

"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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Guest Editorial

Gog and Magog

Part 1 of 6

Establishing Rules to Study Prophecy

Ezekiel 38:1-6 reads: "And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him, And say, Thus saith the LORD God; Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal: And I will turn thee back, and put hooks into thy jaws, and I will bring thee forth, and all thine army, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed with all sorts of armour, even a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords: Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya with them; all of them with shield and helmet: Gomer, and all his bands; the house of Togarmah of the north quarters, and all his bands: and many people with thee."

Ezekiel 39:1-7 states: "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: And I will turn thee back, and leave but the sixth part of thee, and will cause thee to come up from the north parts, and will bring thee upon the mountains of Israel: And I will smite thy bow out of thy left hand, and will cause thine arrows to fall out of thy right hand. Thou shalt fall upon the' mountains of Israel, thou, and all thy bands, and the people that is with thee: I will give thee unto the ravenous birds of every sort, and to the beasts of the field to be devoured. Thou shalt fall upon the open field: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord GOD.

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. So will I make my holy name known in the midst of my people Israel; and I will not let them pollute my holy name any more: and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD, the Holy One in Israel. "

Revelation 20:7-8 says: "And when the thousand years are expired, Satan 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."

In Ezekiel 38:2 the prophetic writer said, "Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog." Here he introduced characters that he entitled Gog and Magog. In Ezekiel 39:1 the Prophet penned "Therefore, thou son of man, prophesy against Gog." In verse 6 he said, "And I will send a fire upon Magog." We can see that a common vein of truth unites these texts. The revelator, in his writings in Revelation, Chapter 20, also spoke of Gog and Magog. As we view these passages, the predominant questions that arise are, What is the Bible speaking of when it speaks of Gog and Magog? and Who are these characters? First, however, we will establish some biblical rules for studying prophecy.

These Old Testament passages of Scripture are prophetic. Sad to say, these texts gender much confusion in the realms of religion. Religious minds have styled these as most everything imaginable but what they are in reality and in truth. First Corinthians 14:33 says, "God is not the author of confusion." You need not be confused concerning God's eternal Word.

The Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 16:25-26: "Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,

[continued on page 25]

Psalm 92:1 It is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High:

2 To show forth thy lovingkindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night,

3 Upon an instrument of ten strings, and upon the psaltery; upon the harp with a solemn sound.

4 For thou, LORD, hast made me glad through thy work: I will triumph in the works of thy hands.

5 O LORD, how great are thy works! and thy thoughts are very deep.

6 A brutish man knoweth not;

neither doth a fool understand this.

7 When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish; it is that they shall be destroyed for ever:

8 But thou, LORD, art most high for evermore.

9 For, lo, thine enemies, O LORD, for, lo, thine enemies shall perish; all the workers of iniquity shall be scattered.

10 But my horn shaft thou exalt like the horn of an unicorn: I shall be anointed with fresh oil.

11 Mine eye also shall see my desire on mine enemies, and mine ears shall

hear my desire of the wicked that rise up against me.

12 The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.

13 Those that be planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God.

14 They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing;

15 To show that the LORD is upright: he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.



Continuing to Grow

Part 1 of 2

Brother Roger L. Decker

The Source of Christian Growth

I want you to consider verse 12, which states, "The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon." The word grow means "to enlarge, especially upward; to increase." Growth is necessary in all areas of life. When growth ceases, there is a concern that something is wrong. Crops, grass, and children need to grow. Growth is also necessary in the Christian's life. As we grow spiritually, this growth brings us closer to God. Peter said in 1 Peter 2:2, "As newborn babes, desire the

sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." He wrote in 2 Peter 3:18, "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen." God does not want you to stay a babe in Christ all the days of your Christian experience.

Ephesians 4:11-15 reads: "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith,

and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ."

Just as a natural mother wants to see her baby grow, so does the church, the mother of us all, look for growth in her converts. Christ is the source of our growth and the aim of

our growth. A pastor loves to see people come in and not only be converted but also grow spiritually and become rooted, grounded, and established in Truth and in the Christian experience. When that does not happen, there is great concern.

Hindrances to Spiritual Growth

Now we want to look at hindrances to growth. Jesus taught about the different types of ground in Matthew, Chapter 13. He said in verses 3-8: "And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow; And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold."

We want to look at the various types of soil, which represent the hearts of men. Jesus mentioned four types of ground: the wayside, the stony, the thorny, and the good ground. The only one that produced fruit was the good ground, or the good heart; that is the only one that brought forth an abundant harvest.

The wayside ground cannot produce, because on the wayside soil, or heart, the fowls move the seed. In other words, by the spreading of false rumors or stories or doctrines, the Word of God cannot take root. Therefore, the wayside heart never grows. Such a person does not make a good Christian because he is always moved, never settled, always discontented, and always in line for some action. He is ready to follow this or that lead or some rumor.

The Scripture says in Matthew 13:4, "And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up [or gathered them up]." Jesus said in Mark 4:15, "And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts." Those hearts that are as the wayside ground never seem to have time for God. They are always involved where they should not be and never have a settled experience. Often they bounce from congregation to congregation and from rumor to rumor, never settled in their hearts and never sold out on the things of God.

Like the wayside ground, the Word is sown in their hearts but never takes root. The fowls of the air, or the false prophets, take away the seed. Until they have a change of heart, they will continue to be as the wayside ground where the seeds fell in the field.

Next, Jesus mentioned the stony heart. This individual does not give the Word of God room to work in his life. Read the words of Jesus in Mark 4:16-17: "And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness; And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended."

Matthew 13:20-21 says: "But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended." This type of person receives the Word of God quickly and with joy, but it cannot take root in a stony heart, just as a farmer cannot expect to harvest a good crop on stony ground.

When I was growing up, before we planted a crop, my father used to have my brother and me go out with the horses and wagon to pick up the stones in the field. Stones prevent the seed from springing up and bringing forth a good harvest. When a farmer works the ground, if there are layers of stone in the ground, he does not begin planting. First, he gathers the stones. The stony ground will not produce spiritual growth. There will not be any growth until the Word of God is received in the heart and begins to produce fruit.

Next, Jesus mentioned the thorny ground. He said in Matthew 13:22, "He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful." Proverbs 22:5 reads, "Thorns and snares are in the way of the froward: he that doth keep his soul shall be far from them."

There are three types of soil that the farmer does not want to plant seed in, if he desires a good harvest. A farmer is not going to go out by the wayside and plant seeds. Also, he is not going to plant seeds on stony ground or among thorns. A farmer looks for good ground.

When one prepares to plant a garden, he checks the soil. If an area is full of rocks or overgrown with thorns, he would not plant a garden there. He would look for good ground. This is also true of the hearts of mankind. Those first three kinds of hearts that Jesus mentioned will not produce and grow spiritually unless they make a change.

"Mingled Seed"

Luke 8:11 says, "Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God." The Word of God falling upon a good heart will produce a strong Christian. You cannot mingle the seed with that which is not conducive to Christian living. In other words, you cannot mingle the

Word of God and the world.

Leviticus 19:19 says, "Ye shall keep my statutes. Thou shalt not let thy cattle gender with a diverse kind: thou shalt not sow thy field with mingled seed: neither shall a garment mingled of linen and woollen come upon thee." Deuteronomy 22:9 reads, "Thou shalt not sow thy vineyard with divers seeds: lest the fruit of thy seed which thou hast sown, and the fruit of thy vineyard, be defiled." Just as one could not mingle that seed, likewise the Christian cannot mingle the Word and the world in his heart and expect to grow. James 3:11 says, "Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter?"

How can you mingle other seed with the Word of God? Proverbs 14:12 says, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." One way you can mingle the seed is to mingle the Word of God with your thoughts. For example, you may say, "I know what the Word of God says and I know what is preached, but this is the way I see it" or "I know what the Church of God teaches about salvation, but this is what I believe a man or a woman needs to do to be saved." Friend, if what you believe does not line up with the Word of God, you might as well discard it. You are not going to be judged by what you believe but by what the Word of God says. The Word of God is true; it is fixed and settled, and everyone who lines up with it will be saved.

Psalm 94:11 states, "The LORD knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity." Many people come along with their own thoughts and say, "This is how I see it, and this is how far I'm going to go when it comes to being a Christian." You cannot mingle the seed. You have to allow the Word of God to work in good ground, or in a good heart, before you will see any fruit produced.

The enemy will always try to get you to go some way other than

God's way, to take the path of least resistance. It takes a real man or woman to lay down his or her own thoughts and ways and accept the Word of God. This is right at the heart of why many people do not blossom out as Christians. Many people have received the Word of God, but they mingled it with their own ways, and those ways turned out to be the ways of death.

Some people will go only so far, and then they turn away from serving God. When the Lord lays it upon the heart of the pastor to preach on the Bible standard, some people say, "Well, I know what is preached, but I know what I'm going to do," and then they leave. Nevertheless, the Church of God has a standard, and it fits men and women of all nationalities. The dress standard for the brethren and the sisters is modesty. It is a beautiful standard. We do not set the standard by the world; we set the standard by the Word of God. When that standard, the Word of God, falls on a good heart, it produces as long as that person lays aside his own thoughts.

Friend, you have to allow the Word of God to work in your heart. You cannot mingle it with your own thoughts. You may say, "Well, I don't see anything wrong with this or that." At the Judgment, it is not going to matter what you think or what your opinion is, but it is going to be "Thus saith the Lord."

God has a standard unlike any standard in sectism. They try to copy it, but they can only go so far. They cannot take the persecution that is attached to it. There is an inward standard of holiness and an outward standard as well, and it is beautiful. The sisters have uncut hair, and the men have short haircuts. The sisters dress modestly, and they are modest in their actions. They are not bold or forward. That is a beautiful standard. If you take the Bible standard and mix it with your own thoughts, then you are always battling condemnation.

The enemy is constantly working

to get you to go another way. He will tell you, "That's too harsh. God doesn't expect you to do all of that." Friend, you cannot tell Jesus at the Judgment: "I know some others went through martyrdom, but do you know what I had to give up? I had to give up short skirts, sleeveless dresses, and sleeveless blouses. Isn't that terrible? There ought to be a special place for me, right alongside the martyrs."

