The Gospel Trumpeter

JUSTIFICATION — SANCTIFICATION

UNITY & TRUTH

"So will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day." Eze. 34:12 Jer. 32:39

"But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished." Rev. 10:7 Matt. 24:31

SOUNDING FORTH THE SEVENTH AND LAST TRUMPET

Vol. 39 February 2009 No. 2

Church of God Tabernacle in Newark, Ohio

"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord."

Psalm 122:1

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

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Vol. 39 February 2009 No. 2

Winter 2008 Camp Meeting Report

Oh, What a Meeting!

One more year has passed, and another wonderful camp meeting has ended with saints worshiping together. What joy and blessing it always is to gather with God's people during the camp meetings! Sitting in an atmosphere unpolluted by the world and feasting on the heavenly manna that comes down from above is marvelous! Our souls were fully nourished and graciously satisfied as we fed on the goodness of God. Nothing can compare to dwelling in His courts with the saints of God, even though it was for only a short time.

The meeting began on Sunday morning, December 28, 2008, as the host pastor, Brother Roger L. Decker, greeted the saints and opened the service. It is difficult to explain in words all that our hearts felt and our eyes witnessed during this sweet time of refreshing. We could possibly sum it up by saying, "Oh, what a meeting!" God is pleased when His people gather together to worship Him in spirit and in Truth.

In the day and time in which we are living now, it is even more necessary to escape from the worldly influences and to be renewed inwardly. As saints, we need our spirit uplifted, our hearts encouraged, our minds stirred, and our souls challenged. It is most vital for each of us to keep pressing forward in this fight of faith. There is a reward that awaits the true and faithful. Satan is diligently and desperately working to discourage and destroy the souls of mankind.

Time after time, we were blessed and our cups overflowed as the Lord moved in the services in such sweet ways. Often as the singers sang praises, the Spirit of God used the messages of the songs to bring help, strength, and encouragement. Although the meeting has ended and the joys subsided, the blessed time we spent together will be remembered. When the Spirit of God moves in the midst, it is like the wind that blows. We cannot see it physically with the natural eye, but we can surely feel the effects of it, and so it is with His mighty power.

The Lord always prepares a table of good things for His people during the meetings. That which He prepares always provides adequately for the needs of the people. There is plenty of spiritual milk, sweet honey, and strong meat to nourish the souls and fill the needs of each individual, regardless of what the need might be. It is amazing how miraculously God provides for those who trust Him. He gives milk to the newborn babe so that he may grow in strength and become strong. He offers honey for sweet encouragement to those who are going through bitter conditions of persecutions and trials. He sends strong meat to satisfy the hungry soul of the mature Christian. God most graciously sends conviction to those who are lost and groping in sin.

In 1 Corinthians 1:21 the Apostle Paul stated, "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." God has chosen a way to supply the spiritual needs of man, and that is through the preaching of the Gospel. When the Word of God is sounded forth with power, clarity, and anointing, it will produce a work in the heart of every person

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Luke 8:16 No man, when he hath lighted a candle, covereth it with a vessel, or putteth it under a bed; but setteth it on a candlestick, that they which enter in may see the light.

17 For nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest; neither any thing hid, that shall not be known and come abroad.

18 Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.

"Take Heed Therefore How Ye Hear"

Brother Roger L. Decker

Holding Forth the Word of Life

I want you to especially consider verse 18, which admonishes, "Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have." Jesus put before us a thought that Christianity is something that must be seen. It goes beyond word of mouth. He let us know that no man lights a candle and then covers it, but he sets it upon a candlestick so that those who enter may see. In Revelation 1:20 John let us know that the church is the candlestick, which lets the light of God radiate out to a lost and dying world.

May God help us to realize that people out in the world are sick of hearing about religion. They want to see something that will work. I can only go back and relate to you my own experience. Many individuals came up to me where I worked and wanted me to join a church or go to their revivals, but I never saw anything that really worked in their lives until one day an individual invited me to the Church of God. I had watched that person's life, and I continued to watch him. I could see that what he talked about really was working in his life.

I attended a morning prayer service, and oh, how the Spirit of God dealt with me! People see Christ as they look upon the church. Saint, may God help you not to give them a distorted view.

The Apostle Paul wrote in Philippians 2:14-16: "Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain." Paul said to shine forth in a crooked and perverse nation. As our world and many religious leaders wax worse and worse and as it gets darker, the greater the light will shine. God is looking for people who will stand up and let their lights shine, and not just talk about religion. He wants the church to show a lost and dying world what it is to live the life for Christ.

There is a reason that the light

does not shine as it ought and some lose their boldness. Many times it is a fear of being different. Why? People know that when they are different, they are going to be questioned. That is one reason that some saints have problems along the line of the dress standard. They are afraid that they are going to get questioned if they stand out from the world too much. If you live for God, you are going to be peculiar. You will not conform to this world. If you live for God, you are going to be questioned.

