

"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)

We reserve the right to edit and/or decline any material for any reason. Not responsible for unsolicited articles or items.

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Guest Editorial

The Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks

A Time Line to the End of Old Israel as the People of God

Part 2 of 4

The Sixty-nine Weeks

Daniel 9:24 Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.

25 Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.

26 And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

27 And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

In our last article we began a study of this prophetic text and found that the seventy weeks began with the decree from Cyrus in B. C. 457. In this article we want to examine what occurred in the first segment of this time symbol, or the

sixty-nine weeks. In Daniel 9:25 we find three segments to this prophetic time symbol. It reads, "Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment [Cyrus issued the command in B. C. 457] to restore [or to return from exile] and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks [that is the first segment of the time figure], and threescore and two weeks [that is the second segment of the time figure; the third segment is in verse 27 when he speaks of the one week]: seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times."

We find that it is segmented into three portions. First, verse 25 speaks of the seven weeks (remember that seven days are in a week; seven times seven is forty-nine, which equals forty-nine years). This was the period of the first time segment in verse 25. This was the time from Daniel's day in B. C. 457 to Malachi's day in B. C. 408 when they built again in troublous times, as verse 25 declares. Were they in troublous times? Ezra 4:4 tells us, "Then the people of the land weakened the hands of the people of Judah, and troubled them in building." It was indeed a troublous time, so troublous that, according to Nehemiah's writings in Nehemiah, Chapter 4, they had to work with an implement of building in one hand and an implement of warfare in the other.

Nehemiah 4:16-18 reads: "And it came to pass from that time forth, that the half of my servants wrought in the work, and the other half of them held both the spears, the shields, and the bows, and the habergeons; and the rulers were behind all the house of Judah. They which builded on the wall, and they that bare burdens, with those that

[continued on page 27]

Revelation 22:1 And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

3 And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him:

4 And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.

5 And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

6 And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.

7 Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

8 And I John saw these things, and

heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things.

9 Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.

10 And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.

11 He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.

12 And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

13 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

14 Blessed are they that do [notice that he did not say, 'Blessed are they that hear. but 'Blessed are they that do'] his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

15 For without are dogs, and sorcer-

ers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

16 I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.

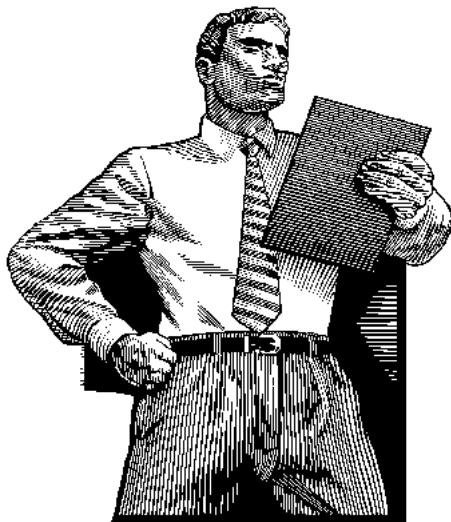
17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

18 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:

19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

20 He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

21 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.



Them That Are Without

Brother Roger L. Decker

"Behold, I Come Quickly"

In the Scripture reading we want to focus our attention on verse 15: "For without are dogs, and

sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." As we read Chapter 22, we need to realize that John was not talking

about eternity, but rather the evening-time church. In verse 7 of our Scripture text Jesus said, "Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the

prophecy of this book." We will not be keeping the prophecy of this Book in Heaven, but we will be in Heaven because we have kept the prophecy of this Book.

Four times in the Revelation, we read the words, "I come quickly." In Revelation 3:11, in the letter to the church at Philadelphia, that expression is used. Three of those four times are in Revelation, Chapter 22. We need to take notice of the words "I come quickly." To "come quickly" simply means "I come soon." Jesus said when He comes, His reward is with Him, "to give every man according as his work shall be."

Sometimes we do not realize how swiftly time is passing. We can become so earthbound that going to eternity is something that happens to everyone else but us. The Scripture speaks of His coming. We all are going to meet Him one of these days, and that day is rapidly approaching every one of us. From the time of our birth, we are dying creatures.

When verse 15 of our Scripture text speaks of those who are without, it lists those who have committed sins that will keep them out of not only Heaven but also the Kingdom of God. Those are not the only types of sins mentioned in the Bible, but in the Revelation we want to look at some of those that John said are without. Those without are out of the church; they are out of God's kingdom. They cannot go to Heaven if they die in that condition. According to Revelation 22:15, those who are without cannot see the inside of Heaven.

Again, our Scripture text states in verse 15, "For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." Whether a lie is a little one or a big one, the outcome is the same. He did not talk about the size of the lie. He just said "a lie." Getting into the real meaning of these words is necessary. If you do not get into the real meaning of words, they do not affect you as they should.

"Beware of Dogs"

John said without are dogs. He was not talking about literal dogs, or pet dogs, such as cocker spaniels or collies. Dogs do not have souls. Although many people have pet cemeteries and some people mourn when their pets die, animals do not have souls. There is no doggie heaven, and dogs are not in the church. No matter how much you might love your pet, there is no hope for it in the resurrection.

Sometimes it is amazing to me how a nation can abort and kill babies, but a person will get thrown in jail if he gets caught molesting, hurting, or killing a pet. Our nation has its values twisted when it can kill millions of unborn babies every year under the law of the land.

What are the *dogs* that John was talking about? If you have studied the Word a little, you know that the dog was symbolic of everything savage and unclean. The word *dog*, as it is used in the Bible, suggests contempt and disgust. The Jews called the Gentiles "dogs." Dogs were considered wicked. The Apostle Paul wrote in Philippians 3:1-2: "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe. Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision." Notice that he said to "Beware of dogs."

Literally speaking, today dogs are well-loved animals, but that was not so in the East in the days of Jesus. Dogs were called the "pariah dogs," and those dogs roamed loose in the streets. Sometimes dogs ran in packs. They hunted and often got into the garbage dumps. They snapped, snarled, and attempted to bite whomever they met. To be called a *dog* in the Bible was the lowest thing you could be called. Goliath came out before David and said in 1 Samuel 17:43, "Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves?"

Jesus said in Matthew 7:6, "Give not that which is holy unto the

dogs." A dog stood for everything that was shamelessly unclean. The Psalmist wrote in Psalm 22:16, "For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet."

Another meaning for the word *dog* is "an immoral person." The word *dog*, as it is used in the Bible, also means "a male prostitute." Deuteronomy 23:18 says, "Thou shalt not bring the hire of a whore, or the price of a dog, into the house of the LORD thy God for any vow: for even both these are abomination unto the LORD thy God." They were considered shameless and unbelieving.

The word *dog* was also used to refer to one who had known the way of the Lord and turned away from serving Him, as a dog turns to its own vomit again. Second Peter 2:20-22 reads: "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." Proverbs 26:11, "As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly."

Tongues Full of Flattery and Deceit

The word *dog* was not the only word that the Apostle John used in verse 15 of our Scripture text. The next word that he used was *sorcerers*. John was using a word that deals with the spirit of divination. The word is used in reference to casting a spell, magic, or witchcraft. It also means "a charmer." There are many charmers around who can

seemingly cast people into a spell. They do not advertise or put a sign in front of their homes, but they are just as deadly, spiritually speaking, as if they advertised palm reading. They have slippery tongues, and they are full of deceit. They use flattery to charm people and draw them away.

Those charmers often carry their Bibles, take notes as the messages go forth, and attend the church services faithfully. Paul wrote in Romans 16:18, "For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." What was he talking about when he said they serve their own belly? He was speaking of their serving their own appetites, passions, and desires. Paul said they serve not our Lord Jesus Christ. They profess Christianity, but they do not follow Christ in all things. Instead, they serve their own lusts, their own desires, and their own private interests.

Often people such as those that Paul was writing about in the Roman letter are authors of division. As charmers, they "by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." How are those people able to charm others? How are those sorcerers able to gain control and divide a congregation? The Apostle Paul let us know that they accomplish this "by good words and fair speeches." In other words, they do it by using good words and have the appearance of being sincere in having a regard for the Truth.

Paul warned the brethren at Colosse to be on their guard against influences that would beguile them with enticing words. His admonition in Colossians 2:4 was this: "And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words." Church, you must be careful of those who try to charm you with enticing words. They are more active and have more of an audience than palm readers will ever have. They deceive people with

subtle reasoning. They use good words to pretend to love the Truth, and they claim it is always for the Truth's sake that they do what they do. They do not go to people with bad words. If they were to do that, good people would not pay any attention to them, so they use good words and fair speeches.

Deceitful Works Under the Cloak of Sincerity

Those people put on an appearance of great sincerity. They act as if they are always concerned for the work of God. They could not get anywhere if they did not act really concerned, because no one would listen to them. They have good church attendance because they know that people would not listen to someone who attends only once a month. People who are sloppy in their appearance and their church attendance could not affect anyone. Those charmers always appear to be burdened to pray for someone, and they put on the appearance of great sincerity concerning humility.

Paul said they use good words and fair speeches to deceive the hearts of the simple. How do they do that? They often give a little extra attention to the weak and struggling souls in the congregation: "Oh, let me help you, brother. Do you need some money? Do you have enough money to eat? Can I help you in any way? God bless your heart. Let me have prayer for you." To get a following, they act very concerned. Many people think, "Oh, they are so good and so kind."

You should put the Word of God on them and see how kind they are. If you talk about the Scriptures, you will see that they are not as nice and gentle as they appear to be. How can you try the spirits? You must try them by the Word of God. There are two witnesses in the Word of God: the Spirit and the Word. There are two vicars to the Church of God. You are not even saved if you do not possess and are not under the control of *both* the Word and the

Spirit.

What else do they do to beguile the weak and struggling souls? They start inviting them to their social activities. They say, "Let's go out and get something to eat." Some think, "Oh, look who is paying attention to me. These people have been coming to this church for twenty-five or thirty years, and they are taking notice of me." Then they say, "Sure, I would love to go out to eat with you," all the while thinking, "Look at who I am going out to eat with! They invited *me* out for pizza." Remember, people are not moved by just anyone.