The Need to Put Forth Effort for Spiritual Growth

Another hindrance to spiritual growth is the lack of effort. Some people are just simply lazy when it comes to serving God. Spiritual growth is not automatic; it takes effort. When you plant a garden, you cannot sow the seed and let it go; you must cultivate it, water it, or maybe even irrigate it. You must continually check it until harvesttime. You cannot plant your garden and leave it unattended until it is time to reap the harvest. It does not work that way.

If you want to grow spiritually, you must bring self under and have discipline in your life. You need to take the engrafted Word of God into your heart so that you may grow thereby. You are going to have to put forth effort. You cannot grow just by attending the regular church services and revivals. You have to spend personal time with God. I repeat, you have to put forth effort to grow spiritually.

Sometimes the reason some children are so unsettled in their experience with God is that Mom and Dad are unsettled. How can the children be settled when the parents are not settled? One month they are standing strong for the standard, and the next month they do not care about it. Friend, if that is your condition, how do you expect your children to be consistent in the Christian life when you have failed to be the right example? The children's spiritual growth is hindered when they see Mom and

Dad without a desire to go to the house of God. Going to the house of God should be a happy time. The Psalmist said, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD" (Psalm 122:1). That is a good time, and it is a time when you can receive help for your soul.

Luke 16:10 says, "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much." If you will be trustworthy in the little things, God will trust you with bigger things. Read the words of the wise man in Proverbs 15:19, "The way of the slothful man is as an hedge of thorns: but the way of the righteous is made plain." He wrote in Proverbs 18:9, "He also that is slothful in his work is brother to him that is a great waster." Lack of effort is a great hindrance to spiritual growth.

Learning to Handle Discouragement

Another hindrance to spiritual growth is discouragement. You have to learn to handle discouragement. Many things can discourage you, and people will sometimes cause you to become discouraged. One thing that can cause discouragement is an evil report. In the Old Testament, of the twelve men who were sent to spy out the land of Canaan, ten brought back an evil report, and it brought discouragement into the whole camp of Israel. Then, Moses, speaking to the tribes of Reuben and Gad, said in Numbers 32:7, "And wherefore discourage ye the heart of the children of Israel from going over into the land which the LORD hath given them?" An evil report caused discouragement when the other two tribes wanted to stay and not enter into the fight. That caused the rest of the tribes of the brethren to become discouraged.

Another thing that brings discouragement is problems within a congregation. As long as a man of

God preaches the Truth, there will be problems. However, I would rather suffer problems for standing for the Truth than to compromise the Truth and have those problems. Having personal problems can discourage you. You might have a personal problem that you do not want to discuss with anyone else. Perhaps you have prayed and prayed, yet you still have the problem. Well, my advice to you is, do not quit and do not stop praying. All of us have problems sometime. You can work through personal problems if you stick with the Lord. You are not going to be problem free. People would like to be off on an island or a mountain somewhere with no problems, sitting in a rocking chair, but that is not going to happen.

You may say, "I would like to be problem free." Well, you will be someday when you lay the body down, if you are saved. However, as long as you are still in the body, you will have problems. They may not be with someone else; it may be with self. Sometimes people think, "If I could just go off somewhere else and worship . . ." As long as you are in a fleshly body, you will take your problems with you. Church, it is necessary to encourage one another. You need to encourage others.

Let us look at some problems that the Apostle Paul had. The problems that he had were severe. Second Corinthians 4:8-9 tells us: "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed." It is doubtful that you will come close to what Paul suffered. You may feel that you cannot take any more, but I do not think you even want to get on the scale with the Apostle Paul.

Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 11:24-28: "Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one [in other words, thirty-nine]. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck,

a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches."

With all the discouraging things that Paul endured, he was able to admonish and encourage the brethren in 1 Corinthians 15:58, when he said, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." He wrote in Galatians 6:9, "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

Discouragement will hinder your spiritual growth if you do not take it to the Lord. Do not take it to someone else who is discouraged; take it to the Lord. Sometimes it is good to talk to someone spiritual, as long as it is for prayer and help, not to gossip. Spiritual people will help you.

Guard Against the Cares of Life

Another hindrance to spiritual growth is the cares of life. The crop in the field cannot do well when weeds crowd it. Sometimes one's spiritual life becomes crowded with many things. For example, a businessman may become so busy that he allows business to crowd out the work of God. You can become so busy with material things that you fail to take care of your spiritual life. Luke 21:34-35 says: "And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a

snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth." Jesus was not speaking of sinful things, but just everyday living. Sometimes too many things are running interference with your spirituality. You may go to a revival and become inspired so much that you plan to do better; but when revival is over, along comes the interference again. The next thing you know, you are not serving God as you ought because you are trying to take care of too many other things. God will help you take care of other things, but where you run into problems is when you put them up equal with serving God. That will not work. Nowhere in the Bible did it work.

Hebrews 5:12-13 says: "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe." God wants you to grow.

Our Scripture text says in Psalm 92:12, "The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon." Cedars were symbolic of wealth and power. Speaking of King Solomon, 1 Kings 10:27 states, "And the king made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones, and cedars made he to be as the sycamore trees that are in the vale, for abundance." A cedar grown in Lebanon was highly valued as building material. That is just how God wants you to be. He wants you to be good building material for the church. A pastor can really build a congregation on spiritual people.

Just as a cedar in Lebanon was a highly valued wood for building buildings, the Christian needs to be settled and valued as those cedars were, because he is good building material for the Kingdom of God. Kings used cedars to build royal houses. Second Samuel 5:11 says, "And Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar

trees, and carpenters, and masons: and they built David an house."

Why were cedars a tower of strength and beauty? God planted them and made them that way. You read in Psalm 104:16, "The trees of the LORD are full of sap; the cedars of Lebanon, which he hath planted." When God plants the Truth in your heart, He expects you to grow, just as a cedar in Lebanon. You will grow just as He planned if you are obedient to His Word.

How is it with your soul when it comes to spiritual growth? If your soul has been dependent upon the Lord, then there is growth. On the other hand, if you have been leaning to other sources, then your growth has been stalemated. God wants to help you. Do not allow hindrances to work on you. God wants you to grow and be strong, to flourish as the palm tree and as a

cedar in Lebanon. Do not allow discouragement, the lack of effort, or other things to take you down. Take it to the Lord, and keep them there until you get victory over them. Sometimes you have to do that on a daily basis.

Christian friend, you need to continue to live right and stay in good fellowship with God. He will take care of these other things in His time. Often we want things done immediately. We are a fast-food nation. Everything is done fast, but that is not necessarily how God works. You cannot grow spiritually strong overnight; it takes effort. Nevertheless, you can be guaranteed to grow just as the cedar in Lebanon if you allow the One who planted you to continue to help you to grow.

(Cassette C-4234M)

Daniel the Faithful

*When Daniel of Judah was taken
To Babylon's court as a slave,
He purposed he'd not defile himself
But instead, the king's anger he'd brave.*

*God rewarded this faithful servant,
Understanding and wisdom gave he:
The king dreamed a dream but forgot it,
None but Daniel the vision could see.*

*Daniel told the dream and explained it,
So Nebuchadnezzar might see
That he was the head of gold
And others, inferior would be.*

*The king convinced that Daniel's God
Was "God and gods and Lord of kings"
Because none of the wise Chaldeans
Had been able to reveal these things.*

*But the king forgot to be humble
In the light of a power so great,
So he had to eat grass like an ox,
And was seven long years in that state.*

*Friend, can't you see, of yourself, you're small
And nothing at all can you do?
But walk each day with God and obey,
For He said He would surely help you.*

Selected



Brother E. David Stegmeier

The Little Foxes Spoil the Vines

I remember well the Tuesday morning of January 28, 1986. I was going into a school library when I heard the news that made history. It was the saddest time in the entire NASA space program. Many were listening and watching as the space shuttle Challenger went up in flames. It was a very terrible thing. As I read about it and studied the events that took place, I learned that many details had been left unattended. They had not taken care of little things. I read a statement made by one leading man in that program. He said, "If the public knew all that was going on at NASA, the program would be the laughingstock of the country. They had better get their act together." Things were done in a very sloppy manner.

I would like to compare that experience with the lives of many people today. Spiritually speaking, many people are living in a very sloppy manner; they are very

careless. One reason is that they are overconfident and feel that some way or another they will make Heaven their eternal home. On the contrary, they will not unless they prepare for it.

We have to take care of many little details. In my life I have had to tend to thousands of spiritual details. Many people are very indifferent, careless, and haphazard when it comes to serving God. They are not tending to little things. The Bible speaks of many things that appear small, yet they are of great importance. They grow until they become very serious.

Godly fear has been removed from the lives of most religious people, and they have little respect for the man of God. They say and do just about anything they want to. Song of Solomon 2:15 tells us, "Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes."

The plan of God is very complex. The plan for the Christian and the church is complicated. When I

preach on the church, I bring out the name of the church. Some people say, "Oh, that's such a little, insignificant thing." However, when a loved one passes away, such as a father or a grandfather, a name becomes very important.

I thought of this Scripture as I was studying for this message. The Apostle Paul wrote about when God spoke to Moses. Hebrews 8:5 says, "Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, with he, that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount." God requires each of us to live a holy life; that is God's requirement, not mine or anyone else's.

Paul, writing to Titus, said in Titus 2:11-12: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." We must attend to the details of our Christian lives.

God is the Master Architect. No man, woman, boy, or girl has the skill that He has in planning the Christian life or in operating the Church of the Living God. He has planned every detail; He has left nothing up to man. It does not take a group of men at a seminary to get together and decide how the church is to operate. God already did that back in the annals of time before the world was ever created. He had this plan in mind, and it is a perfect plan. When men step in and try to run things their way, they spoil that which God intends to be very beautiful. The church is very beautiful if we will keep our hands off and let God control it.

People ought to let God call the ministers and dictate what they should preach and where they should go. It is all up to God. I think it is wonderful how God can work with each of us at the same time. The church is a divine institution.

I was reading part of a book about that space shuttle, and it said there was a warning given to those who were in charge of the program. Different ones saw things that they knew were not quite right, yet they went on with the scheduled launch. Many people disregard the warnings of a man of God and go right on as though everything is fine. Each of us needs to be very careful to attend to the details in our spiritual lives. Little things make a great difference.

Following the Divine Blueprint

God has devised a divine blueprint that is thoroughly coordinated. He has laid down divine principles and rules that we dare not violate. His plan is flawless, and He has paid attention to details. Today many people are so concerned about how they handle temporal things, yet when it comes to living for God, they feel they can do anything they want to do; however, that is not the way it is. We need to be most careful about how we live for God. We each need

to be careful of the words that we speak to one another and the attitudes that we allow to permeate our minds. There may be a gentle nudging of the Spirit when God says, "Go back and take care of that." Too many people ignore that still, small voice.