After I was saved, I no longer participated in the check pool at work, so some people asked me, "Why don't you get into the check pool anymore?" Others inquired, "Why don't you run what the union says to run and not what the company says to run?" Many questions will come your way when you become a child of God. The Christian must answer to God. Therefore, he works for more than just his employer. He lives under the all-seeing eye of Almighty God. He is not just out to please men, but he wants to please God. Moreover, he knows that when he pleases God, he will please his employer.

The fear of being different and taking persecution when one does not conform to the pattern of this world causes many to draw back. Child of God, you should never be ashamed of being a Christian or of whom you serve. It is time for every saint to stand up and be counted instead of cowering down and being ashamed. If you are saved, you need to stand up and be counted and let people know who you are and Whom you serve. It is not mere duty to be counted as one of God's children; it is a privilege.

The Power of the Gospel

You need something besides words, child of God, to convince those who are in darkness that the light is in you. Paul said in Romans 1:16, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." Paul let them know that he was not ashamed of the Gospel or of how he lived.

In 1 Thessalonians 1:5 Paul wrote, "For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake." Another translation of this same verse says, "Because our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit, and with deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake."

The power of the Gospel is in the life, not merely in words. The true child of God has been changed. His life is different. He no longer walks the same course he used to walk. He does not go down the same path that he used to go down. He does not go around looking sad because he has to be different. He wants to be peculiar so that others might see Christ in him.

The life of a Christian is great. It is nothing to be ashamed of or to be sad about. You do not have to feel sorry for the Christian, because he wants to conform to the Word of God. On the contrary, I feel sorry for you if you do not have Jesus Christ. Why? You have to follow the course of this old world, and the course of this old world changes from day to day. Thank God, the Word of God is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Always remember this, church: before the Cross, there was a life that was lived. Jesus did not come down from Heaven and die on the Cross the next day. He lived the life, separate from sinners. John 1:12 reads, "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." Paul, writing to the Philippians, said in Philippians 1:27, "Only let your conversation [or conduct] be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel."

Nothing Is Secret

Luke 8:17 states, "For nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest; neither any thing hid, that shall not be known and come abroad." To be *secret* means "to be concealed or hidden." Often people have shut their eyes to hidden actions or habits. It is like shutting one's eyes to a cold, even though that person knows that he has the symptoms. Then there is the keeping of secrets from one's fellowman, but secrets have a way of being made manifest. If a man or a woman is bitter, that bitterness has a way of manifesting itself. Eventually it will be displayed through word, thought, or deed.

Sometimes individuals try to hide things from God. Dear one, this is something that you will never be able to do. You will never keep anything a secret from God. He knows all. He has heard all your conversations, and He knows the true manifestations of your heart. He hears your telephone conversations, and He sees the text messages that you send on your cellular phone. God knows about all the secrets that young people try to keep from their parents. Nothing is hid from God. Just because He does not reveal it from the housetop is no sign that He did not see it. Just because God does not visit you for something right away is no sign that He did not see it. God sees all, He knows all, and He hears all.

Guilt loves secrecy, but Jesus said that nothing is secret. It would be well for you to keep some Scriptures in mind. Although you may know these Scriptures well, it is good to reread them. They are well worn, but they are not worn out. They are still as much alive today as they were when they were written.

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 says this: "Let us hear the conclusion [the end or the grand finale] of the whole

matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work [not most works, but *every* work] into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."

David said almost the same thing in Psalm 139:1-3: "O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me [in other words, he was saying: 'Lord, You know my secrets, You know my thoughts afar off, and You know all about me']. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off [even before a thought comes to your mind, God knows about it]. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways." God knows about your little temper tantrums and all your disobedience to your parents. You cannot let a word slip from your mouth but what God hears it. He knows about your actions, and He weighs them all.

Psalm 139 lets you know that nothing is hid from God. That which is done in darkness cannot be hid from Him. Have you ever driven by a barroom as the door opened and seen how dark it looks on the inside? The lights are turned down low. Why? Sin likes to work in the darkness. If someone were to go into a bar and turn on a floodlight, he would hear all kinds of complaints and hollering. Dimly lit rooms, darkness, the nightclubs, the cement walls, and the steel doors cannot keep out the all-seeing eyes of the Lord. God sees everything. There is no secret place where you can go to hide from God. No walls are thick enough to keep out God's all-seeing eyes. I repeat, God sees all. He sees beyond the walls, right down to the very depths of your soul.

In Ezekiel 8:12 God was showing Ezekiel what was going on with the ancients of Israel and said: "Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery? for they say, The LORD seeth us not; the LORD hath forsaken the earth." The ancients of Israel were doing all these things in the dark, in the chambers of their imagery, and they were saying that the Lord did not see them, but God sees everything. Proverbs 15:3 states, "The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good."

The Parable of the Talents

In Matthew, Chapter 25, is a very good lesson that Jesus taught. In verses 14-23 Jesus, talking about the kingdom, said: "For the kingdom of heaven is as a man traveling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.

"Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money. After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.

"And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. [In other words, he needed to keep right on progressing. Although he had gained five talents, it was no time to relax. His lord was going to make him ruler over more. He was going to have more responsibility.]