Those people invite others to their activities, and they will brag on them a little: "You seem to be doing well. You really got victory over that, didn't you? You might be struggling a little, but we will have prayer about that. I want you to know I am always there if you need me." At the same time, they are turning them, little by little, away from the leadership in the congregation. However, they never come out and say that they are against the pastor. They just say subtle things, such as, "Yes, I wish the pastor would preach on this more often, but he gets on that thing and hobbies it. Have you ever heard him hobby that? I don't know who he is preaching at. I will tell you, I really love him. He can preach." They throw the latter part in for a while, but little by little, they try to erode his influence.

The Apostle John was dealing with more than just a spirit of divination, palm readers, and witchcraft. He was dealing with people who are not in the kingdom, but who profess to be saints. You may say, "Oh, you mean as nice as they are?" Yes, they are without. John went on to say that they "deceive the hearts of the simple." Who was he speaking of? He was speaking of those who are unsuspecting. They do not even have a clue concerning what is happening to them.

Church, no group of people could walk out of any congregation

anywhere together unless some deceitful works were going on first, some meetings were held, and some were sowing discord. All it takes to start trouble is for someone who holds a position to get crosswise and not get it straightened out, and you will usually find that person at the head of the pack. Who did Moses have trouble with? Aaron. While Moses was in the mountain, the people were playing. If you study the Bible, you will see who some of the brethren had problems with. It has not changed one iota. Often someone will bring a false charge against the pastor and say, "He is not feeding my soul." Well, you cannot feed the soul of a dead man until he is first resurrected.

We are in the evening time, and many people are walking against light today, walking against what they know, yet they continue to go their own way. When people continue to go against what they know is right, they will get a wrong spirit. The Bible lets us know in the Thessalonian letter that they will believe a lie and be damned. Why? This happens because they love not the Truth. It does not say that they did not hear it.

Whoremongers and Murderers

Next, John mentioned whoremongers in verse 15 of our Scripture text. Ephesians 5:5 reads, "For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God." The word *whoremonger* means "fornicator, or one who is immoral and perverted." Today our world is geared and governed with sexual spirits. Have you ever seen so many sexual spirits in our government officials? Many people get in trouble because they have disobeyed the Lord. You should never put yourself in a compromising situation.

Young person, you should not sit in a parked car or be alone in a house or an apartment with some-

one of the opposite sex. Doing that will put you in a compromising situation and get you in a place where it will be difficult to say no. You are not made of stone. You have feelings and desires. No matter how spiritual you are, you still have a body to keep under. Keeping the flesh under when you are obeying the Word of God is much easier. You ought to live a clean life so that when you stand before a preacher, you do not have to stand there filled with condemnation.

Sometimes young people get in trouble, and then they make up a false story to tell their parents. That falls under the last one that John mentioned when he said "whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." They know that if they tell the truth, they will get in trouble. Well, dear one, you would be much better off getting in trouble with your parents than with God.

John also said that murderers are without. First John 3:15 says, "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." Now, a person may be on death row and may even be put to death for murder, but if he asks God for forgiveness and gets old-time salvation, then he is no longer a murderer in the eyes of God. You are not confused when it comes to where unconverted murderers are going to go in eternity. However, John was dealing with spiritual things.

According to 1 John 3:15, murderers can even include hating people and having wrong attitudes against people. Some are guilty of that, yet they still profess to be saints of God. You cannot hate others and still be a child of God. Oh, you may despise their ways and the things they do, but you have to remember that they have souls. One soul is worth more than this whole world. There is not even the slightest chance that if one goes to the Judgment having hatred in his heart that he will have eternal life. Too often people's hatred has been

masked over with good works. It would become confusing if one did not know the truth. Jesus said in Matthew 5:43-44: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." You can see that the new covenant is quite different from the old.

Lovers of Self and Loving and Making a Lie

Another word John used in verse 15 of our Scripture text was *idolater*. The word as it appears simply means "to worship an idol." An *idolater* is one who worships an idol, but there is no greater idol than self. Second Timothy 3:1-2 states: "This know also, 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." What do they love first? They love their own selves. That is the reason some people struggle to serve God. They love themselves more than they love God, more than their husband or wife, more than their children, and more than anything else. The very first sin that John mentioned was loving self. Self is the greatest idol that people have to contend with: what I think and how I feel it should be. We are not going to be judged by our own thoughts and feelings, but by "Thus saith the Lord."

The last thing that John mentioned was "whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." This deals with people who not only lie, but who love to lie. They love to see what they can get by with. It becomes a habit with them, and they get so good at it that they can look one right straight in the eyes and tell a big lie. Some young people can look their parents straight in the eyes and lie. Well, your parent may never discern the truth, but rest

assured, there is One who is called Truth, and He knows all things.

Children can sometimes convince their parents that everyone else is wrong. Some can sound very convincing. Sometimes parents get more upset than the children do with each other. Some parents are ready to go head to head while the children are back out playing with each other. Children get over things right away, while sometimes parents carry resentment.

If you are professing to be saved but you are unsaved, you are living a lie. Some people might not be able to discern the difference, but God knows. Some liars are so good at it that they almost make you feel as if you are the one who is guilty if you accuse them.

Lying is a terrible sin. It is not just speaking something that is untrue; it is speaking that which you *know* is untrue. There might have been a time when you have spoken something that you found out later was not right. However, at

the time that you spoke it, you thought it was right. That is not lying. If that should happen, you ought to go back and straighten it out. Lying is when you speak something that you *know* is not true. Proverbs 19:5 says, "A false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall not escape." Proverbs 19:9 reads, "A false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall perish."

Psalm 101:6-7 states: "Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me: he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me. He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house: he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight." It will keep you out of not only Heaven but also the Kingdom of God. Lying will take you into a lost eternity, whether you call them little lies, big lies, or made-up stories.

John listed some of these sins in Revelation 21:7-8: "He that overcometh shall inherit all things;

and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." The second death is eternal separation from God.

If you are guilty of any of the sins that John mentioned, you need to mind the Lord. God is not going to cast you away if you have been struggling. He is a Father, and He wants to help you. His Holy Spirit will draw you, and He will help you. He knows what you need more than you know yourself. In the light of the message, if the Holy Spirit of God has shown you anything in your life that should not be there, then you need to go to Jesus Christ and ask for forgiveness, straighten it out, and God will help you.

(Cassette C-4862E)

Radio Log



LOCATION	STATION	DAY	TIME
Newark, Ohio	WCLT-AM 1430	Sunday	8:15 a.m.-9:00 a.m.
Anderson, Indiana	WQME-FM 98.7	Sunday	8:00 a.m.-8:30 a.m.
Gaffney, South Carolina	WAGI-FM 105.3	Monday	8:30 p.m.-10:00 p.m.

Tune in to the radio station nearest you to hear an inspiring message from the Word of God. If you enjoy the broadcast, let us hear from you!

Psalm 119:1 Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD.

2 Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart.

3 They also do no iniquity: they walk in his ways.

4 Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently.

5 O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!

6 Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments.

7 I will praise thee with uprightness of heart, when I shall have learned thy righteous judgments.

8 I will keep thy statutes: O forsake me not utterly.

9 Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.

10 With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments.

11 Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.

12 Blessed art thou, O LORD: teach me thy statutes.

13 With my lips have I declared all the judgments of thy mouth.

14 I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as much as in all riches.

15 I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways.

16 I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word.

17 Deal bountifully with thy servant, that I may live, and keep thy word.

18 Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.

19 I am a stranger in the earth: hide not thy commandments from me.

20 My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times.

21 Thou hast rebuked the proud

that are cursed, which do err from thy commandments.

22 Remove from me reproach and contempt; for I have kept thy testimonies.

23 Princes also did sit and speak against me: but thy servant did meditate in thy statutes.

24 Thy testimonies also are my delight and my counsellors.

25 My soul cleaveth unto the dust: quicken thou me according to thy word.

26 I have declared my ways, and thou heardest me: teach me thy statutes.

27 Make me to understand the way of thy precepts: so shall I talk of thy wondrous works.

28 My soul melteth for heaviness: strengthen thou me according unto thy word.

29 Remove from me the way of lying: and grant me thy law graciously.

30 I have chosen the way of truth: thy judgments have I laid before me.

31 I have stuck unto thy testimonies: O LORD, put me not to shame.

32 I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart.

33 Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end.

34 Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart.

35 Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight.

36 Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.

37 Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way.

38 Stablish thy word unto thy servant, who is devoted to thy fear.

39 Turn away my reproach which I fear: for thy judgments are good.

40 Behold, I have longed after thy precepts: quicken me in thy righteousness.

41 Let thy mercies come also unto me, O LORD, even thy salvation, according to thy word.

42 So shall I have wherewith to answer him that reproacheth me: for I trust in thy word.

43 And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth; for I have hoped in thy judgments.

44 So shall I keep thy law continually for ever and ever.

45 And I will walk at liberty: for I seek thy precepts.

46 I will speak of thy testimonies also before kings, and will not be ashamed.

47 And I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved.

48 My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments, which I have loved; and I will meditate in thy statutes.

49 Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.

50 This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me.

51 The proud have had me greatly in derision: yet have I not declined from thy law.

52 I remembered thy judgments of old, O LORD; and have comforted myself.

53 Horror hath taken hold upon me because of the wicked that forsake thy law.

54 Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.

55 I have remembered thy name, O LORD, in the night, and have kept thy law.

56 This I had, because I kept thy precepts.

57 Thou art my portion, O LORD: I have said that I would keep thy words.

58 I entreated thy favour with my whole heart: be merciful unto me according to thy word.

59 I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.

LIVING BY DIVINE PRINCIPLES



Brother E. David Stegmeier

Keep God's Precepts Diligently

It is very important that we live and build our lives according to the divine principles contained in the Word of God. We are living in a day when many people are violating and laying aside beautiful principles that Jesus taught in His Word. Psalm 119 is the longest chapter in the Bible. It is a composition in which the author, in almost every verse of the entire chapter, magnified the Word of God. He used

many words in that long chapter to describe the Word. He spoke of God's law, His testimony, His precepts, His statutes, His commandments, His judgment, and His Word.

