects greater performance of you, you can have peace. You do not have to utter things under your breath. When the guy in your rear view mirror cuts you off or gives you an angry look, you can have peace. You should have, if you claim to be a child of God. There is too much road rage today. The Christian should never be involved in road rage, no matter how poorly other people might drive.

We read in John 16:33, "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." Saint, you need to make up your mind that no matter what comes your way, you refuse to be discouraged. I want to read this poem entitled "I Refuse to Be Discouraged."

*I refuse to be discouraged, to be sad
or to cry*

*I refuse to be downhearted, and
here's the reason why:*

*I have a God who is mighty, who is
sovereign and supreme.*

*I have a God who loves me, and I am
on His team.*

*He is all wise and powerful; Jesus is
His name.*

*Though everything is changeable,
my God remains the same.*

*My God knows all that's hap-
pening, beginning to the end.*

*His presence is my comfort; He is
my dearest friend.*

*When sickness comes to weaken me,
to bring my head down low,*

*I call upon my Mighty God, into
His arms I go.*

*When circumstances threaten to rob
me of my peace,*

*He draws me close unto His breast,
where all my strivings cease.*

*And when my heart melts within
me, and weakness takes control,*

*He gathers me into His arms,
He soothes my heart and soul.*

The great I AM is with me; my life

*is in His hands.
The Son of the Lord is my hope; it's
in His strength I stand.
I refuse to be defeated; my eyes are
on my God.
He has promised to be with me, as
through this life I trod.*

*I am looking past all my circum-
stances to Heaven's throne
above.
My prayers have reached the heart
of God; I am resting in His love.
I give God thanks in everything, my
eyes are on His face.
The battle is His, the victory is
mine; He will help me win the
race.*

Discouragement leads to doubts and fears. Your doubts and fears can affect others. Do not let others get you down. Let others see a difference in your life. It is amazing what God can do if we let Him take control. Too many people in this old world are dragging around with their heads down, claiming to be saints of God. You cannot see where you are going and run the race successfully with your head down, and you cannot be an encouragement to others.

Take the Shield of Faith

First Peter 3:13-17 states: "And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear [you have a hope that lives within you when you have Jesus Christ in your heart]: Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing."

Too many people today want their own way instead of God's will. We are living in such a selfish, self-centered world. Some people cannot understand why they are not blessed of God in their everyday lives. The reason is that too much self gets in the way. They are always thinking, "How is this going to benefit me?" or "What am I going to get out of it?" They need to ask, "What is God going to get out of it?" Are you discouraged? Are you full

of fear? If so, you do not have to go on in that condition. The Lord has something more for you in this Christian life. Your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ needs to rise far above doubts and fears. Doubt sees the obstacles, but faith sees the way. Doubt sees the darkest night, but faith sees the day. Doubt dreads to take a step, but faith soars on high. Doubt questions "Who believes?" but faith answers "I." Faith will drive away doubts and fears.

Ephesians 6:16 states, "Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked." Are you ready to tear down the walls of doubt and fear? The Lord can help you. Do not try to tackle them by yourself. You need the Lord's strength each day. If you do not have God within, you live without hope, and you do not have anything secure.

You can live successfully for Jesus Christ. Do not let anyone tell you that you cannot. Jesus Christ can take you all the way. Never doubt the power of God. He will be there each time you call Him. If you have a need in your life, won't you take it to the Lord in prayer?

(Cassette C-4560A)

Radio Log



LOCATION	STATION	DAY	TIME
Newark, Ohio	WCLT-AM 1430	Sunday	7:15 a.m.-8:00 a.m.
Anderson, Indiana	WQME-FM 98.7	Sunday	8:00 a.m.-8:30 a.m.
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What Is a Father For?



"Daddy's home—he can fix it!" Johnny exclaims. "Wait till your father gets home—you are going to get it then!" Mother warns. If you are like most fathers, you have put in a long, hard day before you walk through the front door and may not be mentally prepared to be a fix-it man or a mean bear. The role of a father has changed a lot in our society since the beginning of this century. Once the aloof, autocratic provider, a father now finds he has a full-time job at home as well as at work. Your position in your home is vital to the stability and well-being of your wife and children. If you are fortunate, you have a job that you like, one that pays well and gives you time with your family. Many men are not that fortunate and must learn to meet their family's needs in less than ideal situations.

Your job begins at home!