"He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord."

In the following verses Jesus is coming to one who did not want to work for Jesus Christ. There are some people who do not want to work in the Kingdom of God. There are those who do not want to be servants of God because they do not like the way of Christianity. The slothful servant hid, or buried, his talent. He wanted nothing to do with serving God.

In verses 24-29 Jesus said: "Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, [he was starting to make up excuses] reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine.

"His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. [This is the law of the kingdom. The more you work for God, the more you are going to be used by Him. The more you work for God, the more responsibility God will give you.] For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath."

The Law of the Kingdom

Going back to verse 18 of our Scripture text, we read, "Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have." It is a universal law that the man who has will receive

more.

The student that will learn will keep on learning, but he who refuses will lose that which he has already attained. Jesus was not talking about this temporal life; He was speaking of spiritual life. How do we know? It has to do with hearing the Word of God. You will either increase or lose out entirely. This is the reason Jesus said to take heed how you hear. He was talking about your spiritual life. God wants you to progress. He wants you to gain, spiritually speaking. He does not want you to regress, or go backward. He does not want you to take the talent that He gave you and bury it somewhere in the earth, or in fleshly living. He wants you to take it and gain another talent, and continue to gain. The more you work for God, the more He is going to increase your talents in the kingdom. That is the law of the kingdom.

Earlier in Luke, Chapter 8, He listed the four types of ground. Those types of ground represent the hearts of people. They all heard, but only one had a good, honest heart, which is what it takes to prosper with the Lord. How you hear makes a difference. Do you hear to criticize, to make light of, to become offended, to twist, or to complain? Or do you hear to receive help from the Lord? It makes a difference, dear one. Only one type of ground will bring forth fruit. When one has a true, honest, good heart, more will be given to him.

The more you work for God, the more God will bless you and use you. You should not hide your talent, or your gift, from God. Do not bury it in fleshly living. You should take that talent and work for God and reproduce and gain another talent, and another talent. You will find that the more you gain, the more you will be used of God.

John 10:10 says, "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." This is the law of the kingdom. Those who have the real thing will have more. Those who take serving God seriously and labor in His kingdom will be used more, because God can count on them. He knows that they are ready, willing, and able to work for Him.

How does one attain a talent? The Scripture lets us know that each talent is given to us. Again, verse 18 of our Scripture text states, "Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given." A talent is not something that you earn on your own; it is given to you. God gives each of us talent. It is the law of the kingdom. Friend, you need to be careful of how you hear the Gospel. Your life, your future, and where you will spend eternity depends upon how you hear.

Often people come into a worship service and think they are secure, but God will send the overflowing scourge and the hail, and the covers will be too narrow, and the bed will be too short; then that one will no longer find a refuge. Why does God do that? He does it because He wants people out in the open where He can deal with their souls. God will jerk the covers off false religion and off that which people seem to have. When God jerks off the covers, they have no place to hide, and they must either accept or reject the Gospel.

Having a Know So Experience of Salvation

God does not want you to live a lie. He does not want people to go to hell when they think they are going to Heaven. There is only one thing that will dispel, or put away, the lies, and that is the Truth. When ones get around the Gospel, their false refuges are exposed for what they really are. If you are unsaved, the chances are very real that you are going to be lost. If what you have is not according to God's Word, when you get around the Truth, it is going to be revealed.

Too many people are unsure of whether or not they are right with God. They merely "think so" or "hope so." Friend, God has something better than that. You can know beyond a shadow of doubt that you are God's child.

What did Jesus say in Matthew 13:12? ". . . from him shall be taken away even that [which he seems to have, or thinks he has, or supposes he has] he hath." Friend, you must have more than a "think so" or a "hope so" experience. You may say, "Oh, I sure hope that I'm saved." What does that do? It leaves a little room for doubt. Others may say, "I sure hope I am saved. I hope the Lord can see that I'm trying." You have to get stronger than that. You must get to the place where, like the Apostle Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5:1, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." You need to know that you are saved. Your salvation cannot be based on feelings or emotion or a time when God helped you through an adversity in your life. It cannot be based on the fact that you cry when you hear a certain song. You have to *know* that you are saved. The only way that you can know is to base your experience on the Word of God. Have you truly met the conditions in the Word of God? Have you confessed and forsaken sin?

When you confess your sin, God will forgive you for the sin that you confess up to that point. He does not save you from sins of the future. Then God makes His abode within you. The power to live right is not in the blood; that is the power for forgiveness of sin. You must have the life of the Spirit. You must have God on the inside so that God can guide you and help you in this present world.

You have to get beyond false religion. False religion's cry is, "Get down beside your bed every night and tell God that you are sorry for the sins that you committed during

the day." Friend, God has something far greater than that. You can get down and thank Him for keeping you from sin another day. I want to repeat, you have to get beyond forgiveness. You have to base your experience on the Word of God. You have to meet Bible conditions to be able to stand and to know for sure that you are saved.