In the Old Testament tabernacle there was a brass laver, which was a large bowl on top of a pedestal where the priests washed themselves when they entered the tabernacle. It is a type of the Word. The brass laver washed the outward man; however, the Word of God

washes the moral filth from one's life. It can clean up your thoughts, your actions, and your deeds and make you morally and spiritually clean.

Verses 1-4 of our Scripture text read: "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD. Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart. They also do no iniquity: they walk in his ways. Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently." Those

verses are so profound and so weighty, and they afford so much good spiritual meat.

Verse 5 states, "O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!" That is my prayer. I sometimes put my hand on a verse in the Word of God and say, "O God, this is my desire. This is what I want in my life more than anything else." We need to rehearse the Word of God and meditate on it. I cannot follow you around and tell you how to make each decision or tell you which way to go, what to say, or what to do; however, I can teach you divine principles that you can implement in your everyday life. There is nothing that I want more in my life than to please God; that means everything to me. Nothing is more worthwhile than living to please God.

Verses 6-8 of our Scripture lesson read: "Then shall I not be ashamed, [Saint of God, you do not have to be ashamed. As the saying goes, you might not have two nickels to rub together, but if you are living right morally, you do not have to be ashamed. The Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 1:16, 'For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation.'] when I have respect unto all thy commandments. I will praise thee with uprightness of heart, when I shall have learned thy righteous judgments. I will keep thy statutes: O forsake me not utterly." God is in control of all things. He will never forsake you, but you must be very careful to obey Him. He will be with you in every problem of life. You do not have to go alone.

Seek His Counsel

Our Scripture text states in verse 9, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word." If you will obey the Word, you will be cleansed from all sin, wrong

thoughts, offensive words, and ungodly actions.

Verses 10-16 continue: "With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments. Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee. Blessed art thou, O LORD: teach me thy statutes. With my lips have I declared all the judgments of thy mouth. I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as much as in all riches. [Every word is so important. I would rather learn the beautiful truths from God's Word than to be rewarded with a million dollars.] I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways. I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word." Today many people are violating and laying aside the principles of God. Some may think they are old-fashioned; nevertheless, God's Word does not change.

Verses 17-35 of our Scripture text read: "Deal bountifully with thy servant, that I may live, and keep thy word. Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law. [Is that your prayer?] I am a stranger in the earth: hide not thy commandments from me. [Sometimes I feel as if I am a stranger. This world is not our home; we are just traveling through.] My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times. Thou hast rebuked the proud that are cursed, which do err from thy commandments. Remove from me reproach and contempt; for I have kept thy testimonies. Princes also did sit and speak against me: but thy servant did meditate in thy statutes. Thy testimonies also are my delight and my counsellors [or advisors]. . . ." Do you want to know what to do? Seek the counsel of God's eternal Word.

"I have chosen the way of truth [I can say that very confidently] . . . Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy

statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end [many start in this race and embrace these wonderful truths, but they lay them aside]. Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart [almost every verse magnifies the importance of God's Word]. Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight."

I am thrilled every time I have the privilege of opening the Book. I would rather read the Bible and meditate on it than anything else in this world. It is like gold, and it has hidden treasures. If we were to tell the community that one million dollars was hidden at a certain location, people would flock there to try to find it; yet we are uncovering marvelous jewels and precious diamonds each time we open the Word. Few want the diamonds with which the saints of God adorn themselves. Truths make people beautiful, wholesome, godly, and upright.

Delay Not to Keep God's Commandments

We read in verses 35-36, 47, and 59 of our Scripture text: "Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight. Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness. . . . And I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved. . . . I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies."

Friend, you need to think about the way you are living, the way you are treating your husband or your wife, your employer or your employees, and your pastor. All those relationships are covered in the Word of God. A preacher has no power behind the pulpit unless he is living right and is clear and clean with his wife, his children, his congregation, and his community. You

have to live right. How can you live right? You must take heed to God's Word.

David said, in essence, "I thought on my ways and turned my feet unto Thy testimonies." My wife and my children watch me, and I have to be clear with them. If you want your children to follow in your footsteps, then you must not bend the rules. You must live by divine principles, father. My children have never said, "Dad, you are a hypocrite." Fathers, if you want your children to live right, you must follow God's rules. You cannot build a godly life, a marriage, or a spiritual congregation unless you follow the rules and build according to divine principles.

Verse 60 says, "I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments." A principle that I was always taught in my growing up years was that if one had a restitution to make, he should make it right away. If you need to ask forgiveness for something, you ought to do it now. If something is amiss in your life, you should not wait until tomorrow to straighten it out. If you have a problem, maybe between you and your spouse, you should take care of it now. The Bible instructs you not to let the sun go down upon your wrath. In other words, take care of it right away. You need to get together and communicate and make up.

When I counsel with people, I tell them how important communication is. There is no power in my living whatsoever unless I treat my wife right. When I stand before a classroom of students, I want my conscience to be clear. When I stand before my congregation, I want to be clear with God and clear with each of them. These are divine principles. I have heard ministers say, "We did wrong," yet they let the days go on and on without setting things straight. That is against di-

vine principles. Proverbs 27:1 states, "Boast not thyself of to morrow." You do not know whether you are going to live another day. If you are unsaved, you should get saved now. That is a biblical principle.

Meditate on God's Word Throughout the Day

Verse 63 of our Scripture text says, "I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts." First Corinthians 15:33 tells us, "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners." In other words, you need to be careful of the people with whom you keep company. If you want to be a good, strong spiritual person, then you should keep company with other strong, spiritual individuals.

Often people seek counsel where they can get the counsel they want to hear. They do not seek wise counsel. The Bible says to let the older women teach the younger. That is a principle in the Bible. Sad to say, not many call upon stalwart saints of God who have been serving God faithfully for many years and who love their husbands and their children.

Psalms 119:63-64 states: "I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts. The earth, O LORD, is full of thy mercy: teach me thy statutes." Verse 86 reads, "All thy commandments are faithful." If you live according to the Word of God, it will turn out just that way.

Verse 97 states, "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day." When you get on an airplane, a subway, or a bus and look to see what people are reading, it is usually an indication of what kinds of persons they are. I have had many opportunities to speak to souls on an airplane or a bus because I was reading the Bible. I do not read the

Word so people will say, "Oh, how religious!" I read it because I desire to read it. Oh, what wonderful opportunities I have had to speak to souls!

If you are having problems with your thought life, you should read the Word of God. You should spend much time in God's Word if you are having spiritual problems. Psalm 119:97-100 reads: "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day. Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts."

Verse 105 says, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." That Scripture is the first one that I can remember learning by heart. Verses 111-112 read: "Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever: for they are the rejoicing of my heart. [Church of God, what a heritage we have in knowing the Truth! Oh, how we ought to appreciate the Truth!] I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes alway, even unto the end."

Verses 126-127 state: "It is time for thee, LORD, to work: for they have made void thy law. Therefore I love thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold." In other words, God's will, or His way, should be first and foremost in your life. That is another divine principle.

Verses 128-130, and 133 read: "Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way. Thy testimonies are wonderful: therefore doth my soul keep them. The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple. . . . Order my steps in thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me." I do not want the least bit of sin, rebellion, or hypoc-

risiness in my life.

Verse 142 states, "Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and thy law is the truth." We read in verse 148, "Mine eyes prevent the night watches, that I might meditate in thy word." Right before I go to bed, I like to pick up the Word or a good religious periodical and read a portion so that it can be fresh in my mind. Often I dream of it and wake up thinking about it.

Verse 162 says, "I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil." Then, in verse 174 we read, "I have longed for thy salvation, O LORD; and thy law is my delight." The entire chapter of Psalm 119 is absolutely profound.

In John 3:1-2 John wrote: "There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God." In Jesus' early ministry, the first call that He entered into was the vocation of a teacher. He was the most profound and the greatest of all teachers; yet He was more than a teacher: He was the Messiah. I asked a Jewish girl once, "What is your impression of Jesus?" She said, "Well, He was a good man and a good teacher." He was much more than that. He had divine inspiration and divine authority.

Choose the Harder Right Instead of the Easier Wrong

With God's help we want to consider some divine principles that Jesus implemented and taught in His ministry. This was the prayer of one man once: "Make me to choose the harder right instead of the easier wrong, and let me never be content with a half-truth when the whole truth can be known." I want to know the whole Truth, do you? Isaiah wrote in Isaiah 8:20, "To the law and to the testimony: if they

speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Everything that is taught and practiced should be according to the Word of God.

First John 4:1 states, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." Many false prophets arise and go out from congregations of the Church of God. I have seen that happen. We read in 1 John 2:18-19: "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. They went out *from* us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us." May God help us to weigh everything we hear and see, and to weigh the choices we make after we have sought the counsel of God.

Jesus said in His Word that we should allow the principle of love to govern everything we do. Love, or charity, never fails. Jesus said in Matthew 5:43-44: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you."

We should pray for our enemies, that they might be reconciled to God and to us. We do not have to love what an enemy does, but we must love his never-dying soul. I do not want to see anyone lost. Charity never fails. It is not always very comfortable for me, but I am hoping that someday, before it is too late, they will be reconciled to God and to me.

The Bible tells us in Romans 13:10, "Love worketh no ill to his

neighbour." If you are governing your life according to the principle of love, you are not going to do anything to hurt, to discourage, or to cause a brother or a sister any harm. The principle of love is one principle that Jesus set forth in His eternal Word. You might have heard this little poem:

*He drew a circle that shut me out,
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout,
But love, when I had the wit to win,
We drew a circle and shut him in.*

I remember once when I was a boy when we took a stand for Truth. I was in a certain situation, and another minister from a sectarian church saw me in a group and said, "Oh, you are one of those heretics." You may be called names or be treated wrong by an enemy, but draw a circle of love and include that one, and you may win that person for God. I have seen that happen. Love never fails.

