

"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

The Little Horn and the Truth Concerning Antichrist

Part 3 of 3

First John 2:18 states, "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time."

In the last article we saw that the prophetic passage of Daniel 8:8, which speaks of the "little horn," is not speaking of a personal futurist antichrist as dispensational teachers advocate, but rather it represents an opposing force to Truth that immediately succeeded the pagan Roman empire. This horn represents the power of papal Rome.

In this issue we want to address the biblical truths concerning antichrists. What does the Bible teach about antichrist? The word *antichrist* (singular), appears in the Bible only four times. The word *antichrists* (plural), appears only once. These terms appear in only two places in the Bible: in the First and Second epistles of John. In both epistles combined, it is mentioned in only four verses.

Let us examine these verses. The first one, in 1 John 2:18, reads, "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time." Here John employed the word *antichrist*. What does this word mean? *Strong's Greek Dictionary of the New Testament* tells us it is the Greek word *antichristos*, and means "an opponent of the

Messiah." *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* is a little more expansive in its definition and says this: "... adversary of the Messiah. John employed it of the corrupt power and influence hostile to Christian interests, especially that which is at work in false teachers who have come from the bosom of the church and are engaged in disseminating error."

Millenarians advocate that antichrist is a singular individual of a political nature, that he is an atheist, and that he is a person to come in the future. However, notice that the Bible teaches the opposite of that. First John 2:18 says, "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist [singular] shall come, [This is future tense. You see, they were hearing that same thing back in John's day. Notice what he went on and said.] even now [in A. D. 100] are there many antichrists."

John acknowledged the same falsity that we hear over our land today. In this verse John dispelled two of the false ideas that religion holds concerning the antichrist.

Let us look at 1 John 2:22, "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son." Here it says he is antichrist. Who? Look at it closely. This is not referring to just one individual. The clear implication is that anyone who meets this condition or falls into this category is antichrist.

What kind of liar was he talking about? It says "he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ." Men run off with the word "denieth" and assume that it means a verbal denial. Notice that it does not speak of a verbal denial. How does one deny that Jesus is the Christ? The Apostle Paul gives insight in Titus 1:16, which says, "They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him."

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1 Samuel 13:13 And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever.

14 But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the LORD commanded thee.

Acts 13:22 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.

A MAN WHO GOES AFTER GOD'S HEART



Brother Roger L. Decker

Keeping God's Commandments

The Prophet Samuel made a statement about the Patriarch David that was a wonderful compliment. The Apostle Paul also paid him quite a compliment. In 1 Samuel we find that King Saul was to wait for Samuel to offer up a sacrifice to the Lord; but Samuel did not show up when Saul thought he would, so he offered it up himself. Then Samuel came and told Saul that he had done foolishly by having done so. He then let Saul know that the Lord had sought a man after His own heart.

In our second account in the Book of Acts, Paul, in his message at Antioch, recounted the history of Israel and mentioned the statement that Samuel had made. He said David was a man after God's own heart. David, of the lineage of Jesus Christ, possessed some of the same attributes that Jesus Christ possessed. He surely was a type of Jesus Christ. The compliment bestowed upon David was wonderful, and it should have been. However, it should also be said of those who carry His name. The church bears the name of Jesus, and they also should be after God's heart. The

body of Christ is out to fulfill all of God's will.

We want to consider some outstanding similarities, or likenesses, between David and Christ. Someone may say, "Don't you know that David fell into sin?" Yes, but he was quick to ask for forgiveness when the deception was rolled away and he gained the understanding he needed.

One outstanding characteristic about David was that he loved the Word of God. Some writers say that he is the author of Psalm 119, the longest Psalm in the Book of Psalms. The charge against Saul in 1 Samuel

13:13 was that he had not kept the commandment of the Lord. For that reason God took the kingdom from him.

God is not going to allow anyone to keep leading His kingdom who does not keep the commandments of the Lord. Our Scripture text in verse 13 reads, "And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly [and surely one has when he does not keep the commandments of God]: thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever." We know by this verse that a man after God's own heart is a man who keeps God's commandments. That is a requirement in the Word of God.

To be a man after God's own heart, you have to keep God's law, or God's doctrine, as He has revealed it to you. David was such a man. He wrote in Psalm 119:127, "Therefore I love thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold." It takes a great love for God's Word to be a man after God's heart. He wrote in the same Psalm, verses 47-48: "And I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved. My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments, which I have loved; and I will meditate in thy statutes." God's Word did some things that caused David to love it. He knew that if he obeyed God's Word, it would keep him from sin.

Friend, you cannot stay out of sin if you do not obey God's Word. Transgression is against the law of God, God's light and understanding that He has revealed to you. In verse 11 David said, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." The individual who hardly ever takes time to read the Word of God will be up and down in his Christian experience, saved one week and out in sin the next.

Having a Love for the Word

The Word of God is a comfort, especially in affliction. David wrote

in verse 50, "This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me." Then, in verse 92, he stated, "Unless thy law had been my delights, I should then have perished in mine affliction." David also said that God's Word gave him peace of mind. In a world that is in confusion and turmoil, God's Word can give you peace of mind.

David said in verse 165, "Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them." What is great peace? Great peace is the peace of God which passes all understanding. It is not the peace of this world. Great peace is when you have peace with your Creator. Why is it great? Because money cannot buy it. You cannot shop around and bargain for it. It costs confessing and forsaking all sin.

David loved God's Word. He was a type of Christ, who also loved God's Word. Christ also needed God's Word. We read in John 8:29, "And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him." It is very evident that Jesus loved the Word of God. You can read that He quoted it at least three times. When He was tempted in the wilderness, He said in Matthew 4:4, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone." Three times He came right back at the devil with God's Word. That is one of the greatest offensive weapons against the devil. That is the reason the devil does not want you to read and study it.

A characteristic, or an attribute, of men and women after God's own heart is that they love God's Word. Do you love His Word? God's Word will keep you from sin, if you obey it. It is a comfort in time of affliction, and it can give you peace of mind. Do you obey it? Psalm 1:2, talking about a blessed man, states, "But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night." A man who loves the Word delights and meditates in God's Word. David loved God's Word. The Bible says he was a man after God's own heart. He

wanted to please God; he wanted to do everything he could to do the will of God.

Do You Have a Love for Prayer?

David also loved to pray. He loved God's Word, and He loved to talk to the Author. David knew that God was a prayer-answering God. Psalm 116:1-2 reads: "I love the LORD, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications. Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live." The Psalmist said that as long as he lived on this earth, he was going to call upon God. Why? He heard his supplications. David's love for the Lord caused him to love to talk to God. He knew that God was going to listen to him when he prayed. He also knew that as long as he lived, he needed to call upon Him.

There are great benefits in talking to God and serving Him with all your heart. Psalm 116:12-13 says: "What shall I render unto the LORD for all his benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD." The Psalmist was saying, "How can I repay the Lord? You can repay the Lord by living the Gospel message, by walking in the light that God has revealed to you. David knew that when he prayed, it brought a closeness between him and God. Have you ever noticed that when you really get into prayer, you feel really close to God? Even if you are wrong when you go into prayer and confess it to God, you will soon feel the warmth of God. You will feel a closeness that you do not feel when you do not talk to Him. Psalm 145:18 says, "The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth." When you come to God and tell Him the true condition of your heart, He will get close to you.

Jesus, the antitype, and David, loved to pray. The Son of God, our

Lord and Savior who died for us all, also had to draw strength from the Father. Jesus loved to pray. Often He would slip away privately. Speaking of Jesus, it reads in Luke 5:16, "And he withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed." In time of His greatest trials, Jesus deemed it necessary to pray. In the time of great trials, He did not forget to talk to His Father.

What are some examples of prayer? We read in Matthew 26:36, "Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder." How about on the Cross? Luke 23:34 tells us, "Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots." Verse 46 states, "And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost."

Matthew 27:46 reads, "And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Both David and Jesus loved to pray. They were great examples of prayer in the Bible. They not only talked about prayer, they prayed. The Prophet Samuel and the Apostle Paul said David was a man after God's own heart. David was the man that God was looking for to lead His kingdom. Speaking of Jesus, Luke 18:1 says, "And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint."

Friend, how is your love for prayer? Prayer is necessary, even for our very existence and preservation. Psalm 32:6-7 reads: "For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him. Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Selah."

When people get in trouble with God, many times they are convicted of the Holy Spirit, and what do they often say when they go to an altar of prayer? They have not committed vile sin, but they have been neglectful concerning their prayer lives. You ought to thank God that His Holy Spirit speaks to you and shows you that He still cares for you. God is still there to help direct and guide your life.

The reason some people do not get the help they need is that they do not take it to God. They complain to others and try to get them to see their point or their way. James said in James 4:2, "Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not." God has afforded us one of the greatest strengths there is to maintain victory in the soul and for power in this life. It is one of the most untapped resources there is in the Christian's life.

James said in James 5:16, "Confess your faults one to another [some people have changed that around today—they confess everyone else's faults], and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." Fervent prayer is powerful and effective. It has an effect, maybe not immediately, but if you do not grow weary, in due season, or in God's appointed time, something is going to change. The flesh has to be put under when it comes to prayer. The flesh is not usually the one that leads you into the prayer room. It is usually the Spirit of God moving upon you. Therefore, you have to do what Paul says and bring the flesh under.

Prayer brings peace to the soul. Philippians 4:6-7 states: "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

Praising God With Your Whole Heart

David liked to praise God. You can read of it throughout the Psalms. Moses, David, and other patriarchs loved to praise God. Throughout the Psalms there is praise for the Lord. David praised God with his whole heart. You may say, "I'm not one who cares for all of this emotion." As long as the Spirit of God is in it, I say let people enjoy their liberty. When the Spirit of God is in real praise, it will be a blessing to the congregation.

David wrote in Psalm 9:1, "I will praise thee, O LORD, with my whole heart; I will show forth all thy marvellous works." David praised God for His power. In Psalm 21:13 he said, "Be thou exalted, LORD, in thine own strength: so will we sing and praise thy power." David wrote in Psalm 119:164, "Seven times a day do I praise thee because of thy righteous judgments."

David took an active part in the congregation when it came to praise. He did not just go out and praise God by himself; he wanted to praise God in the congregation. He said in Psalm 22:22, "I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee."