The Bible reminds us: "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him" (Psalm 103:13). Throughout Scripture, a father's responsibility to his family is continually emphasized. Of Abraham, God said: "For I know him, that he will command his children... after him" (Genesis 18:19). Jacob was commended for "blessing" his children (Hebrews 11:21). Joshua declared: "... but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD" (Joshua 24:15). God warned Eli that

he "honourest thy sons above me" (1 Samuel 2:29), and brought judgment on his family because Eli refused to deal with the iniquity he knew was there (1 Samuel 3:13). There can be no doubt that God expects fathers to be spiritual leaders in their own homes.

During the wilderness journey, Moses became overwhelmed with the responsibilities of leading the nation of Israel and meeting the needs of Israel and meeting the needs of each of its families. Therefore, God gave him a workable plan to expedite his leadership on every level. Moses was instructed to select a group of leaders (elders) whom he was to instruct. They, in turn, were to instruct the fathers, who then were to teach their own families. Thus, Moses was able to communicate his concepts, which were transferred down to every member of every family through the father's leadership.

Watch Out for the Enemies of Successful Fatherhood

Solomon observed: "A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother" (Proverbs 10:1). Fulfilling your parental responsibilities will bless

you and failing them will curse you. Watch out for the "enemies" of your family:

1.) Occupation Blues—Failure at work will tend to carry over into your family life. If you are under pressure all day and are not handling it properly, you will often take out your frustrations on your family. This is the reason a Christian father must look upon his job as part of God's will and purpose for his life. Working is not an end in itself. Nor should it become little more than a means of income. Our labor should be done unto the Lord, so that even our everyday tasks take on a spiritual significance. We are to accept our place in life and do all things heartily as unto the Lord (Colossians 3:23).

2.) Television Blahs—Beware of television; it will wreck you as a father. It is too tempting at the end of a rough day, when you are mentally exhausted, to just flop in front of the tube and turn off your brain! Television will rob you of vital creative communication with your family.

3.) Devotional Bores—Keep your

family devotions fresh and alive. Get out of boring ruts. Make sure that you are prepared. Read the passage in advance. Learn to study the Scriptures for yourself and then teach it to your family. Become a real man of God to your family and give them the leadership they need. Remember, "He that troubleth his own house shall inherit the wind: and the fool shall be servant to the wise of heart" (Proverbs 11:29). The very next verse declares: "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise." How is your "family tree" doing? Troubling your own house by failing to be a father who leads will result in a whirlwind of conflict. By contrast, producing the "fruits of righteousness" in your life will enable you to win your own children to Christ. Your children should want to become Christians because of the quality and character of your Christian life. They should

not follow the Lord in spite of you, but because of you. To fail with your children is to fail at one of life's greatest opportunities.

You Can Be a "Super Dad"!

The Apostle Paul wrote: "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). There are basically four types of fathers:

Neglectful—low in love, low in discipline. He avoids his children and flees all responsibility.

Permissive—high in love, low in discipline. He actually fears his children, who lead him.

Authoritarian—low in love, high in discipline. He fights with his children and forces obedience.

Authoritative—high in love, high in discipline. He leads his children and fellowships with them. A

well-balanced father does more than just "bring home the bacon." He is a leader and a teacher who motivates his children to effective decision making of their own. He is not afraid to correct them when they are wrong, nor does he demand behavior of them that he himself is not willing to give. The authoritative father loves his children enough to give them what they need, not just what they want. He enjoys listening to them and helping them with their special projects. He is in fellowship with God and shares that fellowship with his children. This kind of father may claim the promise of Scripture found in Psalm 103:17: "But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children"

Selected

[Guest editorial—continued from page 2]
which we live.

We need to understand the nature of prophetic language; we cannot take it at face value. Wanting it to give Scripture a literal rendition is natural for people, but they are not designed to be taken in a literal fashion. Consider the text that immediately precedes our text. Ezekiel 37:1 declares, "The hand of the LORD was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit [if we are to gain a revelation of Truth, the avenue through which it comes is the Spirit of God] of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones."

We read in Ezekiel 37:11, "Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel." Immediately, we can see that this could not literally be so. Ezekiel was one of the house of Israel, and if these bones literally represented the whole house of Israel, Ezekiel's body would have been among them, and there would have been

no one to address. Therefore, the prophetic Scriptures do not lend themselves to literal interpretation. They are spiritual truths conveyed to spiritual people, and they use spiritual language, or figurative language, which represent spiritual realities with literal things with which we may be familiar.