Weigh Your Thoughts and Stand Firmly for What Is Right

Another divine principle is that you ought to weigh your thoughts and your meditations according to the Word of God. If you want to maintain a spotless and righteous life, you have to be careful of what you are meditating on. An action is never committed but what it first begins in the mind. The following criteria in Philippians 4:8 is so good. Paul said, "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

Did Jesus teach that? Oh, yes. In Matthew 5:27-28 Jesus said: "Ye have heard that it was said by them

of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." I have often instructed young people, "When a wrong thought comes to the mind, you should ask God to help you put it out right then." When I was in the military service, there was so much evil talk and evil singing—all kinds of evil. One of my very favorite Scriptures was Psalm 19:14: "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer."

In Matthew 6:1-4 Jesus taught against being hypocritical. He said in verse 1, "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them." He went on to speak about giving and praying. Dear one, you need to be sincere, honest, and truthful in everything you do. Hypocrisy is running rampant today. Your children know whether you are a hypocrite.

What is another divine principle? You should not be a fence-straddler. You ought to take a firm stand for what is right. If you take a firm stand, you will find that it is easier as you go. I have always tried, by the grace of God, to take a firm stand, not against individuals, but against wrong principles and practices. Concerning taking a firm stand, Jesus said in Luke 14:26, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." You have to take a square stand with your family and against everything that is wrong. I have found that if one does that initially, it is much better along the way. You need to tell your family right in the very beginning how you stand. You need to take a firm stand in your community for

what is right.

Put God First and Follow Divine Principles

Another divine principle is that you should put God first, even before your family. You should make no plans and take no action before first seeking the Word of God. You should never move away from a spiritual congregation for a job, for your education, or for any other reason. I have seen young people leave good, spiritual congregations, and they have gone down. You may say, "I can only get the degree that I want over there." Then you ought to change your degree. You could get that degree and lose your soul. You should put God first in your marriage and in your job. These are divine principles. Jesus said in Matthew 6:33, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God."

Parent, what kinds of principles are you teaching your children? How about when it comes to obeying the law? How do you treat a police officer when he stops you? Deuteronomy 6:4-7 says: "Hear, O Israel [Church of God, we are the New Testament Israel, or New Testament Jews; we are the people of God]: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, [This is another divine principle. You cannot have divided allegiance. God wants your whole heart; He will not take just a part. He wants to sit on the throne of your heart.] and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

"And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." You should talk to your children about sound principles that

will guide them.

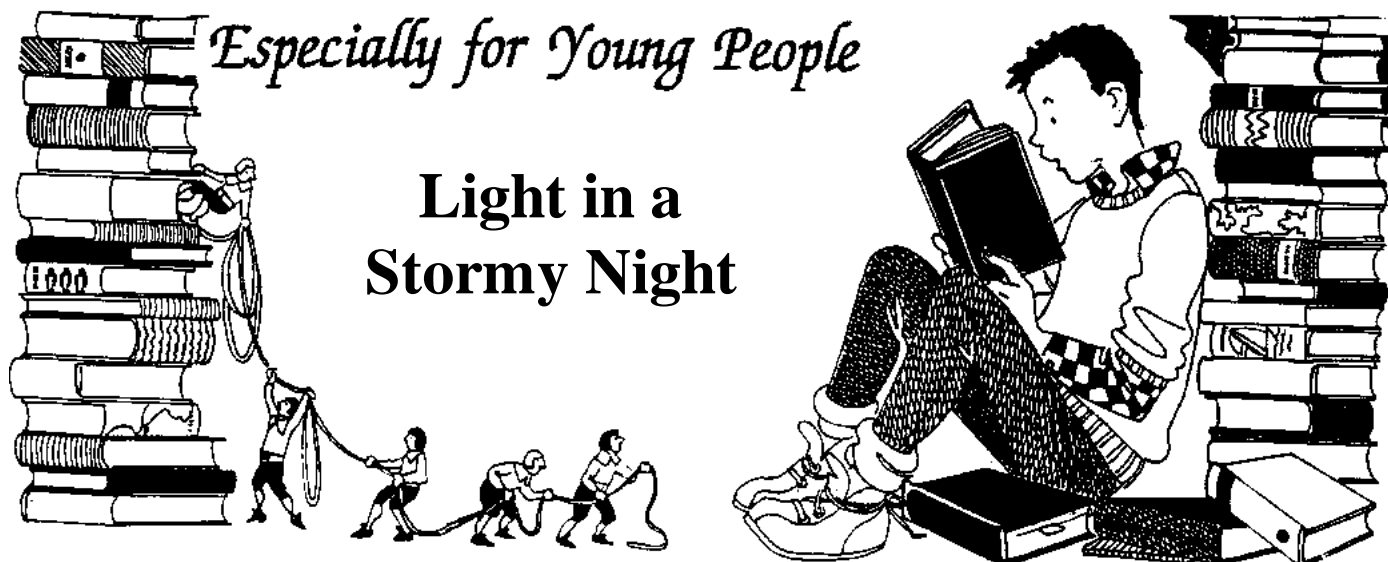
Parent, you should not bend the rules. You must allow the Word of God to guide your life. You do not have to err or be misled. You can walk with God in confidence. You do not have to go into confusion and then look back later with regrets and say, "I wish I would have made a different choice and done things a little differently." God can lead and guide you unerringly if you will listen and obey Him.

When I was in the military service, they taught us how to go through territory that had land mines. We had to go very cautiously, because we wanted to stay alive. I have often likened the Christian life to that. There are many things out there that could destroy us, spiritually speaking, so we have to go very cautiously. We must have our eyes wide open. We cannot sleep, and we cannot bend or violate divine principles, not even a little. If you violate or bend godly principles a little, the next time you might bend them a little more, and the next time, a little more. I would rather tighten up, because I believe that in these last days we are going to need all the insight, the wisdom, and the guidance that we can possibly get.

The Book of Proverbs is full of wisdom and insight. How did Solomon get wisdom? He got it by asking God for it. Nevertheless, when he got older, he became careless. I do not want to get careless as I get older. I want to be more diligent, more prayerful, more watchful, and more spiritual, do you? The devil just loves to trip people up.

By what principles are you living? Are you careful or are you bending the rules a little here and there? If you want to make Heaven your home, you must live according to the Book. You cannot bend the rules.

(Cassette C-4786E)



With the name of Adoniram Judson, the great missionary among the Burmese, is associated one of the most remarkable stories of the ways of God's choosing and fitting instruments for His service and praise.

A student of Brown University, New England, clever, cultured, vivacious but skeptical, he lived a constant round of questionable pleasure, untroubled by thoughts of the future. Joining a theatrical company of New York, on a certain occasion, Judson was journeying in New England. On a dark, stormy night, while the wind sighed and moaned among the pine clad hills, he lost his bearing and finally found his way to a roadside tavern. Hearing shouting, the landlord went to the door, and there saw the benighted traveler at the gate alighting from his horse. Giving the horse to a boy to be cared for, Judson was taken to the house and, his wet wraps removed, he sat down before a roaring fire in the old tavern.

Of slender build, boyish appearance, with strength of character, neatly but not lavishly dressed, the landlord was curious to know who the youth was, to be out so far from home on such a night. He apologized for his inquisitiveness, and then asked many questions, to which Judson gave sparing answers and seemed oblivious to much that

was going on. After a hearty supper, he became more communicative, gave his name and place of abode, stating that he was with a theatrical company. The landlord, who was of old Puritan stock, lost no time in stoutly condemning such organizations as calculated to destroy the morals and character of the younger generation. This had little effect upon Judson, for he was an avowed skeptic.

Feigning sleep, but in reality anxious to get rid of his unwelcome interrogator, whose conversation was not to his liking, he asked to be shown to his room. Following the light of a pine knot, he was taken into a dingy apartment, for which the landlord apologized, stating that the guest chamber, which adjoined, was occupied by a young man who was very ill. After arranging everything as comfortable as possible, he bade his guest goodnight and left, saying that he had to watch by the bedside of the sick man all night.

Young Judson could not sleep, but lay in the bed thinking. The wind howled without and shingles on the roof rattled, and constantly a groan would come from the sick room. The rooms were only separated by a thin partition and the flickering light shone through the cracks, making thin streaks of light on his own bed. Toward morning the groans increased, interspersed

by a loud curse or a bloodcurdling yell, mingling with the sobbing of the wind.

The restless visitor was tormented by these sounds, which seemed to find an answer in his own heart cries. As the night wore away and morning dawned, the groans became more feeble, then suddenly ceased, and the light went out. The tired traveler now tried to sleep, but only fell into a fitful slumber for a few moments. At breakfast he inquired of the landlord for the sick man. "Dead," he said, "and may I never see such another deathbed, for without faith in God and hope in Christ, he has gone to meet his doom." Judson did not care for such reflections and tried to stop the old man by asking, "Who was he, and where did he come from?"

"Where he came from I cannot tell," replied the landlord, "but he stumbled in here one day in almost a delirious condition and could not answer questions. I put him to bed, and he got worse. I looked in his pockets and found a letter addressed to William George Saunders, Brown University."

Judson dropped his knife and fork on his plate, and his hands went to his sides. "What!" he cried. "George Saunders, my old school-mate? He graduated with me last year!"

"I suppose it must be the same," replied the landlord, "for the letter was dated more than a year ago, and I judged it to be from his mother. I wrote her at once and expect her here soon." Adoniram Judson arose greatly upset and said, "Show me the room immediately. I wish to see for myself if it is my old time friend." The landlord led the way to the room, pulled back the sheet, and disclosed the distorted features of what once had been a fair youth, budding into manhood.