Paul admonished the church that we are laborers together with God. I need you and you need me. I appreciate all the ministers of God. There should be no pushing ahead of the other. Each should esteem the other better than himself. That is the spirit that should permeate the lives of every man of God. Paul admonished the church at Corinth in 1 Corinthians 3:9. "For we are laborers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building." We are not independent. Though I live out west, I feel very dependent upon all of God's children. We need one another, and each of us needs God. Your burdens are my burdens, and your concerns are my concerns. This spiritual battle that we all are in belongs to God. I believe the church in this day has great opportunities to shine for God. I thank God for true Church of God congregations.

Paul went on to say in verse 10, "According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon." We want to stand for God and weather the storms when the winds blow. Too many people do not give enough attention to the building of their spiritual houses. Many are building in a slipshod, sloppy manner. We each need to take care of the details.

When I teach on the church, I bring out the name of the church, the way the members should live, the operation of the church, and the way the church ought to dress. You may say, "You are getting too technical." Whatever the Master Builder has designed, you need to obey and implement. There are no

small things as far as God is concerned. He is the designer; therefore, you dare not ignore the little things in your life, lest your spiritual space shuttle become a fatality. One of these days, we all will become airborne on our way to eternity. I want to be successful, don't you?

First Corinthians 10:12 says, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." I have been serving God for many, many years, but there is still a tremendous fear upon me. I feel very incapable of speaking to God's dear people. We need God. No matter how long we have served Him, we can fall. Each of us needs to realize that we are not infallible. We can fall; therefore, we need to lean on the Lord and seek Him daily. I tell God often, "Without You I can do nothing." I am so dependent upon the Lord.

"Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Corinthians 10:12-13). All temptations are common to man. The Bible says that Jesus was tempted in all points. Everything that man is tempted with, Jesus had those same temptations, so He can help us. Some may look down on a brother because he is having a certain temptation, but Jesus was tempted in all points.

Little Things

Again, Song of Solomon 2:15 says, "Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines. . . ." Little foxes can pull the vines down and destroy the grapes. Little things that seem insignificant can destroy a person, even a minister. You may feel you have been going along well for a long time, but the devil can slip in and destroy you if you are

not careful. Dear one, whatever hinders you in your walk with God, take care of it now. It may be a small temptation with which you are flirting. You need to be honest with yourself. If you have done that which you know is not right, you need to be honest about it. If you read books or magazines that you know you should not read, then you ought to get rid of them. If you watch things that you should not watch, you ought to destroy it or turn it off. If you go places where you should not go, then run for your life, as Joseph did in the Old Testament. Won't you be honest with God?

An individual who is very careful about the little things is a man or a woman who is truly spiritual and close to God. One who is close to God will become strong for Him. You may think, "It's not so important to do what the pastor says. I can hold out for my own thinking and my own way." However, a little deviation from the Truth grows until you have departed completely. Movement after movement has gone down because they began to deviate from the Truth, little by little. Today you would not know them from what they were in the beginning. They are completely different from when they started.

Solomon warned of another danger. He wrote in Proverbs 6:10-11: "Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man." Habits that you allow tend to grow. He wrote in Ecclesiastes 8:11, "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." You need to stop evil quickly, lest it becomes uncontrollable.

Many people today are in a lethargic, slothful condition spiritually because they began to sleep just a little. Too few are diligent when it comes to the

concerns of their souls. The Bible lets you know that your conscience can be seared. You need to quicken your conscience.

Too many sleep when they should be awake and alert to impending tragedy. We know that is true physically out on the highways. Matthew, Chapter 25, tells us concerning the ten virgins that they all slumbered and slept. We are living in a very sleepy, lethargic, indifferent, careless day. God help us to be alert and awake. I want to be my best for God in this serious hour, don't you?

"Walk Circumspectly"

Paul said in Ephesians 5:14-15: "Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise." In other words, you need to see that you walk in a responsible manner. You are responsible for the words that you say. Little words of discord could cause major division. People down through the years, even ministers, have said little things against other ministers. That troubles me. People do not get involved in these things unless there is something in their hearts. You need to keep your heart clear and clean of everything that should not be there. A little word of discord can cause tremendous division because it grows.

Paul went on to say in Ephesians 5:16, "Redeeming the time, because the days are evil." We may not have much time left, so we ought to keep busy for God. Let us keep spreading the Word, testifying to the saving grace of Christ, and inviting people to the house of worship. We have a responsibility to pray with the lost and plead with them to heed the Gospel.

I like the song Fanny Crosby wrote called "Rescue the Perishing." One verse says, "*Down in the human heart, Crushed by the tempter, Feelings lie buried that grace can restore:*

Touched by a loving heart, Wakened by kindness, Chords that were broken will vibrate once more." Saint, there are people out of the ark of safety that you and I can touch with a loving hand to help restore them to that which God has for them to enjoy today. May God help us.

When the Apostle Paul penned the words, "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil," no truer words were ever spoken. Sinners need to be stirred to the importance of preparing to meet God. Saints need to be aroused to the danger of falling away and to the church's duty in these closing days of time.

In Galatians 5:9 Paul wrote of another danger: "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." Hypocrisy is running rampant in the world today. People are professing to be something they are not. Your family and others around you know what you really are.

A little bitterness will spread to others. A little gossip can grow until it destroys a multitude. It can wound a heart until that heart is overcome with discouragement and gives up. Ungodly attitudes, a little malice, or a little resentment can grow until one has hatred and ill will, and great damage will be done. A little jealousy in the heart will grow until one separates from those he used to love. Sometimes a person can have a little chip on his or her shoulder, so to speak. A little peevish attitude or feeling can cause one to become bitter until he no longer attends the house of worship. Have you ever been hurt? We all have. We have to work with those hurts. A little peevish attitude or feeling can grow to where you imbibe a "pity me" spirit. That is evil and devilish.

"The Hole in the Dike"

A little neglect will cause you to lose out with God. Missing one service makes it easier to miss another service. For example, one

may begin to miss the prayer meetings, and then start to miss the Sunday night services, and then the Sunday morning services. The next thing you know, that person has stopped attending altogether. Failing to pray and failing to read the Word of God will cause you to lose out with God.

When I was a little boy, my first or second grade teacher read a story called, "The Hole in the Dike." It was a story about a little boy whose name was Peter. He was raised in Holland. One day he was walking over the dike on his way home, and he heard a trickle of water. So he looked over the dike, and water was beginning to trickle through the ground under the dike. He got down over the dike and put his finger in the hole, but he got tired, so he put a twig in the hole. The twig washed out, so he put a stone in it, but the stone washed out. He put his finger back in and began to yell, "Hey, someone help me! Hey, someone help me!"

The boy stayed there all night until the next morning, when the milkman came to his rescue. He became the town hero because he kept his finger in the dike. Otherwise, the water would have washed the ground away and the dike would have been destroyed completely and those people would have been inundated by a flood and destroyed. The moral to the story is this: we each have a part to play; let us do our little part.

A driver on the highway may go to sleep for just a little while, but a tremendous tragedy will result. Once during the spring of the year in Oregon, a family traveled there to attend a graduation in the area. The entire family had come from Washington. They were driving down the Columbia Gorge when the entire family fell asleep except the driver, which was one of the sons. He soon became tired and fell asleep also. The car flipped over the bank, over the Columbia Gorge, and down over the rocks and cliffs. Most of the family met with a

terrible death because the boy went to sleep. Spiritually speaking, we each need to stay alert. I am responsible for a congregation, and I feel that responsibility greatly. Every true pastor does.

Young person, a little petting in a parked car on a dark night leads to great immorality. Spending too much time with the wrong company will destroy you. A little foolish act can ruin the character of a man or a woman who has been esteemed for having a great reputation. I read an article once, and the end of the story was this: it takes years to build confidence, but it takes just a moment to destroy it.

Little Things on the Positive Side

Let us look at the positive side for just a little bit. Little things can do great good. A little word of encouragement, a word of appreciation, or a handshake can keep a soul from giving up. Sometimes I have been low in spirit, but a smile from someone has lifted that burden. I remember once when I was going through a very hard place and a sister gave me a little piece of paper that said, "Underneath are the everlasting arms," and I was greatly encouraged. Little things can be of great benefit in God's work.

We have a song that our children's choir sings that says this:

*One little prayer from the prophet
there,*

And the rains came pouring down.

*A million little raindrops put old Noah
in the ark and kept him up.*

*One little word from God above
brought light into the dark.*

*One little blow from the trumpet horn
turned Jericho to dust.*

*One little push from Samson caused the
temple walls to bust.*

*Two small loaves and fishes fed the
people by the sea.*

*One little word from God above calmed
the Sea of Galilee.*

*Little things, little things,
But when you add them up,
They are bigger than
All the big things in this world.*

Friend, when you are going through a hard place, you should not miss the church services. You may think, "Well, if I am discouraged, I would hinder the services." That is not so. God wants you there, because some little word could inspire you and help you. I have never failed to feel better when I have gone to the house of worship. God's people have a way of lifting us with the songs, the testimonies, the prayers, and the Word brought by the man of God. Little things that you can do on the positive side can be of great help to the man of God and the work of God.

Dear one, you need to take care of the little things, lest they grow into something big and you end up being a fatality, spiritually speaking. This is serious. If you were to speak a harsh word to someone, it could be tremendously discouraging. Harsh words have been spoken to me, and if I would have taken the wrong attitude and had the same sentiments they had, those words would have destroyed me. Little things make big things.

You may receive a little word of warning from your pastor in a message. God will personalize each message. You may receive a gentle nudge from the Spirit of God, saying, "You need to retract the words you just spoke and ask that one to forgive you." You need to pay attention to the quiet words of admonition from the still small voice of God. Maybe you need to speak a word of apology to someone. Little things in your life could culminate into something disastrous.

You may ask, "Are you ever tempted with jealousy?" Yes, and you are too. When that happens, we need to recognize it and take care of it. One may ask, "Have you been hurt and then tempted to become bitter and have a wrong attitude

toward the one who hurt you?" Yes. Sometimes I have misunderstood something my wife has said, and the old devil has come and said, "She meant to hurt you." Has that ever happened to you? We have to work at this salvation. I have seen young married couples who loved each other dearly become strongly filled with hatred for each other. Little things crept into their lives and into their homes. Now their homes are broken, and their children weep their eyes out.