Now let us study our lesson text. The Prophet stated in Ezekiel 38:2, "Son of man, set thy face against Gog." Notice that this is definitely something to which God is adamantly opposed. Ezekiel wrote in Ezekiel 39:1, "Therefore, thou son of man, prophesy against Gog, and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, O Gog." Then, he wrote in Ezekiel 39:6, "And I will send a fire on Magog." Since this is something that God is against and it stirs His anger, we need to understand biblically what these characters are.

Let us consider how they are denoted in our lesson text. In Ezekiel 38:2 the Prophet penned,

"Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog." As with most Hebrew names, there is significance in these names. The word Gog literally means "roof, covering, or a mountain." Can we identify who Gog is by this mountain? Yes, but before we do, let us go to the only place in the New Testament where these words are used, as it gives keen insight into who Gog and Magog are. Revelation 20:7 reads, "And when the thousand years are expired . . ." The thousand years he referenced were the Dark Ages, from A.D. 530 to A.D. 1530.

Verse 2 says, "And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, [The Greek says 'the accuser and the adversary.' This serpent was no more the devil personified than the serpent in Genesis, Chapter 3, was the devil personified. The devil was working through this system.] and bound him a thousand years." This dragon represented the first oppos-

ing force to the morning-time church, and it is a symbolic expression of pagan Rome. In Revelation 12:1 you can see when the morning-time church came on the scene in her pristine glory: "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars." She came in a beautiful vesture and had all of God's luminary agents shining through her.

When the church appeared on the scene in Revelation 12:1. Revelation 12:3 tells us, "And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon." The first opposing force to the morning-time church was the pagan Roman Empire, and when it appeared on the scene, Revelation 12:7 tells us "there was war." There has been war ever since, not in God's Heaven, but in the ecclesiastical heaven, or in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, where the enemy is opposing the Truth and the church.

Revelation 20:7-8 says: "And when the thousand years [A.D. 530 to A.D. 1530, the Dark Ages; while the dragon was bound, the devil was very much loosed] are expired, Satan [*adversary* in the Greek; the same word is used in verse 2, and it is referring to the dragon] And when the thousand years were expired, Satan [or the dragon] shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea."

The inference of "the sand of the sea" lets us know this is a massive move. The sand of the sea cannot be numbered. When God spoke of Israel and how numerous their seed was, what analogy did He use? Isaiah 10:22 says that "Israel be as the sand of the sea." This signifies a great massive move.

In Revelation 20:8 we see Gog and Magog. The revelator gives us some key phrases that serve as identifying factors. Verse 8 says,

"And shall go out to deceive." This tells us the nature of these characters, that they are religious entities, because deception is a religious move of the enemy of souls and spirits. How can we identify them? Verse 9 says, "And they went up on the breadth of the earth." The latter portion of verse 8 says, ". . . to gather them together to battle." Note these key phrases. Where else are these types of phrases employed? In Revelation 16:13-14 John said, "And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs [they were not frogs, but they were *like* frogs; in other words, their nature was similar to frogs, depicting how they operate.] come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty."

I want you to notice some similarities. Revelation 16:14 says, ". . . which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of *the whole world*." Then, in Revelation, Chapter 20, what does it say the field of operation would be for Satan, or the dragon and Gog and Magog? Verse 9 says, "And they went up on *the breadth of the earth*." Here we find a common denominator: they have the same field of operation, or the same field of labor. "The breadth of the earth" and "the whole world" are synonymous terms. Notice that Revelation 20:8 says "to gather them together to battle" and Revelation 16:4 says "to gather them to the battle." We can clearly see that their field of labor, their effort, and the purpose are the same; therefore, understanding that the characters must be the same is not hard.

Revelation 16:13 denotes the characters as the dragon (paganism), the beast (papalism), and the false prophet (Protestantism), and lets us know that these are the deceptive religious powers that would gain influence throughout the whole world and would gather the forces

of all amalgamated religions together to confront the camp of the saints. It is the same entity. In Chapter 16 John called them "the dragon," "the beast," and "the false prophet." In Chapter 20 he denoted them as "Satan," "Gog," and "Magog," but they are the same characters and forces.