"Poor, poor George," said Judson, looking on the emaciated form of his old college chum. "Who would have thought, when you graduated a year ago, the pride of your class, that you would now be lying, far from home, with no one to soothe your dying hour? Sad to think such a star of promise has gone out in darkness. Nothing accomplished in this life. And the next—alas, alas, we both denied a future existence. Your past was an opening rosebud, your present a

withered flower, your future—well, God knows. Shall I ever be lying thus?"

Turning to the old man, he enquired if he had arranged for the funeral. "Nothing definite," was his reply, adding that he wished the relatives to come first. Judson quickly took a roll of bills from his pocket saying, "Bury him decently and keep the rest for your trouble. With his memory I also bury my former life of sin. From this day I will please God, strive for something nobler than either of us sought before." Turning away, he ordered his horse, offered his hand to the old man, who took it firmly while tears ran down his furrowed cheeks, for the man who had come as an infidel rode away truly repentant and seeking light.

Has God ever refused a contrite cry? The Psalmist said, "A broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise" (Psalm 51:17). The truth of this Judson proved. The

incident became the turning point in the young collegian's life, and the erstwhile infidel became a sincere believer, carrying the Gospel, which had so significantly proven itself to be, in his case, the power of God unto salvation, to foreign lands. Truly, it could be said of Judson, as was said by the Lord of Saul of Tarsus, "He is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings" (Acts 9:15).

Friend, whoever you may be, skeptical or deeply devout, the Savior who became Judson's Deliverer is patiently waiting and pleading, saying, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). He also said, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37). Will you not turn today and say with one of old, "Lord, I believe"?

J. F. Nichols

A Way to Reach Them

*The heathen world is calling,
They call for Truth and light;
Too long they've lived in darkness
And suffered in their plight.*

*The masses are awaking,
New millions now can read;
Oh, who will go and reach them
And give them what they need?*

*There is a way to reach them,
Reach all in this space age;
A cheap and speedy method—
It's through the printed page.*

Selected





2 Chronicles 34:1 Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem one and thirty years.

2 And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the ways of David his father, and declined neither to the right hand, nor to the left.

3 For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet young, he began to seek after the God of David his father: and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images.

4 And they brake down the altars of Baalim in his presence; and the images, that were on high above them, he cut down; and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images, he brake in pieces, and made dust of them, and strowed it upon the graves of them that had sacrificed unto them.

5 And he burnt the bones of the priests upon their altars, and cleansed Judah and Jerusalem.

6 And so did he in the cities of Manasseh, and Ephraim, and Simeon, even unto Naphtali, with their mattocks round about.

7 And when he had broken down the altars and the groves, and had beaten the graven images into powder, and cut down all the idols throughout all the land of Israel, he returned to Jerusalem.

DOING THE RIGHT THING AT THE RIGHT TIME

Brother Esau Brooks

Josiah Sought After the God of David His Father

Our Scripture lesson tells us in verse 1 that "Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign." You cannot be too young to serve God. The word *reign* should be understood in a twofold sense. Josiah reigned as a monarch in Jerusalem and in his life. There is such a thing as reigning in this life. You can reign in your life to where nothing evil can have control over you. You do not have to smoke marijuana, drift

away on cocaine, or lose your senses with ecstasy. You can reign over these vices in this life.

Often in the past we used to see billboards on the highways that read, "Chew Mail Pouch Tobacco." I thank God that I do not have to chew or smoke tobacco or dip snuff. Once we passed by a billboard that pictured a woman with a long cigarette, and in bold letters above her head, it read, "I smoke for taste." I said, "I have taste, and I don't have to smoke." The world and the devil have really gotten things messed

up. They have sent the message to people that they have to smoke to have taste, but they do not have to. Friend, you do not have to wait until sin has partially destroyed you before you serve God.

Verse 2 of our Scripture lesson tells us that Josiah "did that which was right." Remember that he was only eight years old. You may ask, "What could he have known about doing what was right?" If you were to study his background, you would be convinced that he must have known what the Scripture was

saying about him. He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord. That is the best place to do what is right.

The Scripture says that he walked in the ways of David his father. David had been dead for years, so about all Josiah knew about David was what he had heard or read. Nevertheless, Josiah had in his heart what David had in his. He started walking as David had walked. It strikes me as odd that people today do not seem to remember those who have walked before them in perfectness after the dear one has passed. They act like the devil and call it right. Josiah walked in the ways of David. We could not say that today, because some would say, "You are worshipping man." Josiah did not care what others said. He walked in the ways of David his father and declined neither to the right hand nor to the left.

There was nothing vacillating (or wavering) about the boy at eight years old. You may say, "Well, it stands to reason that Josiah would have done that, because children often do what they see others do." I repeat, David was dead. Josiah's father and grandfather did wickedly. They did not do as David had.

Thank God, you do not have to follow the multitude to do evil. You do not have to join the crowd that is following wickedness and sin. You do not even have to follow one in the congregation who is disgruntled and carrying a chip on his shoulder, so to speak. Like Josiah, you can do that which is right in the sight of God.

There might have been many in those days who said, "Josiah, I knew your Grandfather Manasseh. Oh, he was so wicked. I supposed that you would turn out as he did." I can imagine that Josiah probably would have said, "I beg your pardon, I do not have to become what he was. Yes, he was my grandfather, and he did evil, but I do not have to do that."

Fashion Yourself After the Right Example

Our Scripture text tells us that in the eighth year of Josiah's reign, while he was yet young (he would have been about sixteen years old), he began to seek God and purge Judah and Jerusalem of their false gods and idol worship. Young person, the best time to set your course in life is while you are yet young. Nowadays most young people start thinking about becoming lawyers or celebrated individuals in this life. When it comes to salvation, they want to forget it until they get almost too old for anything good to be done.

Do you know what messed up many people? They got saved too old, so they were already set in the evil way. Even though they got saved, the consequences of those years in sin are still with them. Therefore, they refuse to submit to leadership. The young crowd coming along questions, "How can Brother So-and-So or Sister So-and-So do that?" Young person, while you are young, you have a better chance than what they had. If you are going to choose anyone in the congregation as a role model, look carefully and choose the right one. If you are going to fashion yourself after the example of any particular individual, be sure that individual is spiritual.

Some people around congregations today are hindrances to the congregation being what it ought to be. They are the ones who always run to you with counsels: "Come here. I want to tell you a few things. You don't have to be governed by anyone. You don't have to go by what he says. He is an old fogey." Young person, you need to look to the most spiritual ones in the congregation to model after. Those who have been around before the young people came along ought to be conscious of how they conduct themselves before the young people. Your actions will have a lasting effect upon the young people. Al-

though some people today are not going into out-and-out sin, they are slack in their doings. Some young people think they can do anything they want. They are too carefree, and they are going to be messed up for life in eternity.

After Josiah reigned for eight years, while he was yet young, he began to seek after the God of David his father. The words of our Scripture lesson infer that he began to pattern himself after the God of David. I am sure there were influences around that would have liked to have influenced his actions contrary to that, but he declined neither to the right hand nor to the left. He let those influences be what they wanted to be, but he purposed in his heart to be what God would have him to be. We do not have too many people like that today.

In Josiah's twelfth year of reigning, he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem. No doubt, there were those around who said, "Wait a minute, Josiah. What are you trying to do, change everything?" Josiah had been exposed to eight successive years of unlimited wickedness. He had the evil influences of his grandfather and also his father, but none of those influences was strong enough to turn Josiah away from seeking after the God of David his father.

How to Grow Stronger in the Things of God

In Josiah's twelfth year of reigning, he was twenty years of age. As he grew and matured into a young man, he got stronger in the things of the Lord. Young person, I want to hold him up before you as a model, an example of what you can do. This business of serving God carries with it much more than just being present for the church services. You must learn some lessons and allow godly influences to influence you.

It is strange that people seem to follow the wrong so much easier than the right. If they are going to

The Result of Following Bad Examples

look around to pattern after anyone in the congregation, rarely do they look to the most spiritual individuals. Some look to those who talk too much, those who are always dipping into matters that do not concern them. Pastoral work belongs to pastors, not a "Mr. Johnny-Come-Lately" who joins the congregation. One thing that has caused me to marvel in these last days is how some people can spend so long a time in the life of wickedness and sin, and only through the mercies of God they are converted, yet they have not been saved two weeks before they decide they are going to teach the church something. Some even have the attitude, "I am going to teach that pastor how to run the church." I have seen many ruined by the wrong influences.

There are people around the congregation whom you cannot afford to listen to, not even for a minute. One of the best practices that you can cultivate in your life is, whenever someone comes around you and starts to speak critically of the congregation or the pastor, grab your hat and run. Too much of this is being tolerated and allowed to go on unchecked, and it is damaging the influence of the glorious Church of God.

It is time to try to carve out a future that will be beneficial to both the church and the community. You ought to be an asset to the church, not a liability. The church needs you, and it is going to take a man like Josiah to change the trend of things and begin to make life worth living for many around you.

Turning Aside From Evil

Our Scripture text tells us in verse 4, "And they brake down the altars of Baalim in his presence [Josiah stood there to oversee it]; and the images, that were on high above them, he cut down; and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images, he brake in pieces, and made dust of them, and strowed it upon the graves of them

that had sacrificed unto them." No doubt, some older people were mourning the declension (the turning aside from evil) that had taken place and wondering within themselves, "How could he do this, coming from where he came from?" He did it because he began to reign, and when he reigned, he reigned.

Josiah did the right thing at the right time. (You might be doing the right thing, but you might be doing it out of time, or behind time.) It was a personal decision on his part. Others had occupied the throne, not to reign but to be reigned over. This is our position in this life: we are here either to reign or to be reigned over. Young person, you have the potential of revolutionizing things for God. You can be a model for others. If others want to live loosely, let them. You need to keep yourself straight. All odds were against Josiah. He had experienced eight years of unlimited opportunity for evil living throughout the reign of his grandfather and the reign of his father. He saw nothing but wickedness and evil living.