If you will meet Bible conditions, if you will come to the Lord the Bible way, not my way or someone else's way, then you can stand on the authority of God's Word, having met conditions in accordance with His Word. You have to get beyond hoping that you are saved and get to the place where you *know* that you are saved. Friend, if you do not, your experience will be taken away every time the message gets really close. You will start wondering, "Am I even saved?" God is going to come close to you through His Word now and then, but He does it to help you. We need more than a general message of "God so loved the world." There is another part of that sword. God wants you to get rid of your "hope so" experience.

God Is Offering You a Helping Hand

The question is, Do you really have salvation? If so, Matthew said that you shall have more abundance. You can be saved and used of God. If you are saved, God can use you in a special way. You must be truly born again, and you must live free from sin. Now that does not in any way mean that you will never slip and fall into sin, but the Holy Spirit will lead you away from sin. He will not lead you into sin. God does not allow you to be tempted to take you into sin.

You must walk in all the light that God has revealed to you. God is going to hold you accountable for the truth that you know and for whether or not you are walking in it. If you do not really have what it takes to serve God, there is good news for you: you can! The Gospel message always leaves you with an opportunity to say yes to God and no to the devil.

If you are not saved, God wants to save you. He does not want you to stumble and flounder around in this world. The possibility of destruction is coming upon you or some adversity may take your life. God wants to save you and help you. He loves you! He desires to save everyone, but you have to choose Him. He will not force you to serve Him. He will talk to you, but He wants you to choose Him because you love Him. Also, you must be sick of the things of this old world and want to live for Him. When you make that decision in your heart, that pleases God, and He will be right there to meet you. He will forgive you and roll away the burden of sin; then you will be truly saved, clean, and clear with your Heavenly Father.

God is just and fair. It is not His will that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. God wants everyone everywhere to repent and turn to Him. You might not know much about the Bible, but God is not asking you to quote Scriptures. He is asking you to do that which you know is right. He is asking you to turn from your sin and turn to Him.

When I came to Jesus Christ, I hardly knew how to pray or even what to say. When you come to God, you do not have to say a long prayer. Just tell God what you feel; tell Him your whole heart. You do not have to go into a long discourse with God. When I came to God, all I asked Him to do was this: "Lord, if You'll save me, I'll live for You. If You will save me and give me what I need to live for You, Lord, by the grace of God, that is what I want." It was not much of a prayer, but it did the work!

When God sees that your prayer is coming from the very depths of your soul, He will hear and answer that prayer. If you do not know whether or not you are saved, you must get the matter cleared up. If you are unsaved, God wants to save you. He wants to help you. He is not against you. He does not stand over you with a club, waiting for you to make a mistake. He is a loving Heavenly Father who wants to be right there to offer a helping hand to you.

You need to do that which you know is right. If you have allowed things in your life that ought not to be, you need to humble yourself before God and get the matter settled. Jesus Christ will save you. You need to get down to business with God and acknowledge your need. If God is troubling you, you need to be careful of how you hear. You should be obedient to that which the Lord shows you.

(Compact Disc TR-205E)

Does your faith remove mountains or do mountains move your faith?

Revelation 2:18 And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass;

19 I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.

20 Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.

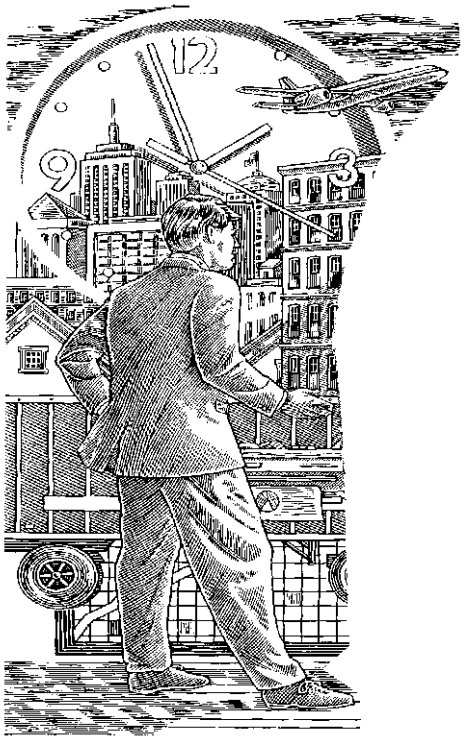
21 And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.

22 Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.

23 And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

24 But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden.

25 But that which ye have already hold fast till I come.



A Space to Repent

Brother E. David Stegmeier

"I Have a Few Things Against Thee"

Those letters in the Book of Revelation were written to the seven churches of Asia, but they apply to us today and to certain periods of time in the New Testament era. Again, verse 18 of our Scripture text tells us, "And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass." Many people want to hear about the love of God. That is all that is preached and talked about in many places today. However, our Scripture text reveals another side to God. He can be very angry.