David is the one that the Prophet Samuel and the Apostle Paul said was a man after God's own heart. He was a type of Jesus Christ. So the antitype, Jesus, also gave praise to God, and sometimes He did it publicly. He did it at the tomb of Lazarus. John 11:41-42 states: "Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me." Jesus praised His Heavenly Father. Luke 10:21 says, "In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid

these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight." David loved to praise God, and Jesus loved to praise God. How is your praise for God? Do you ever offer praise to Him? A man after God's own heart does.

A good time to give praise to God is in your prayers. I like to thank God before I ask Him anything. We thank God for what He has given us: our children, our home, and the very air that we breathe. It is good to give praise to God in our prayers. It is also good to sing praises to God. Psalm 147:1 reads, "Praise ye the LORD: for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is comely." Praise is not a strange thing; it is comely for the upright.

Dwelling Together in Unity

David loved unity. He said in Psalm 133:1, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" It is good to dwell together in unity, but it is not so good to dwell together when there is no unity; that is a hard place. In Psalm 122:1 David said, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD."

Jesus also loved unity. He prayed for unity, and He also died for unity. You may say, "I believe there should be just a gathering together." That is not the kind of unity I am talking about. I am talking about a unity that comes about through obedience to God's Word. Unity first comes through the Father, and then you walk in the light. Then when we each walk in the light, we have unity together.

We cannot lay aside the Word of God and just gather together and have a good time. According to the Bible, we must walk in the light as He is in the light, and then we can have fellowship with one another. Jesus said in John 17:20-21: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them

also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." I repeat, Jesus prayed for unity and died for unity.

The Apostle Paul wrote in Ephesians 2:13-16: "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby."

The saints of God also love unity. We do all that we can to preserve it. The Scripture says in Ephesians 4:3, "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." We do not compromise to keep it; we do not back away from light and understanding to keep it. We each must walk in the light, and then those who are walking in the light have fellowship with one another. It does not matter if an individual has just started serving God. As long as he is walking in the light, he can have fellowship with those who have been serving God for thirty years, if they both are walking in the light.

Hating Every False Way

David hated every false way. A man who is after God's own heart hates false ways. David wrote in Psalm 119:104, "Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way." In verse 128 he stated, "Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way." God's Word is what is right, and that is our guide for our daily walk.

There are some places and some

things that God's Word says we are not to walk in. One is, we are not to walk after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Romans 8:4 says, "That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." We also are not to walk after the counsel of those whose lives are not what they ought to be. Much less confusion would be going on today if people would listen to God and quit listening to people who are not living right. Psalm 1:1 tells us, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful."

Someone may say, "That was David, but Jesus was so loving that He put up with most anything." Friend, that is not so. What about those who corrupted the house of God? Matthew 21:12-13 says: "And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out [He did not go to them and offer them some money if they would leave and beg them to leave: He *cast* them out] all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves, And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves." If Jesus were around in His corporal body today, He might physically put some people out.

Fourteen times the word *wœ* was used in the Book of Matthew. Of those fourteen times, it was used eight times in Chapter 23. What does the word *wœ* mean? It is an exclamation of grief. Jesus used the word on religious people who were so caught up in religion that they had no time to be saved. There are some people today who are so religious that they have no room for Jesus Christ.

I am thankful to be a part of the family of God, the Church of the Living God. There is only one church in the Bible, and it is the Church of God. The Baptist Church is not in there. The Pentecostal

Church is not in there; Pentecost was a day, not a church. There is a church in the Bible, and it has the Bible name, the Church of God.

Babylon is a place of unclean spirits. It is not a geographical location, but the experience of those who are not born from above. They wear their own clothing and eat their own bread. God's church, the Church of the Living God, eats that bread that comes down from Heaven, that manna from Heaven, Jesus Christ.

The Church of God still has a standard, and it does not offend God's people. One thing about the standard, it keeps out the goats. They may wander around out in the congregation, but they do not have lot or part in God's church. God's church is a clean, holy church, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

Jesus denounced those who pretended to have life but on the inside were dead. What is your attitude toward false ways? We love the sinner, but at the same time, we hate every false way.

Fulfilling God's Will

There is another attribute, and this is an attribute about David that really got hold of the heart of God. In Acts 13:22 Paul said, "And when he had removed him [speaking of Saul], 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." What a testimony Paul gave about David! God found a man.

Jesus, in the Garden of Gethsemane, prayed in Matthew 26:42: "O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink

it, thy will be done." That is the prayer of a man after God's heart. He desires to do the will of God. Sometimes the will of God can really come against the flesh. It can come against your thinking, and it can even come against what you think is common sense. Nevertheless, Jesus said, "Thy will be done." In John 4:34 Jesus said "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work."

There are outstanding characteristics in the life of Jesus and in the life of David. One is the antitype, and the other is the type. David, an Old Testament patriarch and king of Israel, a man whom the Bible says was a man after God's own heart. Samuel said it, and then Paul said it hundreds of years later. What a testimony!

As God looks down upon you, can He see the desire within your life to fulfill His will? You have a will, but is your will doing anything for you? If you are getting anything done for God, it is because you are doing the will of God. Sometimes your desires will get in the way of God's will. Jesus had to pray to bring under His body, but He finished His prayer with "Thy will be done." As God looks upon your life, does He see an individual seeking after His will? If not, you need to seek God's face earnestly until you gain the victory. No doubt, physically Saul stood head and shoulders above David; but one thing Saul did not have that David had: David had a desire to fulfill the will of God. Saul's desire was to fulfill his own will. No matter how small David's physical stature might have been, spiritually he was a giant in God's eyes, because he sought after God's own heart.

(Cassette C-4072E)

Traveling On My Knees

*Last night I took a journey
To a land across the seas;
I didn't go by ship or plane;
I traveled on my knees.*

*I saw so many people there
In bondage to their sin
And Jesus told me I should go,
That there were souls to win.*

*But I said, "Jesus, I can't go
To lands across the seas."
He answered quickly,
"Yes, you can—
By traveling on your knees."*

*He said, "You pray; I'll meet
the need,
You call, and I will hear;
It's up to you to be concerned,
For lost souls far and near."*

*And so I did; I knelt in prayer,
Gave up some hours of ease;
And with the Saviour by
my side
I traveled on my knees.*

*As I prayed on, I saw souls
saved
And twisted persons healed:
I saw God's workers' strength
renewed
While laboring on the field.*

*I said, "Yes, Lord, I'll take
the job.
Your heart I want to please;
I'll heed Your call and swiftly go
By traveling on my knees."*

Selected

If you want to walk with God, you must go God's way.

1 Peter 1:17 And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear:

18 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;

19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

20 Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but

was manifest in these last times for you,

21 Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.

22 Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:

23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

24 For all flesh is as grass, and all

the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away:

25 But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

1 Peter 2:1 Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings,

2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.

The Incorruptible Word of God



Brother Allen Polston

"I Am the Lord, I Change Not"

We are living in a day when things are changing rapidly. Many things have become obsolete and of no value. Some people have decided to change, and some congregations have decided to change. Therefore, we have to prepare ourselves. When Peter was talking about suffering in the flesh, he said, "Forasmuch then

as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin" (1 Peter 4:1). Peter said to arm yourselves with the same mind. Just as Christ had to suffer, we must suffer if we are going to live free from sin and make Heaven our home.

It can be very grievous when we

see the changes of those whom we have come to love and care for. However, we do not have to allow what is going on around us to cause us to become discouraged or depressed or knocked out of this Christian race. As time rolls on, I am glad to report to you that God does not change. He is very much the same this hour as He was before you and I were ever brought on the

scene of action. Hebrews 13:8 tells us, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." Malachi 3:6 says, "For I am the LORD, I change not."

If we did not have something that we could get hold of that is unchanging, it would be quite tumultuous to live with everything constantly being changed and rearranged. I am glad there is something unchangeable, no matter how much people change or how much the world changes. Our personal lives may undergo some changes. We never know what will happen as time continues, but no matter what changes, becomes corrupt, or becomes obsolete, God let us know there is always a need for some things.

The Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 13:8, "Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away." We need some things from time to time, and other things have no place in our lives. However, he mentioned something that is always needful, and that is charity. In every situation, in every circumstance, in every age of your life, charity is needed. It never fails. There is never a time when we can say, "We do not need to have charity at this particular moment. We do not need God's love." There is always a need for it to be manifested. For the person who does not know much about God, there is a need for charity, and then for the person who has been around the things of God for years and who knows much about God, there is a need for charity too. There is an ongoing need for charity.

With the understanding of 1 Corinthians 13:8, it would be a wrong move to abandon charity, because charity never fails. In every crowd, in every gathering, in every age of time, in every situation, in every condition, charity is necessary. Charity does not fail; it needs to be there. In our business dealings,

in our families, in our homes, and in our congregations, charity is needed. It should always have a place in your heart and should be manifested to others. The same principle holds true concerning other things in life. When God speaks to you and points out things in your daily living, it would be foolish to neglect the needs of your soul, because your soul is always going to exist.

Guard Against Seducing Spirits

Many things are temporal. This old earth that we live in is not going to last. Second Peter 3:10 says, "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." God has given us the earth to use, and He has enabled man to have a choice concerning how he will live his life. Neglecting the needs of your soul to attend to temporal matters would be foolish.

The Bible says in Mark 8:36, "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" This really sums up what I am saying. What would it profit you if you were to gain the whole world and lose your soul when one day the world is going to be burned up and destroyed? The things of this world are just for a time, but your soul will live forever. Friend, you need to think about that. What would it profit you if you were to get everything you wanted to get out of life—every pleasure, every position, every word of praise that you desire—and lose your soul? One day this world is going to pass away. You need to keep this in mind as you live your life. Neglecting your soul to seek after the things of the world would be foolish.

We are living in a time when people are out to gratify the flesh. Saint, if you are not careful, that old spirit will begin to move in on you.

A seducing spirit does not come to your door and knock and announce its arrival. It does not say, "I am here to seduce and deceive you." It just tries to creep in slowly. If it can gain just a little ground each year, that is what it will try to do. It works in a seducing way.

Paul wrote in 1 Timothy, Chapter 4, about the Spirit of God speaking expressly, not just in a half-hearted manner, that in the latter times some would depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils. That is the reason we have to watch. The Spirit is speaking that message expressly, to really make an impact on you. Though you might have heard it before, you need to give heed.