To sum it up, Revelation 16:13 speaks of the dragon; Revelation 20:7 speaks of Satan, or if you back up to verse 2 he let us know he was speaking of the dragon. Gog and Magog in Revelation 20:8 tie in with Revelation 16:13, the beast and the false prophet. The beast is Gog, and the false prophet is Magog. Again, bear in mind that we are speaking of religious systems, not individuals. The minds of men have devised these systems, and they are contrary to the sound teachings of the Scriptures. The enemy of souls is using them as instruments to deceive the souls of men.

Gog represents the religious system of papalism. How does that relate to the meaning of the word *Gog* as "a mountain?" The system of Roman Catholicism began with a mountain. Revelation 8:8, where we get a picture in symbolic expressions of the morning-time apostasy, says, "And the second angel [that was the period from A.D. 270 to A.D. 1530] sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea."

What is this mountain that John spoke of? Hebrews 12:22-23 (the Apostle penned this in approximately A.D. 63) reads: "But ye are come [present tense] unto mount Sion. To the general assembly and church." This mountain is a symbolic expression of the exalted position in which the church dwells, or those heavenly places. Ephesians 2:6 speaks of "in Christ Jesus."

Revelation 8:8 speaks of "a great mountain burning with fire." What is the fire? When the church was instituted on the Day of Pentecost, Acts 2:3 states, "And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them."

What was it? Verse 4 tells us, "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." Fire represents the Holy Ghost. Therefore, this mountain burning with fire is a picture of the morning-time church in the exalted position on fire with the Holy Ghost, under the Holy Ghost unction and anointing. However, something happened, and it was cast into the sea.

Now, as we all know, when fire goes into water, it is extinguished. When the mountain went into the sea, that which had been in public view went out of public view. What is the sea? The sea is nothing more than a density of water (again, this was a massive move). Two-thirds of the earth is covered with water. The composition of the human body is predominantly water, so it is talking about a massive water.

What does water represent? Revelation 17:15 says, "The waters . . . are peoples." What we see is a picture of the morning-time apostasy, where much of that which had been the church fell out of divine control, or out of the hands of God and into the hands of man. Then, up out of that same sea of apostasy, in Revelation 13:1 John said, "And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns." What came out of this sea of apostasy? The system of Roman Catholicism. How do we know that? The Scripture says it had seven heads and ten horns. Those seven heads denote government. Isaiah 9:6 says that "the government shall be upon his shoulder." What is on the shoulder? The head; heads denote government. Rome had in her history seven distinct forms (or heads) of government. They were as follows: 1) Regal; 2) Consular; 3) Decemvirate; 4) Military Tribunes; 5) Triumvirate; 6) Imperial; 7) Patri-
cian.

John also said it had ten horns. Horns denote political power. In Daniel 8:20 the Prophet penned, "The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings [one version

says *kingdoms*] of Media and Persia. Horns denote kingdoms, and the Roman Empire comprised ten distinct minor kingdoms. They are as follows: 1) Anglo-Saxon; 2) Burgundians; 3) Franks; 4) Huns; 5) Heruh; 6) Lombards; 7) Ostrogoths; 8) Sueves; 9) Vandals; 10) Visigoths. How do we know that the beast, or Gog, is Roman Catholicism? Because it tells us that this beast with the horns and the heads is best identified by a man. Revelation 13:18 says, "Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it [the beast] is the number of a man [one man wears this number that best typifies or exemplifies this beast]; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six." This is the exact inscription that the Popes of Rome wear on their miter: "Vicarius Filii Dei" in Latin, which, when given numerical expression, is 666. That man best exemplifies this system.

Establishing this is needful so that we can understand Magog, because Magog directly succeeded Gog. In other words, Protestantism directly succeeded papalism. Therefore, when it says *Gog*, which means a "mountain," this system started as a mountain and began as a result of the apostate morning-time church. Roman Catholicism was a result of an apostate mountain, and that system is a roof or a covering for all manner of sinful living.

What about the beast our text in Ezekiel denotes as Magog? We have already found in Revelation 16:13 that this equates with the false prophet, or Protestantism. What truth does the name Magog reveal? The word *Magog* is actually the Hebrew word **Magowg**, and it appears five times in the Bible: four times in the Old Testament and once in the New Testament. The word *Magog* means "expansion or increase of family" and "cog's region."

In the very name is an explicit picture of Protestantism. How? Stop and consider. The Apostle Paul penned in Ephesians 3:14-15: "For

this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named." To whom does the family belong? The Father. The family of God is named in the name of the Father. What is His name? God; therefore, it is the family of God, or the Church of God. He was speaking of the church. If you will read a few verses before that, you will see that he was expressly speaking of the church (Ephesians 3:10).