That is about the way it is today. Everywhere you turn, there are lures and attractions that invite you to do evil. They splash it all over the newspapers, the magazines, the radio, and the television. You can hardly walk on the streets anymore and not have ungodliness splashed in your face. Because of that, you hear people say, "Poor young people. They have so much to fight against." I agree, but it is time to stand up to the job. If you are going to be a soldier of the Cross, be a soldier of the Cross. If you are going to be a child of God, be a child of God. You can look the devil in the eye and tell him, "I am not going to smoke or take drugs, and I am not going to be a nuisance around the church."

Josiah's father and grandfather were men of renowned evil. Despite their evil influences, Josiah charted his own course of action, much unlike his father's example.

I want to take you back to 2 Kings, Chapter 21, when Manasseh reigned. By the way, Manasseh was the son of Hezekiah. Hezekiah was the only man I have read about who could turn his face to the wall and talk straight off the shoulders to God. God sent him the message; "Set your house in order, for you are going to die and not live." Hezekiah did not want to die, so he told God, "Remember how I have walked before You. Consider how I have behaved myself before You." When he was through talking, God sent the Prophet back to tell him, "I will give you fifteen more years." However, it was to his detriment; it was to his damnation. He lived too long, because he rendered not again to God according to the benefits that God had bestowed on him, and the wrath of God rose against him. I cannot say that this was the part of Hezekiah's life that influenced Manasseh. I do not know why Manasseh turned out to be such a scoundrel, but he turned out to be a very wicked king.

Second Kings 21:1-3 says: "Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign, [You may say, 'There you have it, he reigned too.' Yes, but he reigned in evil. Josiah reigned in righteousness. There are always two sides from which to choose.] and reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hephzibah. And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, after the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out before the children of Israel. For he built up again the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed."

We are having a repetition of that going on today. Children are acting 100 percent different from what their fathers did. We need to check into that. Why? It casts a bad reflection on their fathers. Hezekiah destroyed the altars to Baal. Manasseh "reared up altars for Baal,

and made a grove," as did King Ahab. Of all people, look who Manasseh modeled after.

King Ahab was a weakling who could not stand up to Jezebel. She watched him mourning on his bed because he wanted another man's vineyard. He had too much conscience to do what he could have done to get the vineyard. However, Jezebel came in and said, "You are the king. You do not have to be doing that. Give me your ring." She began to write letters, and it was not long before the man who owned the vineyard was dead. After he was dead, Jezebel told the king, "Ahab, go and take possession of the vineyard now, because the man who owned it is dead." All of that is right in the blessed old Book. The Bible furnishes us with good examples and also the effects and the results of bad examples, giving all people a fair chance to choose rightly.

Instead of Manasseh modeling himself after a godly person, he chose Ahab. Second Kings 21:3 tells us he "worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them." We have the same thing going on today. People are worshipping all the host, but not God, putting in with this group and that group. You know they are wrong, because had Papa lived, he would not have been flirting around with them. Verse 4 states, "And he built altars in the house of the LORD." There are those who, if you would let them be, would be doing that too. One great complaint is, "You are too strict and too conservative. Why do you have to preach against the sisters cutting their hair? Let the sisters cut their hair if they want to." That is Manasseh's way of life, not Josiah's. We need to model after Josiah, not Manasseh, even though Manasseh was Josiah's father.

Are You Following Righteous Principles?

Second Kings 21:4 continues, "And he built altars in the house of

the LORD, of which the LORD said, In Jerusalem will I put my name." Today every Tom, Dick, and Harry is out building altars. These so-called congregations and camp meetings are altars and groves to worship the host of heaven. Someone may say, "Yes, but they are preaching the same Truth." If they were, they would be having the same results as where the Truth is being preached. They may be using the same words and the same song book, but that does not mean they are preaching Truth. Some preach Truth, but they do not uphold it. For example, they do not uphold the Bible standard concerning the women having uncut hair. We are to live to glorify Him and not to please ourselves. Also, back a few years ago, they believed that one Church of God was enough for one city. Now they have come up with the idea, "There is nothing wrong with having three or four Church of God congregations in one locality." Gullible people are following them and swallowing it. Because of that, the way of Truth is being evil spoken of and true men of God are suffering untold agony of heart. If you go back to the blessed old Bible, you will find righteous principles.

Second Kings 21:5-6 states: "And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD [he was not satisfied with corrupting one court; he corrupted two courts]. And he made his son pass through the fire, and observed times, and used enchantments, and dealt with familiar spirits and wizards: he wrought much wickedness in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger."

We are being forced to confront the very same behaviors today by people who once said they were of the Truth. You cannot have people come to you to help without there being those who want to pull them aside and fill their minds with garbage. People need to stop Manasseh's practices and start patterning after Josiah. Josiah purged Jerusalem of all the idols and all the

groves and all the altars that were there. Individuals who foster division and encourage it are false prophets. God have mercy on their souls.

Verses 6-7 tell us: "He wrought much wickedness in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger. And he set a graven image of the grove that he had made in the house, of which the LORD said to David, and to Solomon his son, In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all tribes of Israel, will I put my name for ever."

Now we are having quite a ruckus because we will not allow these images to be set up in the house. We have a man of God who stands up and says, "Ladies, on the authority of God's Word, you should not cut your hair." If you start to entertain the thought, "Well, maybe those folks that left are not as bad as some say," the wrong influence is working on you. You may say, "Well, do you think a pastor is a lord?" No, he is the shepherd of the flock. The sheep do not lead the shepherd. It is the shepherd who leads the sheep.

Stand Against Evil Influences

Second Kings 21:8-12 reads: "Neither will I make the feet of Israel move any more out of the land which I gave their fathers [this was God speaking]; only if they will observe to do according to all that I have commanded them, and according to all the law that my servant Moses commanded them. But they hearkened not [God tried to change them, but they would not hearken]: and Manasseh seduced them to do more evil than did the nations whom the LORD destroyed before the children of Israel. And the LORD spake by his servants the prophets, saying, Because Manasseh king of Judah hath done these abominations, and hath done wickedly above all that the Amorites did, which were before him, and hath made Judah also to sin with his idols: Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Behold, I am bringing

such evil upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whosoever heareth of it, both his ears shall tingle."

God's anger was heated. Those verses of Scripture are speaking of Josiah's grandfather. That was the kind of grandfather Josiah had to look upon, yet he stood against his evil influence. Then when Josiah was eight years old, he began to reign. He dug right in and tried to correct the evil influences that his parents had spread all over Jerusalem.

Verses 18, and 20-22 read: "And Manasseh slept with his fathers, and was buried in the garden of his own house, in the garden of Uzza: and Amon his son reigned in his stead. . . . And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, as his father Manasseh did. And he walked in all the way that his father walked in, and served the idols that his father served, and worshipped them: And he forsook the LORD God of his fathers, and walked not in the way of the LORD."

This was what Josiah inherited. You see, no matter how much evil is reigning around you, you do not have to become a victim to it. Like Josiah, you can stand against the evil influences. This was recorded to show you that no matter what your

station is in life, you can rise above it and do what is right and serve the Lord. Josiah made a great decision when he began to reign. I would imagine that little boy said to himself, "If I ever grow up to become king, this idolatry and evil practice will not be going on around here anymore." History is repeating itself, and we need to be on guard against it, by the help of God.

Josiah did not do what he did through someone else urging him or suggesting it to him. He must have gotten fed up with the wickedness of his parents. He probably never knew the good part of Hezekiah's life, but he might have heard others talk about what a great king he was. While he was young, he fixed it in his heart to serve the Lord. Friend, you, too, can be like Josiah. Though evil is all around you, you can still serve God and stand for the principles of Truth that others are trying to cast down. Look at the reproachful way that many today are going about representing the Church of God. The sinner out on the street questions, "Who is right?" Nevertheless, right is still right, and wrong is still wrong.

We can see the far-reaching effects of Josiah's decision in the fact

that he began to purge the land. The land was suffering much from the evils of the past, and he decided to do something about it. The glorious results were that he restored the Word of God to the people. God worked it out so that the Law could be placed in his hands. The Book of the Law had been lost. (Today the standard that the church once upheld to be precious and so gloriously preached is beginning to be lost.) When the Book was discovered, they were repairing the temple and found the Book of the Law, and someone put it in the hands of Josiah. When he learned about what had happened, he caused a revival in the land of Jerusalem.

Who will be our John Knox today? Who will be our praying Hyde today, crying out to God, "God, give me souls or take my soul." It is time to look beyond our surroundings and see the reason that God has called us to His cause. As Mordecai told Esther, "Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for much a time as this?" Think about it. May God help you to understand it is my prayer.

(Cassette C-4726E)

"PRAYING ALWAYS. . . ."

—Ephesians 6:18

"CONTINUE in prayer. . . ."

—Colossians 4:2

"Pray WITHOUT CEASING."

—1 Thessalonians 5:17

" . . . continuing STEADFASTLY in prayer."

—Romans 12:12

Matthew 7:12 Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

13 Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

The Way of the Lord



Brother Ula Bland

Walking in Obedience to Christ

In verse 14 of our Scripture text Jesus said, "Few there be that find it." Thank God, we can be in the few. He has enough room; He has enough grace for everyone in the world. We read in Romans 5:20, "But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." I thank God for His grace. Titus 2:11-12 states: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." You can live godly among a crooked and perverse generation. Praise the Lord!

In this message we want to study about the way of the Lord, the way that He wants us to go. The way of the Lord is perfect and right. If you are not going to do something God's way, it is better not to do it at all. Our Scripture text teaches us how to enter His kingdom and how to stay in. Jesus said, "Enter ye in at the strait gate." The word *strait* means "difficult or narrow." It does not mean just to walk in a straight line, but it means with difficulty. On this strait way, you have to walk uprightly and circumspectly. If you enter right, you can end right. On the other hand, if you do not start right, you cannot end right.