We see in the Book of Revelation that God is not pleased with the conditions in false religion. Revelation 2:19-20 reads: "I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first. Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols." Many seducing spirits are around today, and they are trying to persuade you and me to do something less than what God requires. They are working very hard to lead us astray. Therefore, we

need to be alert and watchful. We need to be awake and to have an ear tuned to the Spirit of God. We need to anoint our eyes with eye salve, because we need 20/20 vision, spiritually speaking.

Church of God, we need to hold fast to the Truth that we have been taught. The Bible tells us in Revelation 3:11 to "hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." I thank God for what I have been taught. God is still teaching me, and I hold fast to it. I do not want to let it go.

Revelation 2:26-29 reads: "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end [I want to emphasize that we need to be faithful to the very end], to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." May God help you to have a good ear.

I would like to focus on verse 21 of my Scripture text, which states, "I gave her space to repent." A space to repent is a certain length, or interval, of time. God gives every man, woman, boy, and girl a space to repent. During that space of time, each one needs to turn to Him in true repentance. True repentance is to feel sorry for having done something wrong and to seek the forgiveness of God with the attitude that you are going to change.

Take Heed, Lest You Fall

The Bible doctrine of repentance is as ancient as the reality of sin. We can go way back into the Old Testament and find repentance in Genesis. The antediluvian world heard the doctrine of repentance through Noah. It is as ancient as sin, and it is as up to date as anything that exists today. It is still a Bible doctrine. I am concerned about our nation. The answer to the problems of our nation is repentance and returning to God. We have all kinds of social problems and social programs. Our leaders have all kinds of ideas, but we need to get right back to the Bible. Our country needs to repent and turn to God.

In 1 Peter 3:18-20 we read: "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God [That space of time is the long-suffering of God. I have loved ones and friends who are unsaved. I want to stand in the gap for them. Someone needs to stand in the gap, that space of time during which God is long-suffering. Only He knows how long that time will be.] waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water." How many of the thousands of people who came out of Egypt went into the promised land? It behooves you and me to really put forth great effort to be one of those few.

We read in 2 Peter 2:4-5: "For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness. . . ." That is still what God's ministers preach today. I think of the Scripture in Titus 2:11-12 that reads: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, . . . we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." Sadly, most people are not taught that. We are to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this world, right now! If you are ever in doubt, you ought to do what is right.

Peter went on to say in 2 Peter 2:5-6: ". . . bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes, condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly." You and I have many examples and warnings in the Bible and all around us.

I read somewhere that the scars of others should teach us caution. In other words, the things that have happened to others should be examples and warnings to us. Ministers can fail. What has happened to others should serve as a warning to us not to do what they have done, or to do what they *should* have done.

First Corinthians 10:11-13 says: "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples [or illustrations]: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." God has been faithful through the preaching of His ministers to warn us. Through Sunday school teachers, godly parents, and many examples, people have been warned, yet many have not heeded the warning.

A Warning Concerning Wrong Desires

I would like you to read 1 Corinthians 10:12-13 from the Living Bible. It states: "So be careful, If you are thinking, 'Oh, I would never behave like that'—let this be a warning to you. For you too may fall into sin. But remember this—the wrong desires that come into your life aren't anything new and different. Many others have faced exactly the same problems before you. And no temptation is irresistible. [When a temptation first comes into your mind, you need to deal with it; do not entertain it. You should not give it any of your time, but put it out of your mind. God is able to bring every thought into obedience to His will.] You can trust God to keep the

temptation from becoming so strong that you can't stand up against it, for he has promised this and will do what he says. He will show you how to escape temptation's power so that you can bear up patiently against it."

I thought of Joseph in the Old Testament and his trial. He was not there because he chose to be there; he was there because of his job, but he got out of there as soon as he could. If you enter into temptation willingly, you will fail. First Thessalonians 5:22, tells us to "abstain from all appearance of evil."

In the Old Testament you can read of King Saul. He was lifted up with pride. Pride is a temptation that causes people to feel more important than they really are. They may think, "The church cannot get along without me." Yes, it can! The church is going on strong. King Saul started out well, but he became inflated with pride. In 1 Samuel 15:17 you can read the Prophet Samuel's sad lamentation to Saul was, "When thou wast little [this should be a warning] in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the LORD anointed thee king over Israel?" As long as we remain little in our own sight, God can use us. King Saul could not handle the power that God had given him.

I read once that power does not always corrupt, but it always seduces; it is a temptation. If you are given authority or control, if you are not careful, you will take advantage of the situation. It can happen. John shared in 3 John, verse 9, "I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not." What does this mean? Diotrephes wanted to have control.

Some people like to have control and they like to be seen. That is an ugly, detestable thing. The Living Bible says in 3 John, verses 9 - 10: "I sent a brief letter to the church about this, but proud Diotrephes, who loves to push himself forward as the leader of the Christians there [you need to be careful of those who push themselves forward as the leader; a real man of God would just as soon sit back], does not admit my authority over him and refuses to listen to me. When I come I will tell you some of the things he is doing and what wicked things he is saying about me and what insulting language he is using. He not only refused to welcome the missionary travelers himself, but he tells others not to, and when they do he tries to put them out of the church."