One afternoon a little girl in my math class was crying. At the end of the class, I asked her what was wrong. She said, "I have to go be with my dad. My parents are separated, and it hurts me so bad." Sometimes a parent will say, "Well, don't you want Mom to be happy?" or "Don't you want Dad to be happy?" but the little children's hearts are broken. How about it, husband? Are little things working on you that should not be? Wife, are little things working on you? You

ought to take care of those little things.

Do not let anything come between you and a brother or a sister, because when that happens, something comes between you and God. That hinders your prayer life and your spirituality. If something is working in your life, you need to take care of it before it destroys you.

(Cassette C-4227E)

The Last Great Journey

The Bible tells us that the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. Although it is true that all must face this enemy sooner or later, there is a natural shrinking from it, for we all cling to life. But the time comes when the last mile of the road has been traveled and one is ushered into eternity.

Everything in this world is subject to the law of decay. The roses bloom and send their fragrance into the air, but the time comes when they begin to drop their petals and fade. Solomon said that there was an end to everything under the sun, and there will be an end to time, which is like a fragment broken off from eternity. Life is short at most. James 4:14 tells us, "It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away."

Even if a person lives to be seventy or eighty years old, the Psalmist wrote in Psalm 90:10, "Yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away." It is like taking a journey into a far country, never to return.

How few people today are making preparations for this journey! When one decides to sojourn in another part of the country, he figures out which route to take, how much it will cost, and so on. If it is necessary to make preparations for an earthly journey, how much more important it is to get ready for the final journey! This world is only a dressing room in which to prepare for eternity. Life is uncertain and death is sure. Thousands are taken out of the world with scarcely a moment's warning.

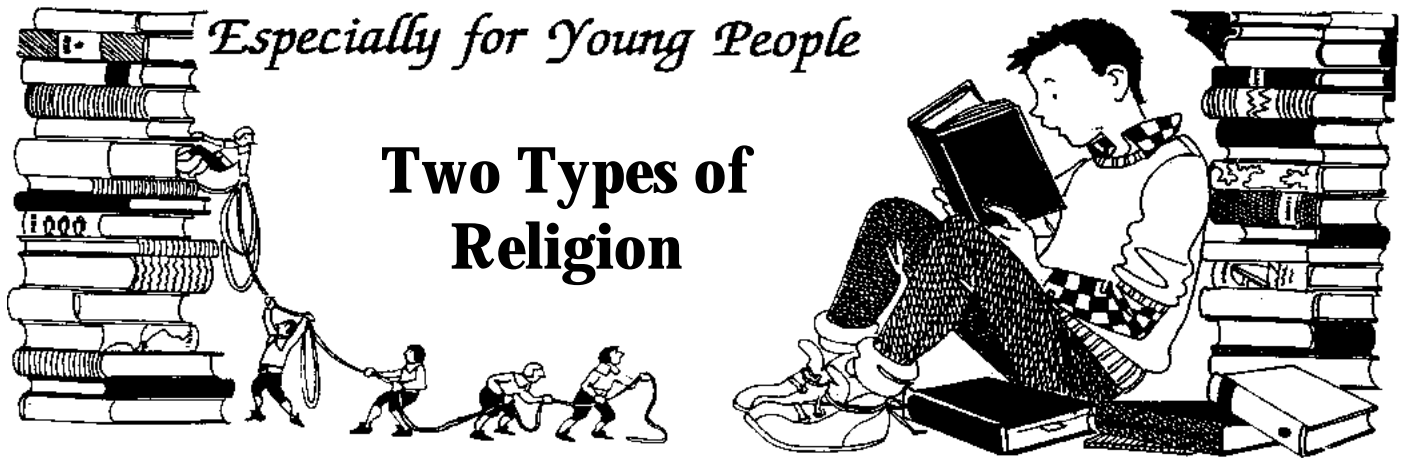
How important, therefore, to be ready at all times to meet the Lord!

God is just, and gives everyone the chance to get right with Him. He gave His only Son to die for this lost world, making it possible for everyone to escape hell. If anyone is lost, it will be because he failed to accept God's priceless gift to man-salvation.

Multitudes today are living the life of the wicked, but they want to die the death of the righteous. There is a great difference between the death of the righteous and that of the wicked. The latter has nothing to look forward to but eternal banishment from the presence of God into outer darkness where there will be "weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth." He may have lived in luxury, but he must leave all of this and appear at the judgment and be judged according to the life he has lived. There will be no escape from this; and rest assured, the wicked will not meet it with joy.

How different is the death of the Christian! He has nothing to fear or dread. Like Paul, he has fought a good fight and kept the faith, and he knows a crown of life is waiting for him. He might have lived in poverty and made sacrifices for others, but now he is ushered into the presence of the heavenly hosts, to hear the blessed words, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant . . . Enter thou into the joy of the Lord."

Author Unknown



The Bible says there are two types of religion: pure religion and vain religion. Very simply put, God controls the pure and Satan controls the vain. But just where does that put religion as we know it in America today, the religion that is all around us?

The Apostle John said in 1 John 3:3, "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he [Christ] is pure."

A few years ago, as I was sitting in a college cafeteria, I overheard two young men at the next table talking about Christianity. One, a Satanist, was trying to "convert" the other, a Christian. The Satanist's argument centered around the corruption and the hypocrisy found so often in "Christendom." He was trying to assert that Christianity was nothing but a sham, that the Christ who authored it was not worthy of one's worship.

After awhile, I had had about all of his comments that I could take, and I stepped over to their table and asked if I might have a word. The Christian lad, who looked somewhat intimidated and overwhelmed, looked up and said, "If you're on my side." I told him that I was and sat down.

I told that young Satanist that there is a lot of hypocrisy and corruption in religion, but that Christ was pure, and that only that which is pure springs forth from Him. I pointed out that many people claim to be Christ's, and that Christ gets blamed for the

things they do, but that He is not to blame, because He really has no connection whatsoever with them. A pure God cannot be the author of impure religion! I told him that those who make such professions are, in fact, not Christians, but religious sinners. When I finished, the young Christian said nothing, but the Satanist replied quietly, "I like that."

I have wondered in the years since that incident, just why the Christian boy was silent. Perhaps it was because, although he thought himself a Christian, all he had was religion. Perhaps he was one who lives an impure life but feels that Christ overlooks and condones his shortcomings. I do not know, but one thing is certain: the Satan worshiper was made to take a second look at the Christ and the Christianity that he had been schooled to scorn.

Friend, many today scorn the so-called Christianity that many possess today, but that is not Christ's fault. He is not the author of such. He is the Author of pure religion, and only of pure religion. As quoted in the Scripture above, those who have a true hope in Christ purify themselves. How does one do that? you may ask. James 1:27 says, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." There is an old saying that reads: "The world has become so churchy and

the church so worldly that one cannot tell the one from the other." Be assured, however, that Christ's church is not worldly. Whenever an individual or a body of individuals begins to embrace this sinful world, Christ is no longer in that person or body.

Very few religious people today claim to live pure lives. In fact, most religious systems teach that it is impossible. You, yourself, may believe it cannot be done. "How can one live holy?" you may ask. Well, one cannot do it in his own strength, but he can do it in Christ! To put it another way, He can do it in you. If He is in you, He will, by all means, live holy in you; He cannot live any other way! The Apostle Paul did not have any problem believing in living holy. He asked in Romans 6:2, "How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"

The real issue is not whether one can live a pure life, but whether one wants to live a pure life! Too many who defend sin in the lives of some so-called Christians love their sins! Often they really do not want to be free from sin. However, friend, one simply cannot love God with all his heart and love sin! The Bible lets us know that sin is the enemy of God (Colossians 1:21, James 4:4, Romans 8:7). How, in the name of common sense, can one profess to be God's friend and be His enemy at the same time?

If one who calls himself a Christian does not have pure

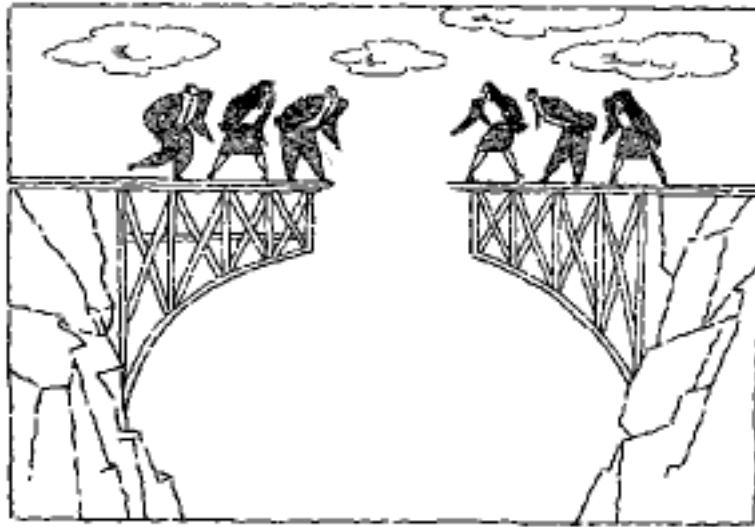
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Luke 23:32 And there were also two other, malefactors, led with him to be put to death.

33 And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left.

34 Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.

The Depth of Sin Is Unknown



Brother Esau Brooks

"They Know Not What They Do"

Since I came to know the Lord, I have never read the story of the Crucifixion without it affecting me. No matter how deep you have seen others go in sin, it is still not the whole story of what destruction sin can bring to your life. I want to focus on verse 34, where Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." When Jesus made this prayer, no doubt He was considering the depths to which those people had fallen; for believe me, the depth of sin to which they had fallen when they crucified the Son of God is beyond description. Portrayed in these words is the saddest condition to which sin can take any person.

Not many people have tried to

fathom what was really done when they crucified our Lord and Savior. You see, the Bible tells us He did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth, yet they crucified Him. Pilate examined Him and re-examined Him, and he came back with the verdict, "I find no fault in Him"; yet they crucified Him. Dear one, I know we dismiss the thought with the idea, "Well, it had to be so, because He came to die for us." That is true, but have you ever stopped to think about the depth to which those individuals had fallen to allow themselves to be used to bring about the cruel experience of crucifying the Son of God?