Friend, you may feel strong in the Lord and feel as though you are secure (thank God, you can be secure as long as you stay close to God), but you have to watch that you do not become careless and lukewarm. You must stay on fire for God, be victorious, and go forth conquering and to conquer. Do not get relaxed and go to sleep spiritually. If you have begun to relax and get lukewarm, the trumpet is sounding to awaken you and cause you to rise up to battle. The devil is not going to let down his efforts as time goes on. The Bible says evil men and seducers will wax worse and worse. The battle is going to keep raging, and it is not going to get easier so that you can sail into Heaven. We are in a battle. The trumpet is sounding to keep us alert and to prepare us for battle in our daily lives.

Spending Time With God

In our text of Scripture, we find that Peter was working to expose a spirit. That same spirit is still working in the day in which we are living. Today many people are failing to call on the Father. Too many people feel that their prayers over their meals are sufficient. Others have given up on prayer! Oh, how

we need to spend more time in prayer. Many people are letting down in their prayer lives and not spending sufficient time in prayer.

Dear one, the Father will not make you call on Him. He is a gentleman, and He allows you to have a choice in the matter. You can spend the whole day without prayer if you want; in fact, you can go a whole week or a month without talking to God. In the midst of all your daily activities, you need to spend time with God. You find time to eat, don't you? You need to find time to pray, so that God will move on needs. The saints of God ought to be a praying people.

The Bible says in 1 Peter 3:12, "For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil." Thank God, He is listening to the prayers of His people. If you are living a life free from all sin, that means you are privileged to have God hear your prayers.

There is a way to call on the Father. Most people call on the Father because they want something. Some want a physical need met. For example, one time I was testifying to someone of how God delivered me from cigarettes. I said, "The night I got saved, I took them out of my pocket, threw them away, and I have never had one since. It's not me; it's God." This person had the habit of smoking cigarettes and said, "Well, could I just come to church and get rid of the cigarettes and then live on?"

I said, "No, it doesn't work that way. You can't just get a certain need supplied and then go on your sinful way." That is one reason many people are not getting through to God. They just come to God to get something they want. They are not coming in Jesus' name. If you really pray in Jesus' name, then you will pray as He would have prayed. Jesus prayed, "Not My will, but Thine be done." If you have been born again and you are living free from sin and doing what God

would have you to do, then you are praying and calling on the Father.

Pass the Time of Your Sojourning in Fear

Peter said in verse 17 of our Scripture lesson, "And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear." God is no respecter of persons. It does not matter to Him how popular you are, how many successes in this life you have achieved, what your family's name is, or how much physical beauty you may feel that you have. Those kinds of things have no bearing in the sight of God. God "judgeth according to every man's work." He judges according to the condition of your heart. God does not care how long you have sat on a church pew or how long you have preached. He goes deeper than just the professions that you may have or the things that you may profess to know. He is looking at the condition of your heart.

It is so important to sit under the preaching of the Word of God every time you possibly can. The Word of God has power that nothing else has. It has the power to look into the secret chambers of the heart and reveal those things that the enemy has sewn and you have begun to embrace.

God is not interested in revealing anyone else's condition to you. Also, He is not interested in your running around and saying, "Well, do you know about So-and-So? I saw it with my own eyes." He does not want you to run around and try to reveal everyone else's shortcomings. God is interested in your seeing what is in your own heart, so that if the smallest thing that is not right is beginning to work, you can do something about it.

God had some instruction in our Scripture text in verse 17. He said to "pass the time of your sojourning here in fear." In other words, this world is not a permanent place. You

need to realize that things around you are temporal; you are just passing through on your way to be with God. You could get off track and begin to focus on the things of this life.

When the disciples were there with Jesus at the temple, they said, "Jesus, we want to show You the temple. Look at the beautiful structure." Jesus said, "There shall not be left one stone upon another." That temple was just temporary, and so it is with each of our lives. Friend, you need to pass the time that God has allotted you in fear. You are not to fear in the sense that you run and hide somewhere, but in the sense that you keep a reverence for God in everything you do, in every place you go, and in every word of conversation. In all things, you need to consider these questions: "What would God think of this? How would God view what I have chosen to listen to and what I have chosen to watch? Would it be pleasing in His sight? Is it questionable? Would God approve of it? As you go about your daily living, you need to consider these things.

As you are selecting clothing to buy in the store, as you do things on the job, as you talk to people, how does God view it? As you look at things on your computer, as you email things, and as you look at emails, what does God think of what you are viewing? Your stay in this world is only temporary, and one day all these things are going to pass away. That is the reason the Bible admonishes you to pass your time here in fear, reverencing God by the way you live and realizing that this is just a temporary place of abode. It is sad that some people are so defiant of God.

Redeemed With the Precious Blood of Christ

We read in verses 18-19 of our Scripture lesson: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversa-

tion received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." If you have been redeemed, your salvation did not come through corruptible things such as silver and gold. You did not buy your way into the Kingdom of God. What brought about your salvation? It was when you came to the place that you were sick of sin and did not want to live that way anymore. You did not want to die in that condition; you wanted something better. You wanted deliverance and victory over sinful things. You did not just want to have a religious profession. You wanted what the brethren had when they shouted and sang and praised God and rejoiced in the good things of God. You wanted what those dear sisters had when they stood up and testified and tears began to roll down their cheeks, and they began to walk around and praise God. You wanted something better than what sin was bringing about in your life.

Salvation does not come by signing a church card, by joining a church, or by putting money in the offering plate. Some people try those things, but they just remain in the same old sinful condition. They try to find happiness through mere forms of religion. It is only when you fully surrender your heart and life to God that He will reach down and work a miracle in your life. You should not come to God because you got arrested or got in some other form of trouble. Some people do that, but it does not do them any good. I am not saying that one cannot get saved that way. I am just saying that in many cases, if that is the only reason a person wants help, then that is worldly sorrow and not godly sorrow. Worldly sorrow does not work repentance unto salvation.

When an individual repents because he is sick of sin and tired of living that way, he does not want to keep doing things that were getting him in trouble. He does not want to keep doing things that defile his conscience and wound God. He

wants something better. When a person comes to that place, then he can get saved. I thank God for a pure soul, free from sin, and for a conscience free from guilt; there is no condemnation. It is a miracle when God removes sin and sinful desires as far as the east is from the west. Christian friend, you have been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ.

Born of Incorruptible Seed

Our Scripture text says in verses 22-23: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." God is reminding us again in this text that we were not saved by the temporal things of life. God does not save a person based on his wealth, how large his house is, how many friends he has, or how popular he is. It is by the Word of God that one can get an experience with Almighty God. You cannot get salvation through worldly means. You get it through God, through the Word of God, and through obedience to the things of God.

If you are not careful, the thinking of the world will move you and cause you to have the spirit of the world to excel, to want to be something great in this world. I am not saying that you should not strive to do well. However, when worldly desires and ambitions begin to interfere with your labor in the work of God and your relationship with God, then things have gone too far. I read a quote once by J. C. Penney, which stated, "If a man is too busy to go to church twice on Sunday and once on Wednesday, he is too busy." Saint, you have to watch that you do not get too busy. You can become too involved with this world, to inclined to excel and succeed in this world. You can be-

gin to think that is what you need to focus on and devote yourself to.

You need to remember your salvation. Your relationship with God did not come by temporal means; it came by the Word of God and by obeying the Truth. You should not lose sight of that. Friend, you can lose sight of that and just kind of let the dust gather on your experience, so to speak. The world has so many things to distract you. Technology is ever advancing, and often we have so many new things that we can learn to do. It can just get out of hand. People in the world think that everything is all right as long as they maintain some kind of religious affiliation. They keep some kind of religious contact, but they have no contact with God.

Dear one, you need to remember that it is the incorruptible, unchanging Word of God that has saved you and helped you, and it is the only thing that will take you through to the glory world. You will lose sight of that if you are not careful. Then you cannot go forth conquering and to conquer; you will just passively go through a religious form. God wants you to go forth with victory, triumphantly reigning in this life. I thank God for a church triumphant!

God is looking for individuals who will not allow the things of this world to get such a hold on them that they are held back from witnessing, visiting, testifying, writing tracts or songs, reading the Word of God, attending camp meetings, revivals, and special services, and doing the work of God. One songwriter wrote, "*Thank God for a church triumphant, All pure in this world below! For the kingdom that Jesus founded Does triumph o'er every foe.*"

There is an enemy that is out to hinder God's church. Often the devil uses worldly successes and achievements and the desire to get somewhere in this world. You have to watch that. It can get hold of you. Things can just slowly inch their way into your life until you do not pray nearly as much as you used to. Before long you will not be doing

much of anything anymore for God. Our Scripture text tells us in verse 23 that we were "born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."

The Word of God Endures Forever

Verses 24-25 of our Scripture text read: "For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man [the things that man is lifting up] as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."

The Word of God and the things of God are where your focus needs to be. Peter went on to say in 1 Peter 2:1-2: "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." If you want to be stronger in the Lord, the potential is there. You can grow in the Lord. It is not through material means; it is through the incorruptible Word of God.

Peter said to get rid of all guile, all hypocrisies, all malice, all envies, and all evil speakings. Do not leave any one of those things in your life. You must put away all evil and ask God to forgive you. You must confess and forsake all those things. Then, as a newborn babe, you will desire the sincere milk of the Word so that you can grow in the things of God. A newborn babe is free of any kind of wrong, but he also has a desire. Friend, if anything is interfering with your desire for the things of God, you need to get rid of it. There are things that can hinder your desire for the sincere milk of the Word. If something begins to interfere with a newborn baby getting milk, he does not just lie there and do nothing. He will begin to cry, and the longer it is before you meet his need, the worse he gets. He wants that milk.

If God has shown you anything in your life that is interfering with your desire for the Word, you need to get rid of it. The things of this world are corruptible. They change, become obsolete, and are no longer valuable. The things of God live and abide forever. His Word is incorruptible and unchanging. It will be

good today, tomorrow, and forever. Dear one, do not allow the enemy to come in and get you to focus on the wrong things. You need to keep your focus on God and the things of God; keep your devotion to God and His work. God bless you.

(Cassette C-4785M)

Modern-Day Sinners

Has anyone seen a plain, old-fashioned sinner lately? They are getting mighty hard to find. If the prodigal son were living today (as if he were not), would he be a sinner? A juvenile delinquent, maybe, but his parents would be to blame for that. His wild oats are just youthful exuberance, a normal rebellion against unjust society. He must be free to "adjust positively."

There are no liars today. These fine people are simply extroverts with imaginative talents, talents that should be properly channeled. They evidence creative ability; their instability is a facet of their capacity for free, uninhibited thought. They may become great poets, lawyers, or philosophers.