God tells us how to come in and

how to stay in. When you narrow it down, God even tells us what to think about. We read in 2 Corinthians 10:4-5: "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds [before we were saved, some things had strong holds on us, but the Word of God pulls down strong holds]; Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." You are to bring every thought into captivity. If you do not capture wrong thoughts, they will captivate you. God has given us power to say no to the

devil. Under every kind of circumstance, you can say no to the devil. No matter what he brings, no matter how alluring it looks, and no matter how much money is in it for you, you can say no to the devil. God has invested that kind of power in the sons and daughters of man. Isn't that wonderful? Thank the Lord!

To enter the Kingdom of God, you have to come in right; you must enter at the strait gate. Jesus said in verse 13 of our Scripture text, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction." You can always find someplace to worship where you can feel free to do anything you want to do. As long as you pay your money, they will call you a blessed member. However, as Jeremiah said, "What will you do in the end?" When you really find the Truth, you need to stick with it. People might talk about you and ostracize you, but you need to stay with the Truth. The Truth is the only thing that can set you free.

Seek the Pearl of Great Price

Jesus said in Matthew 13:45-46: "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it." The Kingdom of Heaven is likened to a merchant man seeking goodly pearls. When he found the pearl of great price, he sold all that he had to buy that pearl. In this Scripture one man sold all he had and bought the whole field. He made sure that he would get the pearl. That pearl is a type of Jesus Christ. To buy the pearl of great price, you must sell out to self. That was what Jesus was speaking of in Matthew 16:24 when He said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself." Friend, self is your worst enemy. You are the only one who can cause you to go to hell. When you stand before a just and holy God, you will not have any

excuse for not living right. You will not be able to blame the pastor or your brothers and sisters in Christ. The Lord is going to look at you and say, "I told you to seek Me." Isaiah 55:6-7 tells us: "Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

When you get saved, God gives you a new heart and a new spirit. He calls you to walk in His statutes and to keep His Word, and you will want to obey it. That is the reason the Bible says in 1 John 3:9, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit [or practice] sin; for his seed remaineth in him." The child of God does not want to sin, because he is born of God. That is the evidence of the new birth. If God takes something away from you, you do not want it anymore. Sinner friend, when God takes away your sin, you will be glad to see it go. John the Baptist said in John 1:29, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

God wants you to be saved more than you want to be saved. He proved that by giving His only begotten Son. Also, the Son wanted you to be saved. He proved that by giving His life for your sins, even when you were at enmity against God. Christ died for the ungodly.

Jesus said in verse 13 of our Scripture text that "wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction." The gate is so wide that many false churches will take you no matter how you live as long as you pay them your tithe. A true child of God does not want any place like that. God is exposing places such as that. Some claim that Peter was the first Pope; however, Peter had a mother-in-law. Now, you cannot have a mother-in-law unless you have a wife. It is good to know the Truth about these things! God will expose all that is wrong.

He will not keep the people in darkness if they are honest hearted. God knows exactly what to do.

God's Ambassadors

Again, our Scripture text states, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction. . . ." It is a terrible thing when people are fooled into thinking that they are on their way to Heaven when they are heading for hell. A good example of how people are deceived concerning this is through the doctrine of eternal security. You can have eternal security only as long as you obey God. On the other hand, if you do not obey God, you no longer have eternal security. Oh, how I thank God for His Word!

Church of God preachers are obligated before God to preach the Truth. We are God's ambassadors, and we are obligated to tell people the Truth. Many people are going the wrong way. Pastors have a responsibility to let people know which church is right and which ones are wrong, which one is on the true foundation and which ones are on the sinking sand. That is the way God's man has to put it out. People might not like it, but pastors must do what God directs them to do. We have to let people know when they are on the way to destruction.

No matter how many churches men try to establish, there is only one church. Some people have been around the Church of God for a long time, yet they still do not see the church. God will show honest-hearted individuals the church. When a person truly sees *the* church, he will not want just any church. He will want the real thing. There is nothing like the real thing! It means something to sit under the Truth. If you have a pastor who is preaching and living the Truth, you ought to get behind that man and stick with him 100 percent!

I thank God for Jesus Christ. He brought salvation down to man and gave us true men of God who

preach the Word, the whole Truth and nothing but the Truth, no matter whom it hurts. A man of God who is preaching the Truth is the man under whom you want to sit; he is the man you want to follow. The Truth is the only thing that can set you free. I thank God for His Word.

"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." If you are a pastor, you need to let people know that they need to stay in the strait and narrow way. Few there be that find it.

Walk in the Good Way

We read in Jeremiah 6:16, "Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein." When you find the good way, then you need to walk therein. The people said in those days, just as many people are saying today, "We will not walk therein. We don't want to walk in the good way. We do not want to walk in a way where we have to get rid of all sin." Friend, why do you want to keep playing around with sin?

Too many people want to go their own way. They want to walk the way they want to walk and do what they want to do. God said in Isaiah 55:8-9: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

God explained it well to us that we have to walk in His ways. We have to do things His way. To enter God's church, you must be born into her. If you have not been born into the church, you are not in her. Some people have been going to church for a long time, but they really have not given themselves totally to God.

They have not put their confidence in the shed blood of Jesus Christ. You must put your confidence in Christ. We all put a certain amount of confidence in men when they are following God, but we do not put all our confidence in them, because the Head of man is Christ. That is the way it has to be. Our trust and confidence must be in the sacrificial blood of Jesus Christ.

One poet wrote, "I know it was the blood." Another poet said, "What can wash away my sin?" Then he answered, "Nothing but the blood of Jesus." It was Jesus Christ who came to seek and to save that which was lost, and He can save you. It is sad when a person has been going to church for a long time and has not been truly saved. Then the devil makes him ashamed to say he is not saved. When God reveals your true condition to you, He does it so that you might make a change in your life.

If God is sending you a test, it is to make you stronger, not to beat you down or for spite. He is so merciful. God will not put any more on you than you can bear. The Bible teaches in 1 Corinthians 10:13, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." I believe this will happen to every experienced Christian. God has made a way for us to bear it and come out of the temptation with victory in our souls. Saint, God will not put any more on you than you can bear, and He knows how much you can bear. Isn't that wonderful?

Why are so many people entering the wide gate and traveling down the broad way? Jesus gave the answer when He said, "Strait is the gate." This is a strait way. You cannot enter the strait gate trying to hold on to sin. It will not work. Only the strait gate and the narrow way lead to life. A true child of God wants eternal life.

Paul wrote in Philippians 3:11, "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." Paul did not care what it cost him, he wanted to attain the resurrection of the dead. When Paul was stoned and left for dead, he got up and went back into the city, exhorting the souls of the disciples, saying, "We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22). He did not care what it would take. He had his eyes on the goal.

God's grace is sufficient. When you go through tests and trials, you can have victory. Sinner friend, if you want to be saved, you can be saved. God sends His grace right along with His Word. When He tells you to do something, His grace will be right there to help you, along with His Word. If you intend to do His will, He will help you. That is the reason we can "come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16). God wants to help us as His people when we have a mind to do right.

God's Sheep Hear His Voice

Nehemiah rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem because the people had a mind to work. It is no trouble to pastor people who have a mind to serve God. However, if people want to gossip and go their own way, there will be trouble in the camp. In John 10:27 Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." Sheep are ready to follow the shepherd, but a stranger they will not follow.

Jude wrote in Jude, verse 4, "For there are certain men crept in unawares." When a person acts as if he is your friend and pretends that he is with you, he is a traitor. In Revelation 3:15 Jesus said, "I would thou wert cold or hot."

God is exposing everything that is unlike Him. It is time to get right with God and to stay right with God. There is no time for foolish-

ness. Paul stated in Romans 13:11, "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep [it is time not only to wake up but also to get up]; for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." Christ is coming back after *the church*, a church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

I have often wondered how people can sit under the Truth for years and then end up in sectarian churches. The Bible likens that to a dog going back to his vomit and the sow going back to her wallowing place. Sectarianism did not do anything for them the first time, so why do they want to go back to it? You need to walk the strait and narrow way. Once you allow Satan to get hold of you and you turn away from Truth, God will send you a strong delusion that you might believe a lie and be damned. If you do not want to walk uprightly, God will let you believe a lie.

The Psalmist wrote in Psalm 1:1-3: "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. But his delight is in the law of the LORD [that is where your delight ought to be]; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."

Verses 4-5 tell of the sad part: "The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous." Pastor, you might have only three people in your congregation, but I would rather have three righteous folks in the congregation than to have a building full of hypocrites working against me. We are workers together with God. There is no time for playing around. Time is too short for that. Remember Ananias and Saphira. To be saved, you have to do things God's way. Proverbs

14:14 reads, "The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways: and a good man shall be satisfied from himself." When a man backslides, he is filled with his own ways. Again, if you do not do something God's way, then you should not do it at all.

Do You Love Your Brother and Your Sister?

Saint, to walk in this narrow way, we must love one another. First John 3:15 says, "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." Church, we must love one another. The reason there is so much division is that the devil is really after the Church of God. Jesus said in Matthew 16:18, "And upon this rock I will build my church [He did not build it upon Peter; He built it on Truth]; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." God has always had a people. When Christ returns, God will still have a people. He is coming back after His church. I want to be ready to go with Him, don't you?

We read in Matthew 25:6, "And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh." Sinner friend, the Bridegroom is coming, and you know that you are not ready. Do you have jealousy or hatred in your heart?

Matthew 25:6-7 reads: "Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps," but they had no oil in their lamps. Verse 10 says that "the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him . . . and the door was shut." The only ones who are going in with Christ are those who are ready. Those who have been retaliating, talking about people, and backbiting will not go in. You cannot sing your way into Glory or preach your way into Glory. You must live this thing out in your life.

Enoch walked with God for three hundred years, and one day he was not found, because God took him.

He was translated so that he would not see death. Hebrews 11:5 tells us, "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God." Before you get into God's Heaven, you must have the same testimony: that you pleased God. We read in Psalm 37:25 that David said on one occasion, "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." God will take care of the righteous. You cannot do wrong and expect to have God, because He is not with what is wrong. If you will just stay right and treat people right, God will be with you.