There is a Scripture in the Bible that speaks of crucifying Him afresh. We need to stop and think about that, for it is speaking of

carrying the Son of God through the same agony, the same pain, and the same sorrows that He went through when He hung on the Cross. To what depth have you fallen in sin to make you so careless, to cause you to become so hardened and so unaffected by that which Jesus did? What is keeping you from facing your condition as God points it out to you?

The depth of sin is unknown. It is no wonder that in the midst of Jesus' suffering and agony that He found time to pray for those who were crucifying Him. The burden of His prayer was, "Father, forgive them." Why was He asking God's forgiveness for them? It could well be that God was at the point of doing what they least expected. Jesus knew what was motivating

them in their acts of crucifying Him; therefore, He was saying, "Father, don't send Your wrath down on them; forgive them, Lord." For what reason? "They know not what they do." Friend, are you any more aware of what you are doing than those people were? Is Christ praying the same prayer for you as He prayed for those who crucified Him? Have you ever thought about what mercy has been extended to you and about the working of God's Spirit upon your heart despite your pronounced rebellion?

The people of whom Jesus was speaking deserved to be destroyed. They deserved God's wrath, but Jesus asked the Father to stay His hand. Their trouble was, they did not know what they were doing. Friend, you do not know any more than they did what you are doing in your rebellion against the idea of yielding to God. Little did those people know or realize to what depth sin had taken them. Many, because they still go to church, fail to realize what is happening to them. To what depth have you gone? Oh, you like to think that you are much better off than what you really are, but whenever God speaks, it is symbolic of the shape and the condition in which He sees you.

Many people in our world start in the sin career without thinking about what they are dealing with. Sin is no playing thing, because sin is no one's friend. You can take it into your bosom, cherish it, and tolerate it; but it is going to turn around and slay you and destroy you.

The Deceitfulness of Sin

The Bible shows sin to be very deceptive. Paul, when he wrote to the Hebrew church, said in Hebrews 3:12, "Take heed, brethren, [If the righteous can scarcely be saved, where will the sinner and the ungodly appear? He was talking to brethren. What about the sinner? He does not even enter this picture now. Take heed.] lest there be in

any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." In other words, Paul said to watch yourself, lest there be in you an evil heart. An evil heart of unbelief causes people to go away from Christ instead of coming to Him.

Paul went on to say in verse 13, "But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." Sin will fool you. It has the capability of making you feel better than what you are. You may say, "I believe I am all right," but what is God saying about you? You need to get closer to Him. You need to rise higher and go deeper in His grace. It is not enough just to align yourself with others with a mere profession. God has provided a means by which we can have the most intimate relationship with Him. I never want to get to the place where I settle for less than my privilege to obtain. I have been saved for a long time, and God has done wonderful things for me, but I am given to anxiety often as much as I ever was because I want to get closer to God. I do not believe that I can get too close to God. I do not believe that I can reach the place in this life where I do not need the Lord. How about you?

You may say, "I know that I'm saved, and I'm living for God." Jesus, in His very first message, said in Matthew 5:48, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Are you there yet? Someone may say, "Wait a minute. I don't believe in that kind of preaching." That is what I am talking about. You need to be careful that this is not a reflection of the depth to which you have gone in wrong, in tolerating wrong, and in permitting wrong to deceive you. The testimony of Paul to the Roman church in Romans 7:11 states, "For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me." What was he talking about? He was saying that the commandments of God were made for your good, but if you are not

careful, sin can deceive you and let the commandment that was made for your good destroy you.

The Game That Sin Has Played With Every Man

Revivals are meant to help people get closer to God and to revive their love and passion for God. However, in too many cases, people weather out the revivals without the least inclination toward becoming more impassioned for God and the things of God. This has been the game that sin has played with every man from Adam down to our day. It is the game of sin to fool people and destroy them.

How beautifully Adam and Eve lived in the garden before sin entered. Look at the deceitful way in which sin appealed to our fore-parents. In Genesis 3:1 the devil said to the woman, "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" God did not say that. God told them, "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:16-17). It appears that Adam was satisfied to abide by that commandment, but the woman began to talk with the devil. The devil is no one for you to listen to. Whenever something holds you back and contends against your advancing in the things of God, that is the devil. You need to know when he is talking. Eve allowed the devil to gain her attention.

Look at the way the devil is working today. In general, people do not seem to have to go out of the church services until the message starts. People can sit at the edge of their seats while the singing is going on; but when the message of God begins, in their minds they reach out to flip the switch, pull up the covers, and go to sleep. Friend, that is the devil. You cannot afford to sleep when God is speaking. That is the game that sin has played with every

man, and only a few ever recover from its snares. Out of the whole world of antediluvians, only eight people were saved. Think about it! If you really boil it down, seven were saved through one man. One person was found righteous out of a whole world's inhabitants. Can you imagine that? No doubt, that almost seemed to be a dream, but it was reality. "Only thee," God said to Noah, "have I found righteous."

Had God given way for others to voice their opinions, it probably would have been different. Suppose someone had said, "Lord, I think Brother So-and-So is doing his best," and maybe he was. "I think Sister So-and-So is a good Christian." From people's point of view, maybe she was. However, when God began to evaluate conditions, He said, "Noah, only thee have I found righteous in this generation." In the whole generation, God found only one man righteous. Now, people would not believe that today for anything in the world. How could only one person be found right? Well, you do not want to believe that only one church is right. Many people are getting strangled on that. They say, "Only one church is right? Come on, out of all the churches, only one?" According to the Bible, only one man was righteous. You see, the Bible has already told us that man sees differently than God sees, for man looks on the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart.

During those unguarded hours when you are swayed and influenced by your surroundings, God is still looking on the heart. You might have your own way of rationalizing, but if it is not God's way, it is still wrong. If God would never intervene on man's behalf, no people could be saved; it is as serious as that. In Matthew 24:24, when prophesying of these last days, Jesus said, "If it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." You may feel that is a little too tight, but I would to God I could tighten it as tight as it really is. The devil has

no mercy. Do you think he is going to leave you undisturbed?

Dear one, sin not only deceives but also binds, degrades, and destroys. Yes, that "little thing," as you might refer to it, will fool you and bind you. You can become so accustomed to not responding to the call of God that you get beyond the place where you *can* respond. In times past when the Gospel was preached, often saints would move to an altar of prayer for fear they might overlook something.

Read David's prayer back in the days of types and shadows. He prayed, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me [in other words, he wanted God to put the test to him]. . . . And see if there be any wicked way in me" (Psalm 139:23-24). Have you ever been motivated to pray that kind of prayer? You may say, "No, because I don't believe that I have any sinful way." David probably did not have any either, but the only way he was to know was if God put the test to him.

All of us would like to get rid of the devil and have him bound in hell, but he is a necessity. We must have a devil to try us. You could never know how you would feel if someone should do you harm unless the devil moved on someone to harm you. Nowadays many people do not even seem to be bothered by the devil. They are getting the feeling that he has passed them up.

Crying for Pardon Before It Is Too Late

Returning to our Scripture lesson, our Lord was crying out for God to intervene for those who were crucifying Him, otherwise destruction would overtake them. Had the rich man cried for mercy while he was living, as he did after he opened his eyes in hell, he would not have landed in hell. Crying for mercy in hell was not wrong. The only trouble was that it was too late. Friend, you need to cry for pardon

before it is too late for you. When you appear before the Judgment bar, if God should sentence you to everlasting fire, you may be planning to say, "O Lord, have mercy upon me," but it will be too late. *Now* is the time to cry for pardon. Too often people wait too long to do what is right.

Consider Pilate. When Jesus was before him for judgment, the people cried, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" Though Pilate found no fault in Him, he said, "I will chastise Him and release Him." However, the people said, "If you release Him, you are not Caesar's friend," so he delivered Him to be crucified. Later, when the chief priests read what Pilate had put over the Cross, "Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews," the Jews did not like it. They went to Pilate and said, in essence, "Don't write, The King of the Jews, but put, 'He said I am King of the Jews.'" Pilate put his foot down and said, "What I have written I have written." Where was all that firmness when he should have stood up and said, "Now, listen, this Man is innocent. I have found no fault in Him; release Him"? Pilate could have done that!

Pilate told Jesus, "Don't You know that I have power to release You or to bind You?" Jesus said, "You could not do it unless you had received it from My Father." In other words, Jesus was letting him know, "You know that I am innocent, but you don't have enough manhood in you to stand as you should." It is surprising that he stood against the high priests and said, "What I have written I have written." Pilate waited until it was too late to stand against the Jews. That has been men's condition down through the centuries of time. Often people wait until it is too late. It was too late for Pilate to become decisive in his actions. Christ had already been bound over to be crucified, and then Pilate found the courage to face his foes. He knew that for enmity they had delivered Him; but holding with the crowd, he did not respect

his own conviction.

Friend, how many times have you seen your needs and trembled as Felix did under the power of the Word, but like Felix, you said, "Go away for this time. At a more convenient time, I will call for You." Or perhaps you are like Agrippa, who said, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." In essence, Paul said, "I would to God you were altogether persuaded." Agrippa perished. Is that what you are going to do? Are you going to go on being almost persuaded, but refuse? Consider Jesus' cry for intervention when He said, "Father, forgive them." He was, in substance, crying for God to intervene for those people's behalf. They deserved the wrath of God and merited destruction, yet Jesus said, "Forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Heed the Call of God

Without the forgiveness of God, we are left to the mercy of sin, but sin has no mercy. Look at what it did to Sodom and Gomorrah. Sin brought fire and brimstone from heaven down upon those people. Look at what sin did to the antediluvian world. No one thought sin would take people that far, but

it did. It is doing the same deceptive work today. Sin is keeping you from measuring to the call of God. No doubt, Sodom and Gomorrah and the antediluvian world said what many say today, "Well, everyone else is doing it." Undoubtedly, in Noah's day rejecting his preaching was the most popular thing to do, but sin was working their damnation. The same is true today.

No one can do wrong and get by. Now, you can do wrong and hold onto the wrong, but you are not going to get by. A writer penned these words: "*Out in the dark you alone may go, And seed for the wicked one sow; But there is an eye that is watching from the throne on high. You can't do wrong and get by.*" Often what begins small can become too big to handle. That is how people have become so pronounced in their rejection of God. They started with little things that did not stay little; then those things got out of control. No one plans to be ruined or destroyed by sin, but they just keep at it until it gets out of hand and they are lost. My friend, this is your time to cry out to God. Only He can stop sin from destroying you. Though you might not realize it, you never know how soon it will be too late.