The drunkard is not really a sinner. He has an inferiority complex and makes a mechanical adjustment (albeit a liquid one) to the problems of today. Besides that, he is sick. He beats his wife, starves his children, and is a scourge to society. So, he needs our sympathetic understanding.

Adultery may be a sin in far-off slum districts, but not among movie stars or popular public figures. And don't even mention the word when we get close to home. Here it is merely a case of biological maladjustment. The sex pervert was denied "free discussion" at home. His parents were old-fashioned and believed in common decency. His sin, er, I mean "mistake," is a fault of modern society.

But maybe the murder is a sinner—just maybe. On the other hand, he may be the victim of some traumatic experience. His mother was overprotective; he was greatly inhibited. He was never allowed to push his oatmeal off the high-chair tray, so now he pushes his wife off the Brooklyn Bridge. Poor fellow!

May God stir our hearts to see sin as black and ungodly as it really is, that men may be delivered from it.

Selected

Courage of Conviction

"Our young people of today haven't the courage of their convictions, for they have no convictions," recently stated a modern educator who is connected with one of the large universities. Such a surprising statement, and yet how true.

Some outward forms of courtesy have been carried to extremes until many businessmen, politicians, and ministers will calmly agree to any statement one chooses to make, and then as placidly agree with their caller whose statement is just the opposite. Why? Apparently to gain the favor of the people, but actually because they have no convictions of their own on the topics of conversation.

There is, of course, a difference between convictions and mere opinions. Some people have so many opinions that they are a nuisance. Convictions run deep and are rooted in man's soul.

Jesus Christ was a man of convictions. He spoke with such authority that the people marveled. He was persecuted to the last for His true-ness to principle. A countless number who have since believed upon Christ have carried the same convictions that He did. They have, in fact, been so fully convinced of these things, they have suffered torture of mind and body, and even martyrdom rather than sever from their belief.

All through the ages, there have been men of strong convictions. They counted life itself a small thing beside the principles for which they lived and died. Such were Peter and

Paul and the Apostles. Such were the Puritan fathers in our own country.

Such a man was Daniel and his three Hebrew friends. Would they be able to hold such strong convictions in our day? For Daniel, consulting Mr. Modern Pastor would certainly be told, "Well now, Daniel, God's Word does not command you to kneel beside an open window three times a day and pray aloud. You had better just pray while walking about your duties or lying upon your bed, until this spying blows over. Or else conceal yourself and pray secretly where you will not be observed. You would be foolhardy to chance the den of lions when you only have to be cautious for thirty days in order to escape." However, Daniel believed in "freedom of worship to God."

The three Hebrew children would be advised to "go through the form of bowing before the idol. You know it is only a block of metal, and God would know that you are not really worshiping it in your hearts. You are too valuable to the church to go risking your lives in the furnace of fire for the small principle involved." But it seemed they did not think so.

There will be no lack of courage where there is no lack of conviction. A real Christian is a person of conviction. He believes the Bible is the sacred Word of God. His convictions are founded upon the principles taught by Christ. No one has to wonder where he stands on moral issues, nor if he will believe

differently in the morning.

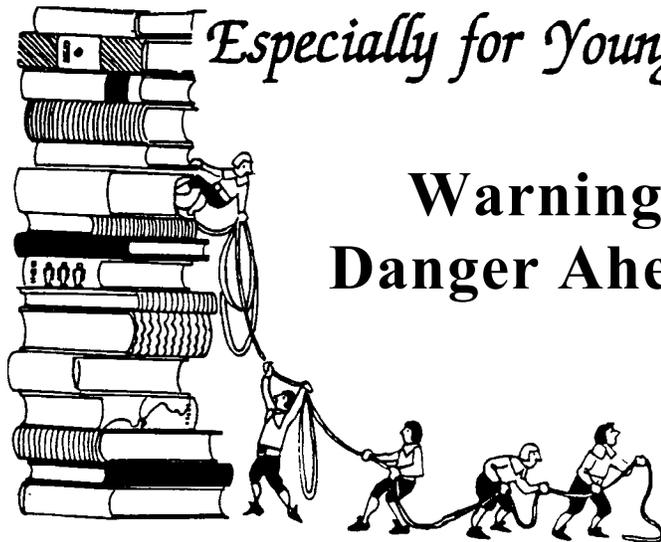
Second Timothy 3:12 says, "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." A good deal is mentioned in the Bible on persecution. Yet, toward the majority who consider themselves "Christians," one sees no persecution directed. There must be a disagreement to cause a clash, and modern Christianity and the world agree quite well. A recent writer stated that in the modern church it is "quite possible to serve both God and mammon."

Some explain that in the advancement of our civilization, Christianity has become general and persecution outdated. But those who have chosen the lowly way of the cross and are living the uncompromising life of "Bible Christians" can dispute the above statement, for they experience persecution.

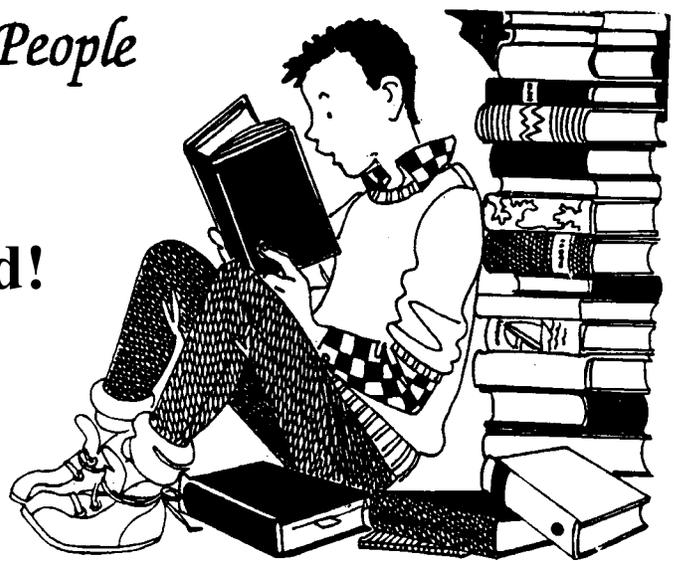
Jesus said in Luke 14:33, "So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." This is the price of becoming a true follower of Christ—one must give up *all*, everything, including his own selfish will. Then he receives that which is most worthwhile of anything. He who has forsaken all he had for Christ and received Him has convictions regarding what he believes. Also, he has the courage to stand by his convictions, unwavering, through persecution, trials, and worldly attractions.

Selected

Especially for Young People



Warning! Danger Ahead!



Attention: if you were driving along the highway and should see a sign telling of "Danger Ahead," I believe you would give it some consideration and would be inclined to be careful not to drive heedlessly into some object or a sharp curve that would cause you to have a wreck or accident or perhaps cause a death. You would want to use wisdom, would you not?

There are danger spots all along the highway of life. Also, there are signs to warn of danger and trouble. If one would only stop, look, and listen! Proverbs 13:1 says, "A wise son heareth his father's instruction; but a scorner heareth not rebuke." Proverbs 6:20 reads, "My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother." One is not considered wise in the sight of God who will disregard his or her parent's instruction.

The first of the commandments with a promise added is found in Exodus 20:12 and reads, "Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee."

This is recorded again in Ephesians 6:1-3, which says: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; which is the first com-

mandment with promise. That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth." When one disobeys this commandment, he is surely headed for trouble; but when one obeys it, it will put him in a position to enjoy the rich blessings of life and salvation. Because of disobedience to this commandment, many young people—girls and boys—have been brought to an early grave.

You must turn away from evil companions who try to induce you to do wrong. If you have been disobedient to your father and mother, ask them to forgive you, to pray for you and with you, that God will forgive you and give you power to resist the wrong and be obedient.

All God-fearing parents delight in seeing their children walking in obedience to the Word of God and will not ask them to do anything that they know would not be right. Their prayer is that their children live and walk in obedience to the Word of God so that when it comes their time to die (we all must die sometime, somewhere), they will be admitted into the realms of bliss and happiness. "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his," should be the desire and aim of each one.

We are living in an evil time. The Bible tells us that "in the last

days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, *disobedient to parents*, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affections, trucebreakers, . . . from such turn away" (2 Timothy 3:1-3, 5).

Hebrews 12:9 tells us, "Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?" Proverbs 4:13 admonishes, "Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go: keep her; for she is thy life." Obedience and submission are the greatest honor children can render to their parents and to God.

There comes to my mind at this time an incident I will attempt to relate in part. There lived not far from our home a daughter who did not want to be in subjection to her parents, so she left home and went to a town some distance away. She had not been away but a few days when she got into a fray with other young people and was stabbed to death. It was a sad shock when her father received a telegram telling of her death and asking what should be done with the body. The body was shipped home for burial. It was a sad funeral. Proverbs 4:26-27 tells us: "Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be

established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil."

Robert was, seemingly, a respectable boy, but he did not like the idea of being required to obey his father's bidding, so he ran away from home. In a short time, he, with some other boys went boat riding. The boat capsized. Being quite a distance from shore and unable to swim, Robert drowned. His body was sent home for burial. Several other cases could be mentioned, some seemingly sadder than others, but remember that disobedience demands retribution, and each one will suffer the penalty some time, somewhere, for obedience to parents is well-pleasing unto the Lord (Colossians 3:20).

Now, we are not saying that every disobedient child will meet with an untimely tragic death. Some disobedient children are permitted to live a good many years, but they are living under a curse and the disfavor of God. The approval of God is not on their lives, and except they repent, death and hell will be their doom. "Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day: And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known" (Deuteronomy 11:26-28).

There is no offering, gift, or sacrifice that is of any more value than to obey the law of God. We can say with authority that everyone who will obey and please God shall be blessed of Him with health, wealth, honor, and life, in this world, and in the world to come, eternal life.

There comes to my mind at this time a verse of a song, which says:

*There's a God who is standing at
Heaven's door,
And He's looking this universe
o'er.
And He views each mortal with a
searching eye,
You can't do wrong and get by.*

Selected

Do You Really Mean What You Sing?

The singing of a hymn should be a great experience for Christians. A hymn can be a prayer, a testimony, praise, or an invitation to others. Many apparently don't take the words they sing very seriously.

They sing, "Sweet hour of prayer" and pray only a few minutes each day.

They sing, "Onward Christian Soldiers" and wait to be drafted.

They sing, "Oh, for a thousand tongues to sing" and don't use the ones they have to speak for Christ.

They sing, "I love to tell the story" and seldom mention Jesus to anyone.

They sing, "Serve the Lord with gladness" and gripe about all they have to do.