Judas was tempted with the sin of avarice. In other words, he had a great insatiable desire for property and money; he was greedy. A true saint of God is not greedy; he is giving. Matthew 27:3 tells us, ". . . when he saw that he was condemned, repented." He repented, but godly sorrow did not accompany his act of repentance. Godly sorrow must be woven into the act of repentance to be effective with God. Judas was probably sorry only because of what he was going to receive in the end. He knew deep down that Jesus was the Christ. The Spirit of God was trying to work in Judas' life.

All repentance does not lead to salvation. All confession of sin does not lead to remission. Judas found no mercy. He did not even appeal to Christ and ask for forgiveness. He went to the chief priest and the religious leaders to ask them to take back the money. He found no comfort from them. They said to him in Matthew 27:4, "What is that to us?" Judas was an apostate. When Jesus and His disciples were around the table at the Last Supper, Luke 22:3 says, "Then entered Satan into Judas." He was entertaining the devil, but there came a time when he entertained him too long and the devil entered into him. The devil further persuaded Judas to the point that he committed suicide.

Another temptation is the temptation of envy, which is to feel discontented over your position and to desire to have someone else's position. Pilate knew that the Jews sold Jesus because of envy. Many problems today are the result of envy, jealousy, and discontentment. As human beings, we are vulnerable to these temptations; therefore, we ought to take warning.

Repentance That Turned Away God's Wrath

Let us consider Noah a little. Noah preached the doctrine of repentance, and he preached righteousness in a generation that was very wicked and soon to approach judgment. We read in Genesis 6:11, ". . . the earth was filled with violence." Violence has filled our country. I have been a school teacher since 1963, and the schools used to be safe places. They were a haven for many children, but today violence has taken over.

Several years ago in central Montana a student went to school and was going to kill his teacher, but he killed the substitute teacher instead. Again, Genesis says, ". . . the earth was filled with violence." Today we are living in a very violent society.

Noah warned the people of his day of an approaching judgment. He warned them to repent. Peter spoke of "spirits in prison" in 1 Peter 3:19. What does this mean? Those people were in bondage to sin. Sin is a bondage to the flesh, and it causes a person to be in bondage to the devil. Many people would like to do better, but the devil has them bound.

Jonah preached in the city of Nineveh. What was his message? He told the people to repent so that they might avert the judgment of God. This is what every city in America should do. Jonah 3:4 reads, "And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown."

Verse 5 tells us that "the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them." What was that a sign of? They were mourning over

their sinful conditions, and they were repenting. That is what our nation needs to do. This is the message that our nation needs to hear. They need to repent and turn to God.

Verse 6 says, "For word came unto the king of Nineveh, [What did he do?] and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes." Those people believed the message that Jonah was preaching. It is high time for people to get down before God in sackcloth and ashes and repent and turn to God. Did Nineveh's repentance avert the judgment of God? Yes, it did! The wickedness of Nineveh was great, but the Bible tells us that God saw her repentance. God's judgment was, "Forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown," but because of her repentance, God extended His mercy.

The king said in verses 8-10: "But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands. Who can tell if God will turn and repent [and God did just that], and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not? And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not." Down through Old Testament history, every time there was a crisis, men of God called for repentance. We need to repent as a nation. May God help us.

True Repentance Brings Restoration

I want to bring this message down to you as an individual. If you are a sinner, your first step is to repent. Repentance is necessary. Ezekiel 18:30 states, "Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin." Do you know what the ruin of our country will be? It will be iniquity, or sin. Never has our country ever experienced so much iniquity. You can say what you want, but I believe much of it comes from television, ungodly songs, and the Internet. I am not preaching against the Internet, but I think people need to be very, very careful. Today many people are seeking girlfriends and boyfriends on the Internet, and some have gotten the wrong one. You should take the Bible way. I have a good wife, and I found her the Bible way.

A man told me one time, "Our country is showing the earmarks of the Roman empire before they were destroyed." One earmark was the iniquity throughout the land. Another one was where they placed their priorities. How sad that some Church of God ministers really struggle to get by, yet athletes are paid millions of dollars. Where are your priorities?

Ezekiel 18:31 tells us, "Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart [the end result of true repentance is having a new heart] and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?"

In the New Testament we can see that John the Baptist's constant theme was "Repent!" Jesus proclaimed the same theme. On the Day of Pentecost, the message that Peter preached was "Repent!" Throughout the Bible the message is "Repent!" Throughout the annals of history, we have that same message: "Repent!"

Today there are many, many substitutes for repentance, but nothing can take the place of true repentance. Someone once said, "We are in a self-indulgent economy in America." Yes, we are, and it will bring the storm of judgment upon our nation sooner or later. What are some substitutes for repentance today in the religious world? They are church joining, good deeds, shaking a preacher's hand, catechism, and baptism, just to name a few. You will never be a Christian unless you come through the gate labeled "Repentance."