Cain and Abel were the first brothers in the world, and Cain killed Abel. In the same way today, so-called brethren are trying to destroy other brethren's influences. God is against that! God is going to do something about anything that He is against. I might be against something, but all I can do is pray. However, when God is against something, He will take care of it. God is against assassinating people's character. We are to love one another. If people do not love one another, then they do not have God. John stated it just as it is. If you cannot love your brother or your sister, you do not have God. The love of God will constrain you to treat people right. If you are saved, the Holy Ghost has shed the love of God abroad in your heart.

The Bible teaches very plainly that you are to love your brother. It says that if you bring your gift to the altar and remember that your brother has aught against you, you are to leave that gift at the altar. God said, "Do not talk to Me until you get it straight with your brother." You are to leave that gift at the altar and be reconciled to your brother. God has given us His words of reconciliation.

Second Corinthians 5:19 states, "To wit, that God was in Christ,

reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." If you will humble yourself under the mighty hand of God, He will exalt you in due time, God will fix the thing for you. You must love your brothers and sisters. If you do not love your brother or your sister, that will keep you out of Heaven. Saint, we are in the church because God loved us and gave Himself for us. When those who profess to be saints of God do not love one another, God cannot use them.

Walk Not After the Flesh

Love does not work any ill to his neighbor. God's Word tells us just how to deal with things. If your brother sins against you, you are to go to him. You are in the narrow way, so go to him, and him alone, and tell him. Then, if he does not hear you, you are to get two or three witnesses. The reason he said to get two or three was not so you would have more people to condemn the person. Maybe someone else would have more favor with him than you have. The two or three witnesses are there to help. Your objective is to bring him back to God, not to down him. The Bible states in Galatians 6:1, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one [This is the Word of God. How are you to do it?] in the spirit of meekness [why do you do it in the spirit of meekness?]; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." We must follow the Word of God, not the flesh. There is no room in the Word of God for hating anyone. There is not even room in the Word of God for folks falling out with each other because one does not believe as the other one does. You should seek to help the other person.

My heart's desire is to see God's people be together. God raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. If we ever get to Heaven, we

must be together. Paul said in Romans 10:1-3: "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear their record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." Christ is the righteousness of God. Without Christ you can do nothing, because all power in Heaven and earth is in His hands.

I thank God for the saints of God. I like the song that says, "I am one of them today." No other people on earth are like the saints of God. We are a peculiar people. We do not act as people of the world. We do not lie and cheat. Saint, when God worked a work in you, He did something marvelous for you. Salvation will work just as the Bible says. Second Corinthians 5:17 tells us, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

God loved us when we were yet sinners, while we were at enmity against Him. We read in Romans 8:1-4: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us." God wants His righteousness to be fulfilled in His saints so that we can show a lost and dying world that Jesus saves from sin, that Jesus is coming back again, and that "the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life" (Romans 6:23).

God has His people as ambassadors of Christ, to show a lost and dying world the right way. God's

people who are married are to show other unsaved married people that they do not have to get a divorce. God can work out any problems that people have in their marriage if they both will humble themselves. Church of God, you are a city set on a hill; you are the light of the world.

In Matthew 5:13 Jesus told His disciples, "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men." If you get to the place where you cannot be a blessing, you are like the salt that has lost its savor, or saltiness. What good is salt if it is no longer salty? If salt is not salty, you may still have the salt shaker, and you can shake it all you want, but it is not salty anymore. That is the way it is if you have lost your Christian experience.

(Cassette C-4866M)

The Fault Is Mine

*Sometimes God seems so far away,
The mists between so dense,
My heart is filled with sudden dread,
Foreboding, and suspense.*

*The very prayers I utter
Come straightway back through
space—
Too weak to make their faltering way
Up to the throne of grace.*

*And then again, God seems so near,
I cannot but believe;
His faintest whisper rings as clear
As vesper chimes at eve.*

*"I never leave thee nor forsake,"
His gentle whisper saith;
And what had caused my sudden dread
Was just my lack of faith!*

Edith M. Lee



Some years ago, Sharon became very ill with a kidney disease. She was only three years old at the time and never complained once during her illness.

Many times while lying on the living room sofa she would yell, "Daddy, Daddy!" and immediately I would run to her side thinking she was in great pain or something was seriously wrong. Once at her side I would ask, "Honey, what's the matter?" With her big blue eyes and a gleaming smile, Sharon would look up and say, "Daddy, I love you." The magnitude and depth of these words could never be explained, and yet our Heavenly Father has been whispering these same words to us for over two thousand years. "My child, I love you." Yes, He really does love you.

I had a good job, was buying a home, had a new car, a secure marriage, and four beautiful, healthy children. Everything was great. You would probably find me in a church on Sunday. I went because I wanted to go. I enjoyed the singing and this was the place to be on Sunday. Many times I had heard the Gospel preached, but each time I ignored it. I was a good person, but I was not saved. I had not been "born again" (John 3:3). I never really had an encounter with Jesus.

In a matter of two months, God

allowed my world to crumble. Suddenly Sharon was dead; my marriage was shipwrecked; I lost my home; my eldest son was scarred for life in an auto accident; my baby boy was adopted out; and now with my two remaining children staying with a relative, I was coming back to a one room apartment and thousands of dollars in debt.

What happened? Where did I go wrong? Oh, if I could only hear that voice again, "Daddy, I love you." I was so lonely. I wished I were dead. Yes, they were my very thoughts.

I found myself in a rented car on the Hanover Street Bridge in Baltimore, Maryland, about to take my own life. "Turn the wheel just a little bit, you can end it all," a voice seemed to say.

I was about to turn the wheel when another voice billowed out, "*Live for Me, and be an example.*"

A movie rolled before my eyes showing my oldest son, Arthur, grown up and someone asking, "What happened to your father?"

Bowing his head he answered, "Oh, he - he - he - committed suicide."

Then the words, "*Live for Me, and be an example,*" flashed before my mind once again.

There was no doubt now, I knew that it was the Lord. Quickly the joy began to flood my soul. I could hear

Sharon in a distance saying, "I love you, Daddy." Then a peace came and calmed the troubled water of my soul. Oh, how I praise God for that glorious day.

During the next couple of weeks, I started going to a Bible believing church and my life changed. Old things passed away, old desires, hang-ups, cursing and all things became new (2 Corinthians 5:17). The years that followed have been precious and fruitful because I know Jesus. God saw fit to give me not only a new life spiritually, but also a new life physically.

I love you also. I really do! Can you remember someone saying those wonderful words to you? Do you recall the joy and warm feeling that flooded your soul, especially if that person happened to be a child or a loved one? Let God speak to you today through this message. Invite Jesus into your heart and become a Christian now! The Bible says, "Now is the day of salvation." Do not put it off as I did.

You can pray this prayer as I did: "God, forgive me of my past life. I'm sorry. Come into my life and help me. I now accept You as my personal Lord and Savior. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen."

Selected

[Guest Editorial—continued from page 2]

laded, every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon. For the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side, and so builded." That was the era of time from when this commandment went forth (when Cyrus issued it in B. C. 457 until Malachi in B. C. 408), and after these forty-nine years the building was done.

As I have already mentioned, this prophecy is broken into three time segments. In verse 25 the first segment is seven weeks, or forty-nine years, which is from Daniel to Malachi, B. C. 457 to B. C. 408. When literal Jerusalem was being built again in troublous times, we find that this was the fulfillment of that seven weeks. Verse 25 speaks of "threescore and two weeks." Notice that no descriptive phrases are surrounding it. That lets us know that nothing occurred in that period of time. A score equals twenty, and threescore equal sixty; therefore, threescore and two equal sixty-two weeks. This was the segment that comes up to the time of Messiah the Prince.

During the sixty-two prophetic

weeks, there was no prophetic activity. Sixty-two times seven is equal to four hundred thirty-four years. This was the four hundred thirty-four years of silence from Malachi the Prophet in B. C. 408 until John the Baptist baptized Jesus Christ and He received His anointing in A.D. 26.

It was the four hundred thirty-four years, between Malachi and John the Baptist, when man did not hear from God. Some refer to it as "the intertestamental period." During that time, many spurious books were written, such as Maccabees and others that false religion uses for doctrine. In one of the Books of Maccabees, you will find recorded teachings concerning offering prayers for the dead, from which Roman Catholicism has derived their doctrine. It was derived from an era of darkness, when man did not hear from God in a public forum.

This sixty-two prophetic weeks gets us from Malachi the Prophet to the baptism and anointing of Jesus Christ in A. D. 26. Every Bible scholar admits that it was not until A.D. 500 when they started calculating B. C., or *Before Christ*, and A. D., or

Anno Domini, meaning *in the year of our Lord*. When they started calculating the distinction between B. C. and A. D. in A. D. 500, they held B. C. four years too long; so in A. D. 26 Christ was actually thirty years old.

Now, we have gone (in verse 25) through the "seven weeks," or the forty-nine years, from B. C. 457 when the commandment was issued to B. C. 408, forty-nine years later when the temple and Jerusalem had been rebuilt. Then, verse 25 speaks of "threescore and two weeks," or four hundred thirty-four years, from Malachi to John the Baptist. If you add sixty-two weeks, or the four hundred thirty-four years and the forty-nine years, you have a total of four hundred eighty-three years or from B. C. 457 to A. D. 26, where you now have sixty-nine weeks.

Most Bible scholars, even sectarian teachers, will concur up to this point. They will concur with the sixty-nine weeks. The point of great contention is what followed the sixty-nine weeks. In the next article we will examine the biblical truth concerning the seventieth week.

Brother Earl R. Borders

Trust in yourself, and you are doomed to disappointment.

Trust in your friends, and they will die and leave you.

Trust in your money, and you may have it taken from you.

Trust in reputation, and some slanderous tongue will blast it.

Trust in God, and you will never be confounded.