They sing, "Cast thy burdens on the Lord" and then worry themselves into a nervous condition.

They sing, "The whole wide world for Jesus" and never invite the next-door neighbor to church.

Dear Lord, help each of us to realize what we sing and act on it.

Selected

Ezekiel 22:23 And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

24 Son of man, say unto her, Thou art the land that is not cleansed, nor rained upon in the day of indignation.

25 There is a conspiracy of her prophets in the midst thereof, like a roaring lion ravening the prey; they have devoured souls; they have taken the treasure and precious things; they have made her many widows in the midst thereof.

26 Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the

holy and profane, neither have they showed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them.

27 Her princes in the midst thereof are like wolves ravening the prey, to shed blood, and to destroy souls, to get dishonest gain.

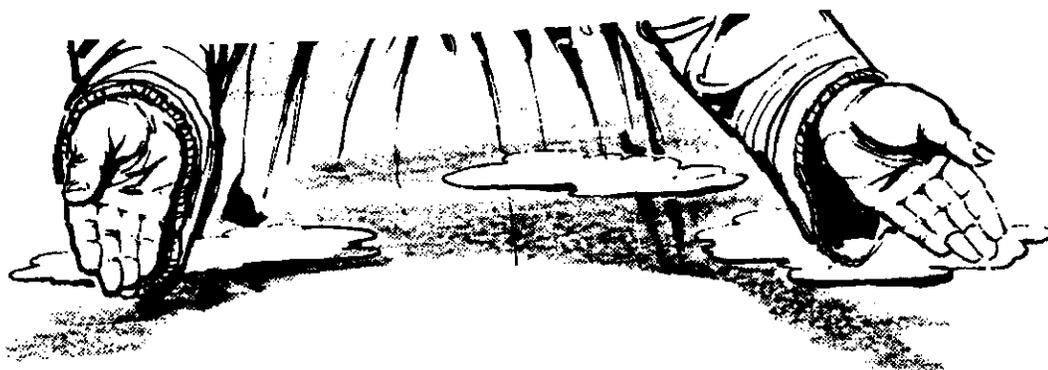
28 And her prophets have daubed them with untempered mortar, seeing vanity, and divining lies unto them, saying, Thus saith the Lord GOD, when the LORD ha'th not spoken.

29 The people of the land have used

oppression, and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy: yea, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully.

30 And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none.

31 Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath: their own way have I recompensed upon their heads, saith the Lord GOD.



IS THERE A MAN FOR GOD?

Brother Esau Brooks

Confronted With Corruption

We can see from this message of the Prophet Ezekiel that it is not the first time that God's people have been confronted with corruption. Satan is working overtime today to try to beat us all down into submission to him and into accepting the status quo. Some are always going to go along with it. You may ask, "What are you talking about when you ask the question, 'Is there a man for God?'" There are lots of preachers supposedly standing for God." The fact remains that with all the religion that people have, with all the

claims that people are making, things are going downhill quickly, not only out on the streets and among politicians but also among many who call themselves the Church of God.

I will be using the words that God presented to the Prophet Ezekiel as recorded in verse 30, "And I sought for a man. . . ." The personal pronoun "I" here has no reference to the Prophet Ezekiel, but to God. The entirety of this message was one directed from God to the Prophet Ezekiel, familiarizing him with the actual state of affairs. It might have been that Ezekiel was

beginning to think about going along with the trend, or falling in step with the people; so God decided to remove the scales from his eyes and give him a first-hand vision of how things *really* were.

I do not suppose that Ezekiel was totally ignorant of the many things that God mentioned. However, though he might have been somewhat acquainted with them, the idea was growing steadily that "Maybe this is the way it ought to be; maybe this is what God wants." Therefore, Ezekiel tells us in verses 23-24 of our Scripture text: "And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of

man, say unto her. . . ." In the Book of Revelation when things began to go downhill, God worked it out so that the Apostle John could be on the Isle of Patmos. Once there, he decided the first Lord's Day to go to church on a barren island, no one else but him. You see, dear heart, when the Scripture says in Isaiah 1:21, "How is the faithful city become an harlot!" it is referring to how faithful people used to be to God. There was a day, even in our modern times, when many more people were faithful to God than what we are seeing anymore. More and more, I am convinced that there is a drive toward making the Church of God a denomination. That was what God was saying when He spoke of the faithful city becoming a harlot. He simply meant, "How have the people of God who were once so faithful become a denomination?"

Notice the state of affairs today. Is there not a move among many to drive faithfulness to God out of existence? With all their claiming to have the Truth and claiming to stand for the Truth, it is a shame what they are winking their eyes to. I am not going to use the term the "true" church, because the church has ever been true, and there is only one church. Whenever that which calls itself the church ceases to be faithful to God, she ceases to be the church. We have to get it clear in our heads that a little paint writing the name "Church of God" over the door does not make a Church of God congregation, neither does singing the glorious, inspired songs of Zion.

There is a song in the *Evening Light Hymnal* entitled, "The Bond of Perfectness." I wonder how many groups are out there singing this song: "O brethren, how this perfect love unites us all in Jesus!" while at the same time they have nothing to do with their brethren. They sing it, but they do not practice it. As a result, it is depriving our young and rising generation of what is rightfully theirs, the spiritual heritage

that many deserve. The way some people are acting under the garb and the profession of Church of God is ridiculous. It saddens our hearts because some of God's people have fallen into these dreadful conditions. Nevertheless, there have always been those who kept up the cry, "How long, Lord, are You going to let this go on?"

God Is Seeking a Man

Notice today that, more and more, the people of God are losing the burden. I want you to bear in mind that I have been around for many years, and I have seen some things. People are ready to fall in line with anything that comes along, as long as they are singing the good old songs and claiming to be Church of God; but dear heart, where is the Spirit of the thing? Where is the power of the thing? God told the people back in the days of Zechariah, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts" (Zechariah 4:6).

If there is anything the world needs, it is the baptism of the Holy Ghost. That is what John the Baptist told the people when he appeared. For many years Israel had not had a prophet from God to sound out the Word of God and things had become formal, dead, cold, and lifeless. Then John the Baptist came around the river banks of Jordan crying out, "I indeed baptize you with water; but [there is] one [who is coming after me] mightier than I . . . the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire" (Luke 3:16). What is the evidence of the Holy Ghost? The Holy Ghost Himself is the evidence.

Let us go back and take another look at the state of affairs in the days of the Prophet Ezekiel. Verses 23-24 of our Scripture reading state: "And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, say unto her, [Do you know who the "her" was? The land of Israel. No, it was not the Edomites or the

Philistines; it was the land of Israel, the supposed people of God.] Thou art the land that is not cleansed. . . ." They were claiming to be cleansed, but God was pronouncing judgment: "You are not cleansed. You cannot be cleansed with all this rubbish hanging on you." Today it is no wonder that most people have done away with this kind of preaching. You do not hear much of it anymore. Thank God for the few who are still holding onto it, but the trouble is, we do not have enough of it. We need more.

In the Scripture text God is saying, "I am seeking a man." The world seems to have run out of men. Oh, we have many walking around in pants, but where are the real, full-blooded men? They are becoming more scarce every day. Someone may ask, "What do you call a man?" It is not so much what I call a man, but what a man is. A man is one who will make up the hedge, one who will stand in the gap before God for the land. When England was faced with a time similar to what we are facing today, a man named John Knox cried out to God, "Give me Scotland or I die." Where is such a man today? That is what we need; that is what the world needs.

We have settled for too much comfort and the conveniences of our age have gone to our heads. All the ruggedness of serving God has nearly been left behind. I am not complaining. I am merely striving to see if there are any chances of God being able to awaken us. We need a revival, not in the sense of having meetings, but in the sense of God's divine power being demonstrated in such a way as to convince the world that there is still reality in serving God.

Our Scripture text says in verse 30, "I sought for a man among them. . . ." God is still seeking a man among them. Who was He calling "them"? The Scripture text tells us in verse 25, "There is a conspiracy of her prophets in the midst thereof, like a roaring lion ravening the prey;

they have devoured souls." More and more, a spirit is taking hold of what is supposed to be the ministry, and they are holding souls as hostages. God's people need to start overcoming some things. First, we have to get over missing the people who have deserted God. I am not talking about carrying a burden for their souls. I am talking about letting them become a hindrance to fulfilling the purpose of Almighty God.

Few Are Going God's Way

In our Scripture text God did not just talk about needing and wanting a man. This was the Almighty saying, "I sought for a man." You can tell how serious things were when God Himself could not even find a man. Today so much rubbish is around that the few loyal souls to God are being suppressed and kept down. Rumors are being spread against true men of God to destroy their credibility, to break down the people's confidence in them, to render them useless. As a result, the church is running out of men.

Can you not see how many males want to wear earrings now? Oh, that makes me sick when I see a person who is supposed to be a man walking around with earrings. That is a reproach to me because I am a man. I wish they would go ahead and put on their dresses too. One thing that is happening today is that some denominations have accepted homosexuality and other denominations have accepted lesbianism. Those are things that should not even be mentioned among the people of God. God said, "I sought for a man," a *real* man. That is what it is going to take to turn things around. There may not be many that will be standing around him, but at least he will have God.

God's way has never been popular with the masses, and it never will be. We are never going to get the crowd in step with Truth, in step with the Word of God. Nevertheless, the Bible says in Exodus 23:2,

"Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil." God said, "I looked for a man who would make up the hedge," not repair it, because it is about gone. What is this hedge supposed to represent? It is a defense against wickedness, hypocrisy, and ungodliness. The line between these things has to be drawn tighter. We are going to have to submit to God's way or lose our souls. We cannot change God. The Bible says in Galatians 6:7-8: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

Just when the world was beginning to have confidence in the Church of God and believing that God yet had a people, the bickering and the fussing started concerning who was going to be the greatest. That was something Jesus Himself had to fight against in His earthly ministry, for when the disciples got together away from Jesus, they were continually questioning, "Who do you think is going to be the greatest among us?" One said, "I think Peter is, because he looks as if he has something over the Lord. And John, did you notice that he is always leaning on His breast?" So one time Jesus asked them, "What was that you all were talking about along the way?" and they grew silent. They dared not lay bare their thoughts, because they knew it was not going to set well with Jesus.

It is no wonder that God had to take Brother Emerson Wilson from the walk of life. God had to take him so that the thoughts of many hearts could be revealed. As long as he was around, no doubt there still would have been those jumping and shouting and claiming to stand for Truth, when, in reality, they were not true men of God. Therefore, God reached down and lifted him and took him home, and the thoughts of many hearts were revealed.