We have many examples set before us in the Scriptures, and we need to take heed. As Jesus prayed back then, no doubt He is praying today, "Father, they should be responding better than they are, and You would be just and righteous to send Your wrath down; but forgive them, for they know not what they do." You need to check yourself. Are you aware of where rebellion against God will lead you and where you are going to end?

You may say, "If I know my heart, I mean to do right." Well, you do not know it. The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. Who can know it? Only the Lord can. He said, "I know it because I try the heart to know the thoughts." Before sin causes your destruction, won't you yield to God? Why put it off any longer? You know in your heart the moves you ought to make. Won't you do what God has been telling you to do? Are you going to go on and perish or are you going to heed the call of God and be delivered and make Heaven your home? It is my prayer that you will heed His call. God bless you.

(Cassette C-4258E)

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Acts 13:16 Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with his hand said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience.

17 The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an high arm brought he them out of it.

18 And about the time of forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness.

19 And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, he divided their land to them by lot.

20 And after that he gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet.

21 And afterward they desired a

king; and God gave unto them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years.

22 And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.

23 Of this man's seed hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus:

24 When John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel.

25 And as John fulfilled his course, he said, Whom think ye that I am? I am not he. But, behold, there cometh one after me, whose shoes of his feet I am not

worthy to loose.

26 Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent.

27 For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him.

28 And though they found no cause of death in him, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain.

29 And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre.

30 But God raised him front the dead.



A MAN AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART

Brother Silvestre J. Calauan

Thirsting for God

In this message I want to focus on the latter part of verse 22, which states, "I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will." This is a wonderful testimony for one to have. What a legacy David was able to leave! What an example his life showed us! As we look at the life of David and his devotion to God, I believe that we all can agree with the writer, that David was indeed a man after God's own heart.

My friend, would you like to have the same legacy that David had? Would you like to set the same example so that people can say, "There is one after God's own heart"? Dear one, if that is going to be said about you, something must be done in your life in the sight of God. David continually hungered and thirsted after God. If there was ever a man devoted to God, it was David. In the Book of Psalms, his testimony was, "My soul seeketh after thee." How he adored God! It is very important that each of us

should have this humbleness in the sight of God.

Psalm 42:1 tells us, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God." We read in Psalm 63:1, "O God, . . . early will I seek thee." David said, "My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God." Saint, are you thirsty for the Word of God? As a child of God, you need to hear the Word. David was devoted to God, and he decided to magnify Him. This was his greatest ambition. His thought through life was, "God is my

portion. The Lord be magnified. I will bless the Lord at all times." Child of God, you can give all your life to Him by means of praising Him and dedicating your life to Him. What a wonderful testimony David left for us. Like David, we need to give all the praises to our Lord Jesus Christ.

David made up his mind that throughout his life he was going to seek after God. That is the reason he could say with such conviction, "The LORD is my Shepherd; I shall not want." Friend, if God is with you, who can be against you? That is the reason it is very important to seek the will of God and live for Him. I like the testimony of the Psalmist David. In essence, he said, "My God will defend me. If there is a problem or if trials or afflictions come, God is going to supply me." If God be for us, we should not be fearful, because He will direct and help us.

I thank and praise the Lord that I am in the Church of God. Paul said in Romans 14:8, "For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's." That is the reason we must stay in the Church of God. In my home in Spain, it is difficult to preach the Gospel of God. However, praise the Lord, the government of Spain has opened another door for those who want to preach the Gospel. I thank and praise the Lord that we have a solid Church of God in Spain. God's people are surrounded by worldly things, but I thank and praise the Lord that the Church of God and the standard of the Church of God does not change.

Seeking and Obeying the Will of God

God has blessed my wife and me in our ministry. That is the reason I can say, if you are in the Lord, who can be against you? No one can be against the saint of God and prosper. Though the devil is using

some who claim to be in the church, if you are on the Lord's side, you are on the winning side. The reason many people backslide is that they do not have faith in God and they do not allow the Holy Spirit to lead in their lives.

I love the Church of God. The Church of God is the church that Jesus built. She was bought by the blood of Jesus. This is the church in which you can live free from the bondage of sin. That is the reason I am living for Christ! Though trials come, dear saint, you must stay with and love the Church of God. I know that the Spirit of God is working in our midst. You cannot compare the Church of God to other denominations or groups. She is the only true church.

David was a man after God's own heart. The reason David could face so much opposition and remain victorious was that his heart was fixed on serving the Lord. In essence, David said, "I want God's will to be fulfilled. I submit to His will." You need to submit your life to Jesus Christ. To seek after God's heart, you must be honest in His sight and with yourself. You need to ask yourself, "Do I want my way in this matter or do I want God's way?" God's people need to follow God's way and follow what the Bible says. We have to follow in the footsteps of our Lord Jesus Christ. You need to surrender your life to the Lord Jesus Christ and have humbleness in the sight of God. You may say, "I want God's way." If you really want God's way, you will search diligently for His way until it is clear; then you will gladly submit and not murmur. You will say amen to His will. When God makes His will known, you have to use that knowledge.

Young person, I would like to encourage you to stand and strive to seek the will of God. Today so many young people are spiritually lost; they have not given their lives to the Lord Jesus Christ. Why? Because they do not want to follow the will of the Lord. The devil is

very deceptive. He will try to use someone to divide the saints. However, if you have faith in the Lord, have an honest heart, and allow the Holy Spirit to lead you, the enemy will not succeed. Sometimes the so-called saints of God have murmured against their brothers and sisters. Church of God, we need to eradicate that and stand against it. There is true fellowship in the Church of God. The church never does things against the will of God. The Church of God is called out to live for Christ.

Many times there is too much self pushing forward. If you will carefully and honestly look at yourself in the light of eternity, on your knees, God will reveal something that you can die out to. This is truly an attribute of a man after God's own heart. We all can have this kind of testimony. If we do, our lives will have a greater effect on others.

Cherishing God's Word

Another thing David did was cherish the Word of God. Though he encountered many difficulties in his life, he determined, "I am going to serve the Lord whatever it costs." Too many people get saved, have problems, and then backslide. That should not be. God can help and direct us in what we should do. The most important thing is to give your heart to the Lord Jesus Christ, and then you must do as David did. He said, "Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee." Where should you put the Word of God? You should keep it deep in your heart. The Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 1:16, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation." There is power in the Word of God.

How beautiful to be a part of the Church of God! It is wonderful to see sinners come to an altar of prayer and get saved! Church, we need each other. Even though my congregation and I are in Spain, we

need the saints' prayers. Friend, you need to keep the Word of God in your heart and put it into practice in your life. The Spirit of God will move and work within you.

I like the examples that David left for us. He said in Psalm 119:11, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." He also said, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105). Then in Psalm 19:10 he said, "More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb." The Word of God is very sweet to eat. As the Church of God, we have to stand and follow the will of the Lord. David loved the Word of God and meditated on it day and night. The Bible tell us that David was a man after God's own heart.

Patient Endurance

Another person who was a man after God's heart was Joseph. Joseph was sold by his brothers to a band of traders going to Egypt. One thing I love about Joseph is that when the clouds of bitterness tried to come in, they found no place in his heart. Joseph kept his heart from evil, and because of that, God was always with him. Dear one, it is surprising how quickly a root of bitterness can spring up. Things may cut to the heart like a dagger, but Joseph had something we all need more of: he was determined to keep his heart tender and full of love and compassion. He had a heart to love God. How the Spirit of God worked in the life of Joseph! God was always with him. That is the reason after all his trials (being taken down to Egypt and sold as a slave, being falsely accused in the house of Potiphar by Potiphar's wife, and then being thrown into prison), Joseph's spirit had an effect on his family. Friend, do you love your family as Joseph loved his family? Joseph had compassion for his family, and later he was well loved and well thought of. Though Joseph

was falsely accused by Potiphar's wife, through it all, God was working in his life. Joseph did something that many people would not have done in the same situation. He had every right to take a stand against the lie that Potiphar's wife told against him. However, he weighed the matter, considered the souls involved, and then said within himself, "Rather than to bring shame on my master's house, I will suffer the wrong." Through it all, we can see the humility of Joseph and see how he loved God and his family.

Friend, how is your faith in the Lord? If you commit your life to the Lord, He will change your life.

Paul, in Philippians 1:21, said, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Mark 8:36 states, "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" The most important thing for you to do is to live for Christ. Church of God, you are an heir of Heaven.

Joseph patiently endured. Even in prison, there was something remarkable about Joseph. He had a way of adjusting and making the best of things. Dear one, in your time of hurt, there is a resting place. Though difficult trials come in your life, if you are on the Lord's side, you are on the winning side.

I would like to encourage you to stay with the Church of God. Dear saint, if you have faith in God and know the Truth, you know that you ought to stay in the Church of God. The devil is using people to divide the people of God. That ought not to be. God is mighty and powerful, and He can supply all your needs. Even though Joseph was falsely accused, he had his heart fixed on serving the Lord. He realized that there is a God in Heaven and that if he would wait patiently on Him, He would bring him through. Church, let us put that into practice in our lives every day. If we will do that, we will see that, though the enemy is powerful, he cannot overcome us. God will defend and support us in the time of need and in the time of

weaknesses. Child of God, I would like to encourage you to do what the Lord God wants you to do. Paul said, "For me to live is Christ." Nothing is more important than learning how to serve the Lord. You must learn how to apply the Word of God to your heart. After serving God for many years, the child of God can agree that it was worth it all to serve God. The people of God must be determined to serve the Lord even if they lose their lives. God's Word tells us that if you lose your life in serving the Lord, blessed are you.

Maintaining Your Integrity

Another person who was a man after God's heart was Job. He has been called the great sufferer. When he had lost all, the Bible says he fell on his face and worshiped God. Even after Job heard the news of the loss of his children, he kept his integrity in the sight of God. In spite of the loss of his family, who was very important to him, he kept his integrity in the sight of God. Saint of God, integrity must be inside your heart. Sometimes when problems come, people backslide or stumble. That is not the way to serve the Lord. You need to keep on until you see that God is going to bless you.