Sin has been renamed by false religion so that sin does not seem as black to people as it used to. An old tract that I have is entitled "*What Do You Call It?*" It reads: "Man calls sin an accident; God calls it an abomination. Man calls it a blunder; God calls it blindness. Man calls sin a chance; God calls it a choice. Man calls it a defect; God calls it enmity [or hatred against Him]. Man calls sin a fascination; God calls it a fatality [or a death]. Man calls sin an infirmity; God calls it iniquity. Man calls sin a luxury; God calls it leprosy. Man calls sin liberty; God calls it lawlessness. Man calls sin a trifle; God calls it a tragedy. Man calls sin a mistake; God calls it madness. Man calls sin a weakness; God calls it willfulness."

The world tries to water down sin. Once a young man who came to our congregation for quite a while told me, "I have concluded that in the Church of God, you put the Gospel out in full strength, but others water it down."

True repentance means having godly sorrow, and it will lead to a change of mind, resulting in a changed life. One who truly repents is first awakened by the Holy Spirit. For a person to receive real salvation, he must repent, and his repentance must be accompanied by godly sorrow. In this awakening process, the individual sees himself as a sinner, and he shows grief over his condition. He will turn to God unconditionally. His attitude is, "God, I'll do anything that You require of me." He is willing to forsake sin completely.

Seek the Lord With Godly Sorrow

Worldly sorrow is brought about by detection, exposure, threatened punishment, or embarrassment. A thief may become sorrowful after he has been caught with stolen goods, but if he had not been caught, he would have

continued to steal.

Paul defined godly sorrow in 2 Corinthians 7:10, which reads, "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death." One minister used to say he had never seen a Christian who was sorry, but he surely had seen a lot of sorry Christians. I have never heard a Christian say he was sorry that he had turned to God. He always says, "I wish I had gotten saved sooner. What a wonderful life!"

It is so good to be a Christian! One old chorus that we sing says, "*Isn't it grand to be a Christian? Isn't it grand? Isn't it grand to be a Christian? Isn't it grand? Isn't it grand to be a Christian Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and all day Sunday? Isn't it grand?*"

Second Corinthians 7:11 says, "For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, [You need to be sure that everything between you and God is clear and that you do what is right. You need to go deeply enough.] yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter."

Saint, you have to be clear. Godly sorrow works deep repentance. The sorrow of this world only dreads the consequences of sin in this life. Godly sorrow brings a dread of what will happen in eternity after leaving this world. You must acknowledge to God that you have sinned. All sin is against God. You are not saved by giving up one sin at a time. Sometimes people say, "I want to quit this sin business and be saved." So they put up the cigarettes, and then they put up the alcohol. When you get saved, you have to give them all up.

You cannot get in the gate of repentance until you get rid of all sin. You cannot leave a pack of cigarettes on the top shelf of your kitchen cupboard just in case you might want them. If you do, you can guess the end of the story. That is not repentance. All sin must be confessed. John said in 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins."

Have you ever heard someone say, "If I have done anything wrong, please forgive me"? They say that even to God. It sounds to me as if there is some dishonesty there and maybe some pride. Deep down, people know. You must get rid of that "if." You must repent with the attitude, "I have done wrong, and I am sorry, God." "I have done wrong, Pastor. Will you forgive me?" "Congregation, will you forgive me?" You need to forget the "if" and be honest. Proverbs 28:13 states, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper."

After repentance, you must look to God and trust in Him. True repentance brings a changed attitude toward those whom you have wronged. You are not fully repentant unless you forgive everyone who has wronged you or you go to someone you have wronged and make that right. It goes both ways; then you are willing to make a public acknowledgment. In other words, you are willing to tell the world what Christ has done for you.

In closing, I want you to read 2 Peter 3:9, which states, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." Our Scripture text says in verse 21, "And I gave her space to repent." Only God knows how long that space is. I heard a song when I was a boy that said, "*Wait while I see my loved ones, While I see my friends, I say, wait a little longer, dear Jesus. They are still wandering out in sin*." That space to repent may be drawing to a close for you.

If you are not a Christian, that space to repent may soon be over for you. Won't you seek God today? If you have never repented, you need to. Ask God to forgive you. Romans 3:23 says, "For all have sinned." None of us can glory or boast in ourselves. We all have been sinners. I was not any better than you. I had to repent. If you are far from God, won't you please ask Him to help you? That would be the best decision you could ever make in your entire life. I made that decision one Friday evening as I said, "I am going to serve God. That is what I'm going to do for the rest of my life." If God is speaking to you, won't you consider His plea?

(Cassette C-3873E)

Tomorrow cannot be found on God's calendar.

Tomorrow sounds so innocent, but it is life's most dangerous word.

Tomorrow is the road that leads to the town called Never.

Tomorrow is the barred and bolted door that shuts people out of Heaven.

Tomorrow is the nursemaid of hell.

Tomorrow is Satan's word. Those who expect to repent tomorrow usually die today. Don't count on tomorrow!

Faith and Why It Will Save You

People who are afraid of associating salvation with religion ought to give the story of the Philippian jailer's conversion a wide berth. If ever there was an exciting time, it was then. There was something happening every minute.