Since then, there has been a

steady downward trend. Let me tell you, if the few remaining lights were to go out, it would be a total eclipse. You may say, "God has ever had a man." Well, it looks as if He is running out of them now. We have many who are willing to stand up and talk. There is no end to the talk and no end to the claiming, but where is the production?

The Lack of a Hedge

Our young and rising generation today has no defense against drugs. There are those laboring to legalize marijuana. No doubt, among some who profess Christianity, you will find those who are sentimental toward that move, thinking it would be nice. Drugs were never and will never be of any good to man. No matter what scientists say, it is wrong; and wrong has never been right, because if it were right, it would not be wrong.

With the treacherousness going on today, you can hardly venture to put confidence in many and depend on their standing. When you become aware, they are the ones digging the ground from under your feet to knock you over. I know what I am talking about. The hardest thing today to find among people are trustworthy men. This thing is turning all the way around, and many men are becoming sissies. You do not have to take what I am saying. If you were to investigate a little, you would find that far more women are standing firm and decisive than men. Now, I am one of the men, but I have to tell the truth. Too many seem to be concerned about advancing only themselves, not the cause of God and the cause of the righteous.

We have portrayed in these lines a very deplorable condition. God was outlining these facts to the Prophet Ezekiel. Notice that He identified two problems to reveal the urgency of the situation. First, a gap had come between the people of God and God. We need something started that will clear up all the mess around the church and the things

that people are sitting around with. No doubt, it would shock us to know what all people are holding in their hearts against one another. If you consider this somewhat rash, do not blame me. I did not mix it; this is the way God gave it to me. My burden is to get men and women closer to God than what they are, and it is urgent.

The second problem that God identified to reveal the urgency of the situation was the lack of a hedge. Anyone who has a yard that they think anything about, the first thing they consider is how to protect and preserve it from anything trampling it. I can remember when God brought me to the church that what seemed to have been the most prevailing condition was keeping the enemy out and keeping the enemy on the run.

I can still remember as a boy growing up, when I was taken to church, that some of the old men would stand up and begin to sing songs that were glorifying God. I would walk out to the edge of my seat and turn around and look up into their faces, because I was wondering what they were made up of. They impressed me with some of the ways they sang, and I have never been able to shake it, not that I have tried. I did not even know what salvation was then, but there was something in their voices that brought us so close to God.

Many nights I sat in those meetings feeling that God was so close that, if I would have reached out my hand, I could have touched Him. The trouble is, we are not having enough of that today. Oh, yes, we are having some blessed times, but the problem is, we are not having enough. There is too much room for other things, and that is the reason it is common now to hear of this one gone, that one going, and another one planning to leave. When people are living close to God, there is no room for that. They are so enraptured with the presence of God that they do not think along those lines. Now this might be strange

talk for such a time as this, when religion is so popular, but these are the facts.

In our Scripture text God was making known to Ezekiel that the need was for a man. He did not even say "for some men," but He said, "I sought for a *man* among them." What kind of man was He talking about? One who would make up the hedge, to rebuild it from the foundation right on up so that people could not penetrate it. Today in many places that call themselves "Church of God," there is no hedge, nothing right. Now, you can run into much that is wrong. This one will want to take you to one side and talk to you about a brother, and someone else will want to take you to the other side to tell you about something. I remember the time when the saints used to gather to pray and the cries were heard all over the place, beseeching and begging God, interceding with God for more and more of His power and glory.

The gap symbolizes an opening between the people of God and God. The lack of a hedge denotes a lack of protection against prevailing conditions across the land. The condition was leaving God's people defenseless, not only against wickedness but also against the wrath of God. The Bible says, "I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none."

Anytime people begin to forsake God, the next thing we need to get ready for is destruction. It happened in the antediluvian age, it happened in the days of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, it happened many other times down through the annals of time, and it is happening today. There is a need for a complete, wholehearted turning back to God. Instead of talking about radicalism and being in bondage and being too strict, we ought to be praying for more of it.

Righteousness still exalts a nation, and sin is still a reproach.

We need a whole lot more of Jesus than what many are seeing today. Why do we need this condition prevailing today? The longer it takes to get it, the wider the gap becomes between God and His people. That is where the concern is, between God and His people. You may ask, "Don't you believe that God is in the midst of His people?" Yes, I know He is. However, I also believe that if God could make Himself heard, He would be saying, "Give Me more room to work and more room to accomplish things," because in too many ways and in too many cases He is being cut off.

"A Conspiracy of Her Prophets"

What are the contributing factors to this developing, deplorable condition? First, as brought out in verse 25 of the Scripture text, "There is a conspiracy of her prophets in the midst thereof." Instead of preachers seeking souls and being burdened for souls, they are concerned about stealing sheep and wrecking congregations. Many of these spiritual upstarts are getting loose among the flock, and they are not sparing the flock to lead away disciples. When Paul was getting down the road in age, he told the brethren as he was making his last trip, in Acts 20:28-30: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God [*feed her*] . . . For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." We do not have to go back to the days of Paul to see those things; they are happening right around us today.

Until God can get your eyes open to the realization of what is going on, you have to be careful of what kind of conversation you get in with people. The moment someone begins to speak critically against a man of God, it is time for you to tell that

person, "I don't have any time for this." Some time ago I had to say to some people, "What am I doing sitting here listening to this? Excuse me, I'm out of here." It is time for more people to do that. Pastors have enough burdens and enough trouble in keeping the flock together without having people out there working and talking critically against them. The bad part is, some talk that way and do not pick up and leave. They just stick around and complain and murmur. If they were where I come from, I would tell them, "Why don't you hit the road? For I mean, if you are not at home here, what are you doing here? If this is your home, what are you doing trying to tear it down?" Come on, it is time to show your true colors. If you are going to be for God, then be for God. If you are not going to be for God, then come out and let the world know it.

The Scripture text says there was a conspiracy. Every now and then you are hearing about these "ministers' meetings." What a conspiracy! I have received many invitations, but I leave them just the way they

come — as invitations. About all they amount to are discussions about someone they do not like, and they try to get others to be influenced against that person. They are never for the salvation of souls! Many people out on the streets need to be reached. Saints of God do not try to tear congregations apart and try to destroy the body of Christ!

The Lord went on to say in verse 25 that they are "like a roaring lion ravening the prey; they have devoured souls; they have taken the treasure [the Word of God] and precious things [the things of salvation and the oneness of God's people and]; they have made her many widows in the midst thereof [trampling it]." How can they preach unity? They are exerting such pressure that sometimes we ourselves want to shy off from this unity business for fear of creating confusion. The moment you start talking about unity, people think you need to bend over backward until you break your back to get hold of those whom God has sent down the road. No one ran them off. They picked up and ran themselves.

God Himself undertook to find a man, a way of help for the people; but the result of His efforts were disappointing. We seem to have come to a time similar to that which the Prophet Ezekiel was seeing. We need to make up our minds that we are not going to be a disappointment to God. We must be the people that God can count on. Let us reach that place where we do not have to worry the pastor's mind when he wakes up in the morning. In too many cases, people let family relationships or friends get between and influence them. Saint of God, you are precious to God, and you are precious to the work of God. Our children and grandchildren are also in need of a man who will stand faithfully and be true to God. We must put a stop to this making the faithful city a harlot, a place where judgment and righteousness would lodge. Let us put an end to all of this and stand fast in the liberty wherein Christ has made us free. God bless you.

(Cassette C-4714E)

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Newark, Ohio	WCLT-AM 1430	Sunday	8:15 a.m.-9:00 a.m.
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Revelation 11:1 And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.

Earmarks of the Church of God



Brother E. David Stegmeier

Lining Up With the Blueprint

As a minister, I have been called to measure the Church of God. I appreciate the Church of God. There is only one true church, but you can find many sorry replicas. Christ has only one bride, just as I have only one bride. Certain requirements must be fulfilled to be the Church of God. The church means more to me than anything else in this world.

A tremendous amount of confusion and misunderstanding are in the world today about what the

Church of God really is. This confusion has been caused by the devil and by man. It did not come from God. To clear up the misunderstanding and the uncertainty about the church, we must go to the Blueprint. God has a divine plan by which we must live to be His people. We need to look into the principles, the actions, and the rules that guided the early church and emulate them. In the beginning there were no denominations or sectarian institutions. The church was one, and she is still one today!

I do not know about you, but I do not appreciate other people opening my personal mail. A name means a lot. When a letter comes addressed to E. David Stegmeier, I like to open it and read it myself. Paul, writing to the church, said in 1 Corinthians 14:33, "For God is not the author of confusion." Paul wrote this letter to the Church of God at Corinth, so it was a personal letter to them and to us.

We do not have to be confused. The Word and the Spirit can keep us on track. However, sometimes we

have to do some fine tuning, and that takes some work on our part. Sometimes when I want to listen to Gospel music on the radio, the station does not come in clearly, so I work to fine tune it. Similarly, we must strive and labor to be what God would have us to be so that we can hear the Spirit of God more distinctly.

The Church of God is an awesome institution, composed of many people from different nationalities and walks of life. When we meet together, we have to be sure that the Spirit of God directs us to say and do what we ought to do. We each must be sure the Spirit of God is directing us; that is an awesome responsibility. Since God is not the author of confusion, if confusion exists, then something is being done that is not according to the will of God, for He is the author of peace and order.

Most of that which is going on in the religious world is not of God. Division among God's people is not of God. Competition is not of God. Competing with one another in the singing or the playing of the instruments or the preaching is not of God. Each saint should have the liberty to be what God has ordained him or her to be. I do not preach as others do. God is the One who directs me as I preach. Sometimes I preach with great vehemence; sometimes I am very quiet. We each should be what God wants us to be, and we should do what God wants us to do. God made the flowers in the different color hues. He loves various colors, shapes, sizes, and personalities. The church is a beautiful church, and there is room for each member in the body of Christ.

God hates division, competition, and rivalry. All of these come about when men and women allow the flesh to take control. We need to keep the flesh down. We are not to use our liberty as an occasion for the flesh. People lose the Spirit of God when the flesh takes over. In the beginning it was God's church, and it still is; it belongs to Him, and He

wants to direct it. In the church Christ must be the ultimate voice and the ultimate leader. We all will answer to Him some day; He is the Head. If it is God's church, it is under the control of His Spirit.