Church of God, again I say that we must have integrity in the sight of God. We have to stand, whatever the cost. If we have integrity in the sight of God, He will bless us. Friend, do not give up at the first sign of trouble. That is not the way to serve the Lord. If that is how you have been living, you need to rededicate yourself to God. You need to commit yourself to Him and say, "Lord, I am going to follow You and do whatever You want me to do." The Apostle Paul said in Romans 12:1, "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." Paul was not speaking of a dead body but a living sacrifice in the sight of God. I would like to

encourage you, dear saint, to stand in the Church of God.

Friend, how does the message find you? How is your heart? Do you need to rededicate your life to the Lord Jesus Christ? We can see through Job's life and his testimony how he kept his integrity no matter how difficult it was. As for me, I love to serve the Lord. Again, Mark 8:36 tells us, "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" How sad to lose your soul. If you want to be blessed, you must put your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and serve Him, and then you must continue to serve Him. I want to thank the Lord for the many years I have been serving Him. I grew up in the Church of God in the Philippines. When God called me, He told me, "You go to Spain to open the door, to preach the Word there." If you have a heart to serve God, He can use you. I want to thank the Lord that my family has that desire and that He has really blessed our work in Spain.

Job learned that he could lean on the Lord. He suffered deep sorrow; but even in the darkest hours, a ray of light came through. Job said, "I know my Redeemer liveth." What a good expression! In essence, Job said, "Lord, I am going to serve You whatever it may cost and no matter how difficult it is."

In serving the Lord, I have learned that we have to trust Him. Job 23:10 states, "But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." Indeed, Job was a man after God's own heart.

Being a Peacemaker

Another person who was a man after God's heart was Abraham. The Bible says that he was called a friend of God. One thing in particular that stands out about him was that he was a peacemaker. We can read in Genesis 13:8 that Abraham said to Lot, "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be

brethren." I love the spirit of Abraham. He said to Lot in Genesis 13:9, "Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left." Abraham was telling Lot, "You choose; I will take what is left."

What a beautiful example Abraham was! He loved peace. In the Church of God this is what we need. In the church there is peace, unity, and sweet fellowship. Abraham had a beautiful spirit, and he valued peace above his own right. Today many people claim to be for peace, yet they do little to obtain it. The Bible says to seek peace and pursue it. If you seek peace and pursue it, you will find it. You can find it in the Church of God. That is the reason you need to allow the Holy Spirit to lead you. The Spirit of God will lead you in the way that you should go.

Seeking and pursuing peace means to go after it. There are things that make for peace and things that make for strife. We do not want strife, but we want peace. Church of God, though many people are against us, we are peacemakers. If you stand for Truth and walk with God, you will always be on the winning side. How can you live victoriously in the sight of God? By being a peacemaker. God loves the peacemaker.

Lot lifted up his eyes and saw the well-watered plains of Jordan, and the Bible says it was comparable to the land of Eden. How beautiful it must have been! Abraham had given to Lot the privilege of choosing that which was good for him. Why? Abraham did not want strife between them. He was a peaceful man. In this story we have two men. Lot was concerned with his own desires and interests more than the will of God. His vision was too earthly. Abraham was concerned with having peace; he was a righteous man. You would think, at the least, that Lot would have said, "I don't

want to go, Abraham. I have all these riches because of you. I am not worthy to make the decision" or "I would rather stay with you." However, Lot did not give any consideration to Abraham. Lot was so enraptured with what he saw and with what he thought he could gain that, without any consideration of letting Abraham have the first choice, he chose the well-watered plains of Jordan and pitched his tent toward Sodom. Self is an enemy to the Church of God.

If you continue to read in the Book of Genesis, you will learn that after Lot had left, God paid Abraham a visit. Abraham had the presence of God; he had the favor and the blessings of God. Abraham was a man after God's own heart. My friend, do you desire to be a man or a woman after God's own heart? Are you willing to say, as Mary in Luke 1:38, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word."

You need to put your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. You must put the Word into practice in your daily life, and then God will bless you. You need the leading of the Holy Spirit. Saint, you have an Intercessor, One who can help you in time of need. God can protect you. He will not leave or forsake you, but He will help you in every way. Remember, my friend, that God can see your heart. You must have humbleness and a heart that desires God. Do you need to rededicate your life to Him?

Today many people are lost because their hearts are away from God. He is calling to them, "Come and dedicate your life to Me." If you want to live perfectly in the sight of God and have His blessing upon your life, you must follow the will of the Lord, and in the end you will see the gates of Heaven. Friend, if you have sin in your life, God wants to make your heart clean in His sight.

(Cassette C-4467A)

Her Hair Is Given Her for a Covering



I believe there are many good women today who would never cut their hair again if they knew the Bible teaching on the subject. I was saved in December of 1925. My hair was cut short at that time, and how well I remember that my good Christian mother didn't want me to cut my long heavy hair. I had heard it was sin for women to cut their hair, but no one had given me scriptural reasons why it was sin.

To me, it was a matter of opinion. I thought, "Old people don't want their hair bobbed and tell us it's sin, but other girls are cutting their hair, so I will too." I could see no real wrong. If I had known how strongly God forbid bobbed hair, I would never have gone against the wishes of my mother and cut my hair. We need preaching backed up with, "Thus saith the word of the Lord."

An evangelist came along preaching against women cutting their hair. I asked him for Scripture references, and the next evening he brought several. Then the battle was on in my soul. I knew I could not keep victory and have my hair trimmed again, but I *wanted* my hair cut. Carnality always wants its own way. I read the Word of God again and again. Condemnation was heavy on my heart. Finally, I

submitted to God's way, and it has been years since the hair God gave me has been cut. He has blessed my life and given me peace that comes with obedience.

I want to make it plain why women should have long hair and prove that it is on the authority of God's Word that a woman should not cut her hair. We will use the Scripture from 1 Corinthians 11:3-9, 14-15: "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God. Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head. But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven. For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered. For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man [reference Genesis 2:22]. Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have

long hair, it is a shame unto him? But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering."

First, there is a woman's place in this arrangement of authority, in verse 3: God is the head of Christ, Christ is the head of man, and man is the head of woman. The authority of the husband over the wife is as Scripture based as the authority of God over Christ or the authority of Christ over man.

Man was made in the image of God. The masculine pronoun is used of God every where in the Bible. Woman was not made in the image of God. Many Scriptures stress that man and woman are different, and that it is sin for a man to appear like a woman or for a woman to appear like a man. "The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the LORD thy God." (Deuteronomy 22:5). Slacks, blue jeans, and cigarette smoking have all followed the bobbing of the hair. And if you noticed, following the pattern of Eve, it is the woman who today has gone first and further in the transgression.

The work of the devil has been to trick the church of Jesus Christ into

rebelling against the law of God, until now we have a weak church. "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." He was speaking of the *power* that can deliver from sin, the *power* that can make preachers strong to preach against sin, *power* to be obedient children, submissive under God, willing to be particular people, full of good works and the Holy Ghost. Blessed is the woman who fills her place. Her glory is in being a helpmate to her husband, a submissive wife to her husband or an obedient daughter to her father. *A woman's long hair is the mark of this submission.*

The women in foreign lands wear head coverings or veils to show they are under submission to their men. Some churches believe a woman should wear a hat to enter a place of worship, but do not teach a woman should wear long hair. Verse 15 of our Scripture text makes it plain that God is not speaking of hats or veils: "But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for *her hair is given her for a covering.*" Long hair is a mark of a woman's femininity in the sight of God and man and is plainly given her for that purpose.

The New Testament church has several ceremonies that are precious and holy, and we observe them because the Word says thus and so. The Lord's Supper is a symbol of the broken body and blood of our Lord, and when we partake of the bread and grape juice, we proclaim the fact that we are partakers of the body, by faith, of our Lord for salvation. The laying on of hands for the ordination of ministers symbolizes they are to receive authority from God and the Holy Ghost for power. The anointing with oil for the healing of the sick is a symbol of the miracle working power of the Holy Ghost.

We must include also the symbol of short hair for men. Men wear short hair as a symbol that they are made in the image of God, put in authority to rule the home, to be the

head of a family. Women wear long hair as a symbol of their submission to husband and father, taking their place with meekness. Godly women are subject to the authority God has placed over them. Long hair is a symbol of a devout Christian woman who is not in rebellion against God-given authority.

When bobbing of the hair first started, every girl had to go the contrary to the wishes of Christian parents to have her hair cut. It was rebellion against parents and against the church and against God's Word. Today this sin has been so indulged that people feel at ease. Many have never heard it is wrong for the woman to cut her hair, yet every bobbed head is saying, "I rebel against God's plan. I will not be under the authority God has placed over me. I will be a law unto myself."

In 1 Samuel 15:23 we read, "For rebellion *is as* the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness *is as* iniquity and idolatry." Rebellion against the Word and will of God was the cause of one-third of the angels (ministry) of heaven (a high spiritual position—a heavenly place) falling from their place with God the Father and Jesus the Son.

In Proverbs 31:10-31 we read that the price of a good woman is far above rubies—she looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness. Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also; and he praiseth her. Favor is deceitful, and *beauty is vain*; but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised. A woman should take a woman's place, dress and act as a woman. No woman ever gained by cursing, smoking, drinking, and bobbing the hair. It only causes you to lose the reverence and respect that would rightfully belong to you if you were in your proper place.

Long hair is your testimony, "I am a woman and willing to be in the place God has ordained for me. There is no rebellion in my heart against God." First Peter, Chapter 3,

clearly states the man's place and the woman's place in God's great plan for family and homes. "Yes, wives, be in subjection to your own husbands—whose adorning is not to be the wearing of gold or the putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart—even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old times the holy women also, who trusted in God adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands, even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord. Likewise, ye husbands dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel and as being heirs together of the grace of life that your prayers be not hindered."

Also, in Ephesians 5:22-25, 31-33, God again makes plain His plan for husbands and wives: "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. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it. . . . For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife *see* that she reverence *her* husband." This is God's beautiful plan for home and family. The woman was not given to man as a slave, but as a helpmate, to love and be loved.

Sister, let us stay in God's intended plan for us. Do not be an abomination in God's sight. Wear that crown of hair that was given for a covering, a beautiful symbol, a testimony that we are God's women, living in the place that God has appointed for woman, and expect God's blessing to rest upon us.

Ethel Baughey

[Esp. for Young People-continued from page 13]

religion, then he has vain religion. And, like anything else that is vain, it is of no value. It cannot save, now or in the Judgment. It is good for nothing. Vain religion is controlled by Satan. Oh, wait, friend! Do not say so quickly, "That is absurd. Satan is a devil, not a religious leader." If you look in the Bible, you will find that he is, indeed, a religious leader! He has ministers, apostles, and synagogues. Second Corinthians 11:13-15 states: "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ [that is what is deceitful about them]. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works."