Consider what is the only God-ordained manner to expand or increase the family? Acts 2:47 tells us very plainly, "Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily [What is the only acceptable mode of entrance?] such as should be saved." No one can get in God's church unless he or she comes by the way of salvation; that is the only mode of entrance.

The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved. Jesus told Nicodemus in John 3:7, "Ye must be born again," or the Greek says "born from above." This is the only acceptable mode for increase of the family. The new birth through Jesus Christ is the only God-ordained, acceptable way to get into God's family.

In Revelation, Chapter 16, when we look at the dragon, the beast, the image, and these characters in Chapter 20, what is the lesson? These Scriptures are speaking of the same terrible trio: the trinity of truth fighters.

In the next part of this series, we will see, on the authority of God's Word, that these systems, though many revere them as Christian systems, are not Christian at all, but rather they are enemies and opposers to the Truth. Again, we are not speaking of individuals, but of false systems of religion. The realms of Protestantism are increasing, and no matter how ungodly people are living, they are accepted as Christians among their ranks.

Brother Earl R. Borders



thyself alone" (Exodus 18:18). You are only an instrument, not an agent.

Have you longed to do some great work for Me, and instead been laid aside on a bed of pain and weakness? This thing is from Me. I could not get your attention in your busy days, and I want to teach you some of My deepest lessons.

"They also serve who only stand and wait."

I want you to learn to sing—
"I am not eager, bold or strong,
All that is past;
I am ready not to do
At last! At last!"

Some of My greatest workers are those shut out from active service, that they may learn to wield the weapon of all—prayer.

Are you suddenly called to occupy a difficult and responsible position? Launch out on Me. I am trusting you with the "possession of difficulties" and for "this thing the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hands unto."

This day I place in your hand this pot of holy oil, make use of it freely. May every word that pains you, every interruption that would make you impatient, every revelation of your own weakness, be anointed with it. Remember, "interruptions are divine instructions." This thing is from Me. The sting will go as you learn to see Me in all things! Therefore, "Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day . . . For it is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life: and through this thing ye shall prolong your days in the land . . ." (Deuteronomy 32:46-47).

The thing He sends is always good,
So let's receive it as we should;
Let's never murmur nor complain,
But gladly suffer for His name.

Selected

My child, I have a message for you today. Let me whisper it in your ear, that it may gild with glory any storm clouds that may arise, and smooth the rough places upon which you may have to tread. It is short—only five words, but let them sink into your innermost soul, use them as a pillow on which to rest your weary head.

"This Thing Is From Me"

Have you ever thought of it, that all that concerns you concerns Me too? "After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye" (Zechariah 2:8). You are very precious in My sight (Isaiah 43:4). Therefore it is My special delight to educate you.

I would have you learn when temptations assail you, and the "enemy comes in like a flood," that this thing is from Me, that your weakness needs My might, and your safety lies in letting Me fight for you.

Are you in difficult circumstances, surrounded by people who do not understand you, who never consult your taste, who put you in the background? I am the God of circumstances. "Thou camest not to thy place by accident, it is the very place God meant for thee." Have you not asked to be made humble? See, then I have placed you in the very school where this lesson is taught; your companions are only working out My will.

Are you in money difficulties? Is

it hard to make both ends meet? I am your purse bearer, and I would have you draw from and depend upon Me. My supplies are limitless (Philippians 4:19). I would have you prove My promises. Let it not be said of you, "in this thing ye did not believe the Lord your God."

Are you passing through a night of sorrow? I am "the Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." I have let earthly comforts fail you, that by turning to Me you may obtain everlasting consolation.

Has some friend disappointed you, one to whom you opened out your heart? This thing if from Me. I have allowed this disappointment to come that you may learn that

"The best friend to have is
Jesus;
He will hear you when you call,
He will keep you lest you fall,
The best friend to have is
Jesus."

I want to be your confidant. Has someone repeated things about you that are untrue? Leave them to Me, and draw closer to Me, thy shelter, out of reach of the strife of tongues, for I "shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday" (Psalm 37:6).

Have your plans been all upset and are you bowed down and weary? You made your plans, then came asking Me to bless them, but I would have you let Me plan for you, and then I take the responsibility, for "this thing is too heavy for thee; thou art not able to perform it