Christ suffered and died for the church, so don't you think that she is very important to Him? The church is extremely important to Christ. Strife and division arose in the Church of God at Corinth. Because of problems, Paul wrote letters to attempt to correct and settle the factional strife and conflicts there. In 1 Corinthians 1:13 Paul posed the all-important question, "Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" I am sure that every one of us would say no; therefore, if there is division, something is wrong. Division is sin, and it is contrary to the will of God.

Paul said in verse 10, "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be *no* divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."

If division is working, someone somewhere is not walking according to the Blueprint. That is very simple to understand. We may see little things differently, but we should not use them in our preaching or teaching. For example, you may prefer General Motors vehicles, and others may prefer Fords. Those differences should not enter into the doctrine. Sometimes ridiculous things enter in. Let us preach and teach "Thus saith the Lord," and it covers the church universally.

The Necessity of Earnestly Seeking God

The church is to be like God in name, nature, Spirit, and purpose. Paul was displeased with the division working in the church at Corinth. God's true people hate division; they work hard to maintain unity. All barriers of nationali-

ties, languages, and races are torn down in the Church of God. No race or nation is superior in God's sight.

While God is our Father, the church is our mother, and we all are brethren as long as we walk in the light. D. S. Warner wrote, "We reach our hands in fellowship to every blood-washed one." Christ is our older brother. By the time you finish reading this message, I hope that I will have cleared up some confusion that might have existed in your mind about the nature, the structure, and the purpose of the Church of God. At the end of this message, I want you to be able to answer this question: Am I a member of the Church of God?

God put me into the church, not man. God will make a place for you and me. Your gift will make room for you. You do not have to push your way into a position. When it is time, God will make room for you. I often consider the universe and all the laws that govern its operation. We have to admit that a God of infinite knowledge and understanding works behind the scenes of this universe, and certainly He can work behind the scenes of the church and govern it.

Some people think they are so important that they can govern or direct the church. They think they can tell a man what to preach and what not to preach, where to go and where not to go, and how to run his congregation. Pastors answer to no one but God, but they are accountable to the people. All of us have a head, someone to whom we are accountable. That is good! Children need parents, a wife needs a husband, and a husband needs a pastor. It is good that we are accountable to someone.

The sun never crashes into the moon, and the moon never bumps into the earth. The earth rotates at the same rate of speed year after year. Paul wrote in Colossians 1:16-17: "For by him [God] were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible [that includes the devil and

all his spirits], whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist [or are upheld]."

Church, we need God in everything we do. We should earnestly seek God each day to direct us. May God give us more mothers in Israel. I grew up where mothers of Israel looked like mothers of Israel. They were deeply spiritual, and they wept at the altar of prayer for souls. Paul went on to say in verse 18, "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence [so that He might have the control]." That is a profound thought!

"Ye Must be Born Again"

The first earmark of the Church of God is that the church is composed of all those who have experienced the new birth. You must have had an experience with God that translated you out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of His dear Son; you must be born again. Salvation from sin makes you a member of the Church of God. Acts 2:47 says, "Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be [the center reference says 'we are being'] saved."

During Jesus' earthly ministry, He said in John 10:1-3: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice." Child of God, you will hear many voices, but you must weigh them by the Word. The Bible says to try the spirits, to see if they are according to the principles of the Word of God. Even if a voice has a minister's name on it, do not listen to it. You should not follow that

voice if it strays from the Bible. You had better get the Bible out and be sure that what that voice is saying is in there. The Church of God is not following man blindly. All the principles by which we live are in the Book. God has covered everything about our lives: He has covered the name of the church, the way the church ought to live, how the church ought to dress, and how the brethren and the sisters ought to keep their hair.

As we near the end of time, many people are making the serious mistake of equating size with significance or rightness. You may ask, "Do you mean that only a few are right when millions think otherwise?" In the Old Testament you can read that as Gideon went toward the battle, God had him pare down his soldiers from thirty-two thousand to three hundred. As we near the end of time, many feel there will be great revival. However, you cannot read that in the Book. God keeps shaking the church. He wants quality, not quantity. Matthew 7:14 tells us that few there be that find this way. Isaiah 1:9 speaks of "a very small remnant."

We read in John 10:3-4: "To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice."

The Word of God is not redundant. In other words, it is not wordy; all of it is important. God's people hear and follow what He has to say; they understand His will and do it. You may attend some place where they have the name Church of God, but are you really an obedient child of God? I have taught many children, and some have been only "fairly" obedient. In other words, they complied to a certain extent. They are like the little boy on the bus. His father said, "Johnny, sit down or I'll spank you." He sat down and said, "Dad, the boy on the outside is sitting down,

but on the inside he is still standing up." My Bible says we ought to be as the Prophet Jeremiah said: we ought to be clay in the hands of the Potter—easily molded into whatever God wants us to be and the way He wants us to look.

God's Sheepfold

John 10:3-7 reads: "The sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know [or recognize] his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers. This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them. Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep."

Jesus was using the sheepfold as a figure to represent the Kingdom of God, or the Church of God. Only through the experience of the new birth can one enter the Church of God. Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Ye must be born again."

Church of God hymns are full of deep meanings. Brother Emerson Wilson said the reason the sixth-seal church knew the doctrines so well is that they sang them. Singing is such an important part of worship. Church of God songs have beautiful, deep messages. We often sing, "Ye Must Be Born Again," in the *Evening Light Hymnal*. It reads:

*That heavenly Teacher, in words
that are plain,
This truth declared to men,
If ever they would to his kingdom
attain,
They must be born again.*

*No mere reformation your sins can
erase,
You cannot remove their strain;
If ever in heaven your soul has a
place,
Ye must be born again.*

*Good works will not answer, no
penance will do,
Mortality, too, is vain:
For naught will avail but a
creature made new,
Ye must be born again.*

Some who feel conviction in their hearts may say, "I know that cigarettes, alcohol, and narcotics are not good for me. I'm going to put those things aside and do better." At the beginning of each year, many people promise themselves that they are going to do differently and that they are going to make certain improvements. They call them "New Year's Resolutions," but they break them quickly because they have no power. A mere reformation will not take away your sins.

Some think, "Well, if I go to church, I will be okay." Some people feel that they have been faithful just because they go to church, even if they sleep through the service. Salvation is much more than going to church, paying your tithes, and doing good works. Everything you do must be according to the Bible. Good works will not answer for you on the Judgment Day. Some in false religion teach penance. What is penance? It is basically doing something to abuse or punish one's self for wrongdoing. Friend, it takes more than penance to serve God. Penance is not a biblical term. We have to take this reed like unto a rod, and measure ourselves by it. The church went through many things, and many places that crept up and called themselves the Church of God were not according to God's plan. We need to look at His plan.

I sometimes tell people who contend with me, "Let's throw away all the books and just take the Bible and the Holy Spirit, and we can teach nothing but the Church of God." Martin Luther, John and Charles Wesley, and D. S. Warner are not in the Bible. We need the ultimate book, the Bible.

Someone came to me once and brought a big book to me entitled

"The Writings of Menno Simons." Menno Simons might have been a good man, but he is not the foundation of the church.

In the song that you read earlier, the songwriter wrote "Morality, too, is vain." It takes more than being a good person. Someone once told me, "I don't need to be saved. I am really good. I treat my wife right, and I am kind to my employees." He was a very dear man who imbibed that kind of spirit and attitude. Thank God, one day he got saved. Salvation is more than being a good person.

Any religious organization that can be entered by any other process than the new birth is not the Church of God. Baptism in water is necessary; however, it is merely a symbol of a death to sin and a resurrection to a new life in Jesus Christ.

A Unified, Universal Institution

Another requisite of the church is, God's church is a universal institution, and it must take in every race. There are no boundaries of any kind as far as nationality, socially, economically, educationally, or politically. It includes all saved people, no matter what class of society they came from. All Church of God members are walking in the light. God will continue to reveal light to each individual who is walking in the light. Light is understanding of God's will.

Another earmark of the Church of God is that she is unified; she is an institution of unity. She is the only one of her mother. Paul said this so beautifully in Romans 12:5 when he wrote, "So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." We are dependent on one another.

John wrote in 1 John 1:6-7: "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son

cleanseth us from all sin." One of the great reformers wrote a song entitled, "The Bond of Perfectness." It reads:

*How sweet this bond of
perfectness,
The wondrous love of Jesus;
A pure foretaste of heaven's bliss,
Oh, fellowship so precious!*

*O brethren, how this perfect love
Unites us all in Jesus!
One heart, and soul, and mind we
prove
The union heaven gave us.*

"Holiness Becometh Thine House"

Another earmark of the Church of God is that the church is holy in nature. Psalm 93:5 states, "Thy testimonies are very sure: holiness becometh thine house, O LORD, for ever." Holiness is a whole subject in itself. Holiness is definitely the nature of the church. She is a spiritual institution and functions as a family. We are a spiritual brotherhood. We are not designed to function as a civil government. Many people are getting to the place where they want to run the church as a democracy. Contrariwise, we do not run the church as a civil government. She is a theocracy, and we all are under God.

Many passages speak about the operation of the church, and she is represented as the bride of Christ. Isaiah 54:5 says, "For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called."

The Bible lets us know that God named the Church of God. She has a name. A name is all important. When the mailman comes to deliver the mail, a name is very important. If someone dies and leaves a legacy, a name is very important. Someone once said, "The sweetest sound that falls on human ears is the sound of a man's own name." Your name is important.

Many Scriptures tell us what the name of the church is: 1 Corinthians 1:2, 10:32, 11:22, and 15:9; 2 Corinthians 1:1; Galatians 1:13; and 1 Timothy 3:5. Galatians 1:13 reads, "For ye have heard [Paul was speaking] of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it." Many people are wasting the Church of God. The Church of God is a universal name; any other name is a subordinate name, or a lesser name.

God is the Divine Designer. He attended to all details. I often think of the space shuttle Challenger when it went up into space and blew up. They did not attend to certain details as they should have. God has covered every detail of the church. If we make it to Heaven, we must take care of every detail.

The church is not dependent on elaborate furnishings or beautiful edifices. The church is dependent

upon the Spirit of God and the Word. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 3:9, "For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building." There was a time in the history of the church when they hid in catacombs and caves. May God help us down to the very end. We want to look to the Word, not to a large following. Many people use the numbers game. In Exodus 23:2 Moses said, "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil." Friend, you need to get into the Word.

The church has a class book. Jesus said in Luke 10:20, "Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven." Revelation 20:11-12 says this: "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand

before God; and the books were opened [God will judge us according to the sayings of Christ and according to our light and understanding and the dispensation under which we lived]; and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works."