In Revelation 3:9, Jesus tells His church, "Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee."

Friend, this may be alarming to you, but Satan controls almost all religion. Very little religion is truly pure, and that little is all that is

Christ's. Why is that? Because that is all that will allow Christ to control it. Anytime He is in control, the results are pure, but most religious people do not want that. As men said in Luke 19:14, most so-called Christians say today, "We will not have this man to reign over us." Oh, they want Him to help them, take care of them in the time of need, and take them to Heaven; nevertheless, they will not let Him reign over them. That means to obey Him in everything they do! This is a narrow way, and most religious people do not want it. However, those who will let Him reign over them will find the pure religion-and all the promises and benefits of the Word of God will be theirs, with Heaven in the end. To them, He promises "joy unspeakable and full of glory" and "fulness of joy." To them, He gives the "excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus." Theirs is the glory to which no pain or trial is worthy to be compared (Romans 8:18 and 2 Corinthians 4:17). They are "joint-heirs with Christ" and heirs of all Heaven's riches. They have the "peace of God, which passeth all understanding." And, they have the gain that turns all this world's gain into dung. The Apostle Paul wrote in Philippians 3:7-8: "But what things were gain to me,

those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ."

Friend, you have a choice. First, you can choose to have religion or you can choose not to have religion. If you choose to have religion, you again have a choice. You can choose vain religion or you can choose pure religion. If you choose to be religious, may I urge you to seek pure religion? Seek the one where Christ is truly in control, where men glorify God and crucify the flesh rather than glorify (and even gratify) the flesh, where sin is denounced and purity is the standard of life, where only the Word of God is the rule of faith and practice, and where people are really obedient to all God's Word and will.

"Is there really such a people?" you may ask. I am very thankful that I can say there is. But do not take my word for it. As the angel told John in Revelation, "Come and see." May God lead you and guide you into His beautiful Truth is our prayer!

Sister Marie Fowler

What does the unsaved world learn when it reads you? Is the letter clear and distinct or blotted and blurred? Do the unsaved have a clearer vision of Christ or is their opinion of Him lessened by what little of Him they see written in your life and attitudes?

[Guest Editorial-continued from page 2]

But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets. . . . "We are living in a brilliant day of revelation. Truth is being revealed in an unprecedented manner. We have the privilege of seeing the light of all seven periods of the Gospel day in this day. Isaiah 30:26 says that the light would be as the light of seven days in this day. We are living in a day when we have the light and the brilliance from all the previous time periods as well as the revelations of Truth that God is bestowing in the time in which we live.

The Apostle Paul said the things being revealed are that which verse 25 says "was kept secret since the world began." What are some truths being revealed and where did the Apostle Paul say they are found? Much truth that God is revealing in this day of revelation is prophetic truth and comes from the realms of prophecies.

These truths, incorporated back in the annals of prophecy, are for us; however, we must understand certain rules to understand a prophecy. When men violate or are unaware of those rules, it becomes confusing. There are basic premises to studying a prophecy. We must follow the rules if we are to "rightly divide the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15). Many people are dividing it today, but not everyone is rightly dividing it.

How can you tell when one is rightly dividing it? When one rightly divides the Word of Truth, he gets the right answer. Just as an accountant with his books, if he gets the right answer on the left side of the ledger, then the answer on the right side will come down and make a common number. On the other hand, if he does not rightly divide it, the books will not balance. This is what happens with the Bible. Often people do not rightly divide it, and they come out saying that the Bible contradicts itself. No, they just did not rightly divide. To rightly divide a biblical prophecy, certain

rules are universal to understanding it. The first rule is that you must respect the place of prophecy. In 2 Peter 1:16-21 the Apostle Peter penned: "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

"And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day stars arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

Many truths are housed in this text, but let us glean a few. It indicates that prophecies hold a paramount place of importance. In the spiritual and scriptural scheme, prophecies are very important. Peter said that we have a more sure word of prophecy. The reason prophecies hold a paramount place in the scheme of Scripture is that prophecy is sure.

Again, the Apostle Peter related in verses 16-18: "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount."

Peter was referring to what is

recorded in Matthew 17:1-8, where he was on the Mount of Transfiguration and saw Jesus Christ literally transfigured before him in the holy mount, or the Mount of Transfiguration. In verse 19 he said, "We have also a more sure word"; in other words, there is something more sure than miracles. In our human thinking we are constantly looking for things to occur miraculously. In our minds we say, "Oh, if God would just show Himself strong through miraculous events, that would convince the world." Peter laid forth a very startling truth, that prophecies are more sure than miracles.

Peter brought up the miraculous event on the Mount of Transfiguration and contrasted it in verse 19 with the statement, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy." That is an astounding statement. Why did he say that? Prophecies can be historically verified, but often miracles cannot. Prophecies are verifiable in their fulfillment. Also, prophecies, in their understanding and fulfillment, can be seen and enjoyed by all, whereas often miraculous occurrences cannot. Stop and consider the case cited in Matthew 17:1 when it speaks about the Mount of Transfiguration. Matthew 17:1 reads, "And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John. . . ." That was a glorious, miraculous event, but only three people enjoyed it.

In Isaiah 46:10, God, speaking through the Prophet, said, "Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done." God declares the things not yet done as if they had already occurred because He knows the end from the beginning. He, through prophetic avenues, can declare the end before it begins. He spoke from ancient days of things that had not yet occurred as though they had occurred. Why? The Scripture says that God's understanding is infinite (Psalm 147:5). Therefore, the place

of prophecy is paramount; as Peter penned, it is "more sure."

The second rule to understanding a prophecy is to understand the parameters of the time of the text under consideration. One great misconception that causes people to teach errantly and misappropriate prophetic Scripture is this: not properly delineating the time scheme, or not understanding the proper time frame for which the prophecy was to occur, and it causes great confusion. Regardless of what the prophetic text is, you must rightly understand the time frame in which God ordained for that prophecy to occur.

Many prophecies pointed to our day, which is the Gospel Day, because this Gospel Day is the culmination of God's divine plan. Read what the Apostle Peter wrote in 1 Peter 1:10 when speaking of the Old Testament prophets: "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you." He let us know that much of the prophetic writings look toward the day and time in which we live and the experience that we can enjoy now. I repeat, when viewing a prophecy, you must properly understand the prophetic time frame, or the parameter of the prophecy of the text under consideration.

The third rule to understanding a prophecy is that you must understand the nature of prophetic language. Often it is not designed to be taken literally, but figuratively. Let us back up to Ezekiel, Chapter 37, to see how the language was used. Verse 1 states, "The hand of the LORD was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the LORD, [Prophetic truths are spiritual truths, and the only way they can be rightly divided is under the guidance and the leadership of the Holy Spirit of God. Those who are lacking the Spirit cannot rightly divide God's eternal Word.] and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones."

If this passage of Scripture were literally so, the valley would be full of bones. However, verse 11 says, "Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel." If the whole house of Israel was nothing but bones, to whom was God speaking? Ezekiel would have been dead too. You must not take the Scriptures at face value or give a literal rendering to them, because they are spiritual words containing spiritual truths to convey spiritual realities. Therefore, the revelation of such truths must come through the avenue of the Spirit of God. The nature of prophetic language reveals spiritual truths; therefore, it employs spiritual language.

The fourth rule to understanding a prophecy that you must ever be mindful of is that you cannot private or isolate Scriptures. Again, Peter said in 2 Peter 1:20, "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation." You cannot get the true meaning of a Scripture by privately interpreting it or isolating it from the surrounding context or the other texts throughout God's eternal Word. There is harmony and scheme to the Scriptures. What is true in a prophecy will mate up and be true in the Gospels and in the Revelation. They all come together as a cohesive whole to paint one beautiful portrait.

In Isaiah's prophecy, in Isaiah 34:16, the Prophet declared, "Seek ye out of the book of the LORD, and read: no one of these shall fail, none shall want her mate: for my mouth it hath commanded, and his spirit it hath gathered them." What does this tell us? For every dark saying in God's Word, there is a Scripture that the Spirit of God will mate it up with and shed light on it. For every Scripture that seems confusing, the Spirit of God will lead you to another Scripture somewhere that will bring clarity.

If you truly have the Teacher (the Spirit of God), He can enable you to mate the Scriptures together and lay

line on line and precept on precept so that you can see the Truth as God has ordained it to be seen. Those who private or isolate Scriptures can teach almost any teaching imaginable. To get a true picture, you must not isolate a Scripture from other Scriptures.

With the aforementioned rules for understanding a prophecy established, in the next lesson we will study what the Bible is speaking of when it speaks of Gog. We will discover who this biblical character is.

Brother Earl R. Borders



Read It Through

*I supposed I knew my Bible,
Reading piecemeal, hit or miss,
Now a bit of John or Matthew,
Now a snatch of Genesis;
Certain chapters of Isaiah,
Certain Psalms (the twenty-third),
Twelfth of Romans, first of Proverbs,
Yes, I thought I knew the Word.
But I found a thorough reading
Was a different thing to do,
And the way was unfamiliar
When I read the Bible through.
You who like to play at Bible,
Dip and dabble here and there,
Just before you kneel a-weary,
And yawn out a hurried prayer;
You who treat the Crown of Writing
As you treat no other book---
Just a paragraph disjointed,
Just a crude impatient look---
Try a worthier procedure,
Try a broad and steady view---
You will kneel in very rapture
When you read the Bible through.*

Amos R. Wells

Reigning in This Life

*Do you triumph, O my brother,
Over all this world of sin?
In each storm of tribulation,
Does your Jesus reign within?*

*One we hail as King immortal,
He did earth and hell subdue;
And bequeathing us his glory,
We are kings anointed too.*

*Shall we, then, by sin be humbled?
Must we yield to any foe?
No, by heaven's gift we're reigning
Over all this world below.*

*Oh, what grace and high promotion,
That in Jesus I should be
Raised from sin to royal honor,
Even reigning, Lord, with thee.*

*All this life is blissful sunshine,
Earth is subject at our feet;
Heaven pours its richest blessings
Round our throne of love complete.*

*Then we'll sing and shout the story,
Of the wondrous blood divine;
Full salvation, glory, glory!
I am reigning all the time.*

D. S. Warner