Is your name there? Can you read your title clear? I thank God that my name is there, and no one can remove my name. Some people might like to have it removed. However, it is contingent upon my listening to the voice of God and obeying Him. In all things He will have the preeminence. If your name is not in the Book of Life, you can become a member of the Church of God by yielding your heart, your life, and your will to Him.

(Cassette C-4478M)

Beware of Covetousness

Among the many types of wrong and sin, the Scriptures teach us that one of the world's greatest sins is the sin of covetousness.

If no one broke the tenth commandment (Thou shalt not covet), locks on doors would corrode with rust for lack of use, locksmiths would hunt another occupation, jails would be turned into other uses, courtrooms might be converted into dwelling houses, and lawyers would seek for other employment. But the sin of covetousness exists today.

It is one of the most fatal of all sins. The Bible says, "The love of money is the root of all evil." Covetousness is mentioned more often in the Scriptures than any other type of sin. It is classified among the grossest types of sin. The Bible says, "Covetousness is idolatry." We should be reminded constantly that the words of Christ in Mark 8:36 are still true: "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

We fight the sins of our modern—times sins such as pride, adultery, gambling, and drunkenness—with all the force we can. Many times the greatest sin is untouched. The root of all sin is covetousness.

Let us notice some of the characteristics of this sin. Covetousness made the first king of Israel keep back the best of the flocks for a wrong purpose. It caused Lot to make a greedy choice and pitch his tent toward Sodom. It made Balaam step over a

heavenly crown and back into hell for a small portion of Balak's money. It caused Ahab to lie in order to get Naboth's vineyard. It made Achan steal the golden wedge and Babylonish garments. It was the cause of the falsehood which Ananias and Sapphira told. It made Judas commit the terrible sin of selling his Lord for thirty pieces of silver, and then caused him to kill himself.

Those who are guilty of covetousness are self-centered and independent and do not recognize their obligation to God nor to their fellowmen. They are callous to everything except their own comfort.

Wealth in itself will not cause a soul to be lost. It is what we do about it that matters, whether our affections are set upon it more than upon God. Christ did not condemn private wealth, but He did teach the proper use of such possessions. He taught the liberal use of money for the assistance of those in need.

Our lives are not to be cisterns; they are to be channels. They are not to be reservoirs; they are to be flowing rivers. The man who is always getting and never giving is of no value to himself, to God, or to his fellowman. He is as the fruitless tree that cumber the ground. Beware of "covetousness, which is idolatry" (Colossians 3:5).

Selected

[Guest Editorial—continued from page 2]

They deny that Jesus is the Christ, not by verbally denying Him or by denying His existence, but by denying His position as Christ. The word *Christ* in the Greek is *christos*, meaning, "the anointed One." They deny allowing His anointing to work in their lives and allowing the anointed One, the unction, or the Holy Spirit to guide, direct, and order their lives. They deny that, yet they profess, and that is the reason they are antichrist.

Titus 1:16 reads, "They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him." The *Amplified Bible* makes it even stronger. It says, "They profess to know God . . . but deny and disown and renounce Him by what they do." One can profess with his lips, but if what he does denies and denounces Him as Lord and as Christ, the anointed One whose anointing guides one's life, it can produce a condition of antichrist. Such a one is no atheist.

John wrote in 1 John 2:26, "These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you." Atheism does not seduce the church. Remember that John called such a one a liar in 1 John 2:22. Why? Because that individual is living a lie, professing that he is a Christian. Such a one may even preach and teach, otherwise he could not seduce others; yet he lives a lie by failing to allow the anointing of the Spirit to lead, guide, and operate in his life.

In 1 John 2:27 John countered the thought of being antichrist with this: "But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you." He was not saying that we do not need services where we are taught or the benefit of teachers, but he was saying that you do not have to blindly accept what they teach. In other words, you have the privilege of having the anointing or the unction within you to discern Truth when you hear it. This contradicts the thought of this being

some type of civil, political leader, because John was speaking of one who was out to seduce and deceive.

Let us look at another passage that lays all three dispensational falsities to rest. We read in 2 John 1:7, "For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist." Notice the wording John employed. He refuted all the positions millenarians hold. He began by saying, "For many deceivers. . . ." First, he let us know that it is in the plural when he said many. This debunks the idea of one great antichrist.

Second, notice he said they were deceivers, not atheists or a political or civil leader; but rather one who deals in spiritual commodities. Third, John penned this in A. D. 100, and he stated that "many deceivers are [present tense] entered into the world." This clearly shows that they are not something to come in the future. John experienced them in A. D. 100, and they have confronted the church ever since.

We have looked at every text where the word *antichrist* and *antichrists* are recorded except one. This last passage reveals what an antichrist really is. In 1 John 4:1-3 we read: "Beloved, believe not every spirit [we do not have to accept things at face value], but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets [Notice that these spirits do not just float around and inhabit the atmosphere; they have bodies. They dwell in people, and they are false prophets.] are [present tense] gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come [they were hearing it then]; and even now [A. D. 100] already is it in the world."

Notice the things that John

stressed, the truths that he reiterated here. Verse 3 says, "even now," in A. D. 100. It was not something out in some future time. Also, he tells us that antichrist is a spirit. What does this reveal to us? First, it reveals to us that a spirit is behind it. What type of spirit produces this? What causes a person to profess Christianity and yet live a lie, to deny Christ by the works in their lives, and to seduce and deceive others into thinking that living that way is acceptable and to join them? John called it the "spirit of antichrist."

Consider the words of Dr. Adam Clarke: "Every man who opposes the Spirit of the Gospel, and every teacher and writer who endeavors to lower the Gospel standard to the spirit and taste of the world is a genuine antichrist. No matter where or among whom he is found, everyone who opposes his reign in the world or in others or in himself is an antichrist." An antichrist is one who professes but does not possess, because they are not for Christ but against Him. The word *antichrist* means "against Christ."

When people read 1 John 4:3, it is very easy to assume they were denying the incarnation of Jesus Christ, because verses 2-3 read: "Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist." John was not talking about verbal confession. This Scripture does not say a thing about that. Again, verse 2 says, "Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth [confesseth what?] that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. . . ." What flesh? The flesh of that individual; in other words, he was saying that the way they live or the spirit they manifest confesses whether or not Jesus Christ is in their flesh.

Verse 3 says, "And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God." He did not say anything about

verbal confession. It was talking about what people's spirit confesses. That is the reason you can meet someone from across the sea and feel that you have known that person all your life. Your spirit bears witness with their spirit that he or she is a child of God, because that person has the same spirit. The spirit is in their flesh and their spirit is confessing that Jesus has come in the flesh; not in His flesh, but that person's flesh.

Just as true as that is, someone can sit around the congregation for thirty or forty years and make great professions, yet you can have an uneasy feeling every time you get around that individual. Why? Because that person's spirit is confessing something different from what your spirit is confessing. If one is professing and his spirit is not confessing, this is that spirit of antichrist.

Again, verse 3 is not speaking of the incarnation of Christ, but rather it is speaking as the Apostle Paul said in Galatians 4:19: "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you." Those people, in essence, had become antichrists. The Galatians had become converts, but Judaizers came in, and then they fell.

The Apostle Paul wrote to the Galatians in Galatians 5:4, "Ye are fallen from grace." They had lost their experience with Christ. Galatians 3:3 tells us they had begun in the Spirit but had been switched over to the flesh, yet they continued to profess. They had lost the inner

reality, so Paul was telling them in Galatians 4:19, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again." In other words, although they had already been born again once, they needed to be converted again. Paul said, "I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you."

The incarnation that is so vitally necessary is not the incarnation when Christ came forth of a virgin; but the incarnation of Christ's being formed in our flesh. This is what John was speaking of in 1 John 4:3 when he said, "And every spirit that confesseth not. . . ." He was not speaking of a verbal confession. They are not people who rise up and become atheistic and say they do not believe in the incarnation of Jesus Christ. Now, these people are seducers. They are of a religious nature. As Dr. Clarke said, they oppose His reign and oppose the Spirit of Christ. As *Thayer's* said, they come from the bosom of the church, because they could not become antichrist had they not once been a part of the people of God.

Again, 1 John 2:18 says, "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time." Where did they come from? Verse 19 tells us, "They went out from us, but they were not of us." In other words, they were not of us in the sense that they were not really in the position they ought to have held. Something occurred and they went out, not so much physically at first. They went out doctrin-

ally and their spirits changed, yet they continued to profess while their spirit no longer confessed. First John 4:3 says, ". . . and this is that spirit of antichrist."

When we consider the antichrist, contrary to what millenarians advocate, he is not one individual, because we have read repeatedly that John said there are many. It is not a political leader or an atheist, because we found that according to the Scriptures, they are seducers and they deceive. We found it is not something to come in the future, but those who, through their spirit, confess not Christ living in their lives, yet they profess. I trust that you can see that the little horn that millenarians advocate as the antichrist to come at a future time was nothing more than a prophetic fulfillment of the offices of the papacy that came in direct chronological succession to pagan Rome through the beast of papal Rome.

Jesus said in John 8:32, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." What does Truth make you free from? Truth makes you free from error, or falsity. Truth does not set you free from sin. The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin (see 1 John 1:9). Truth frees you from false conceptions, false doctrines, and erroneous thinking. I thank God for the precious truths of His Word, and I thank God for the freedom from falsity, confusion, and the error it brings.

Brother Earl R. Borders

MY PRAYER

TEACH ME, LORD, TO KEEP SWEET AND GENTLE IN ALL THE EVENTS OF LIFE, IN DISAPPOINTMENTS, IN THOUGHTLESSNESS OF OTHERS, IN THE INSINCERITY OF THOSE I TRUSTED, IN THE UNFAITHFULNESS OF THOSE ON WHOM I RELIED.

HELP ME TO PUT MYSELF ASIDE, TO THINK OF THE HAPPINESS OF OTHERS, TO HIDE MY LITTLE PAINS AND HEARTACHES, SO THAT I MAY BE THE ONLY ONE TO SUFFER FROM THEM.

TEACH ME TO PROFIT BY THE SUFFERING THAT COMES TO ME. HELP ME TO USE IT THAT IT MAY MELLOW ME, NOT HARDEN OR EMBITTER ME, THAT IT MAY MAKE ME BROAD IN MY FORGIVENESS, KINDLY, SYMPATHETIC, AND HELPFUL.