Paul was a missionary, and he was well known on the streets of Philippi. He had been holding some special meetings, and one day a young woman, possessed with an evil spirit, cried out against him on the street.

Paul commanded the devil in her to come out, and then he discovered that he had stirred up a hornet's nest. There was a set of degenerate and godless rascals who had been coining this young woman's madness into money, and instead of thanking God because the young woman was set free, they commenced to complain and curse, saying that their business was being hurt. So the promoters of this brutal and devilish traffic, when they saw that their hope of gain was gone, laid hold on Paul and Silas and hustled them off to the chief magistrate of the city, who ordered them to be beaten and sent to jail.

The jailer thrust them into the inner prison, so we are told, and made their feet fast in the stocks. Jails are miserable enough now, but in those days they were something awful. Come on now, and let us pay a visit to the Philippian jail. It is midnight, but you would never know it, for in the dungeons it is always dark. Listen to the heart sickening sounds; the groans of the poor victims who have not seen the sunlight for years; the cough of the consumptive wasting away; the wail of despair, the deep sigh, the clanking chains of some poor culprit as he rolls over in his dreams; the shriek of some poor soul in a nightmare of horror; and the curses of those who are crying out against their cruel fate, —and you say, "God pity the poor prisoners."

But listen! Two of the prisoners are singing—singing praises to God! And now they are in prayer! You say, "Why, jailer, these are queer sounds for a place like this, where everyone else is groaning and cursing. Come, take us to them!" In a moment we are standing before the prisoners who are sitting on the cold ground, with blood running from the wounds on their backs, and their feet fastened tight in wooden stocks. It is Paul and Silas holding a prayer meeting at midnight in a dungeon.

You say, "Why, jailer, do you have these two men here?" He replied: "I didn't want to put them here, but I was commanded and had to do it. No such prisoners ever came to this place before. They said, 'Good evening, jailer,' when they came in. Their faces wore a look that has tarried with me since the hour they entered, and while I made them fast in the stocks, they talked to me about a strange new hope, and I have been disturbed in my soul."

We walked back with the jailer, and suddenly, while the jailer was speaking, there was an earthquake! It was God's "Amen" to the prayer of Paul and Silas. The foundations of the old jail commenced to rock, the iron bars began to twist, and some of the walls began to crumble. The doors burst open, and every prisoner's bonds were loosed. The jailer knew that he would be held responsible if anyone escaped. He would have to give up his own life as a penalty. That was the Roman law. So he drew his sword and was about to fall on it when Paul cried, "Stop! Do thyself no harm. We are all here." The jailer saw that Paul had spoken the truth. I can see him fairly rush up to Paul and Silas, and out of the depths of a troubled yet grateful heart, cry, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

"What must I do to be saved?" What a tremendous question that is! Of all the questions ever uttered by the human soul, there is not one in all the universe of God, in the answer to which there are involved such tremendous issues for time and eternity. Have you ever asked it? Have you ever been troubled about it? If not, then let everything else go; shove everything else aside. There is only one important thing for you to do, and that is to ask that question honestly and get the right answer to it.

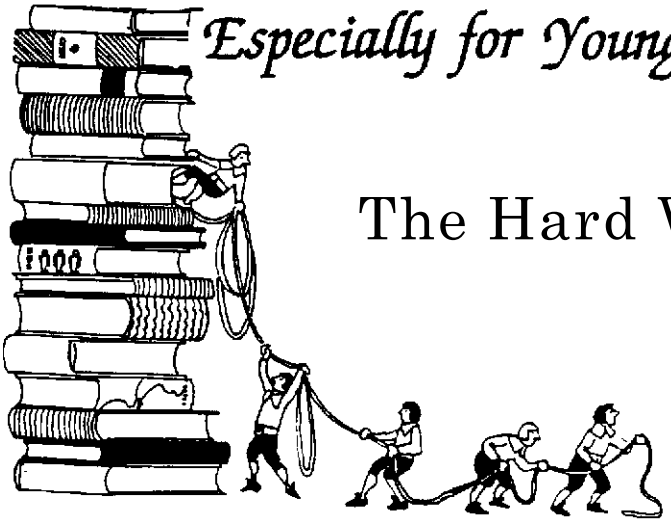
"What must I do to be saved?" Look at Paul's answer. He gave that trembling jailer one compact, thrilling, tremendous answer. He told him what to do. I sometimes think that if it had been in our day, the preacher would have told him a few things to do. There has been so much foolish speculation, there have been so many perversions of the Gospel, so many vagaries, so many delusions and isms in general that it is little wonder that an anxious soul sometimes gets bewildered.

I think he would have said in the first place, "Don't get an idea that there is nothing to do. Don't think you can do as you please about everything else and do nothing about Jesus Christ, and be saved anyhow, sometime, and in some way." There is a certain kind of religion today that teaches something much like that, but it is an outrage on intelligence; it is an insult to an enlightened conscience, and many a man has lost his soul by clinging to a vain hope. There is something to do, and every man who really wants to be saved can do it.

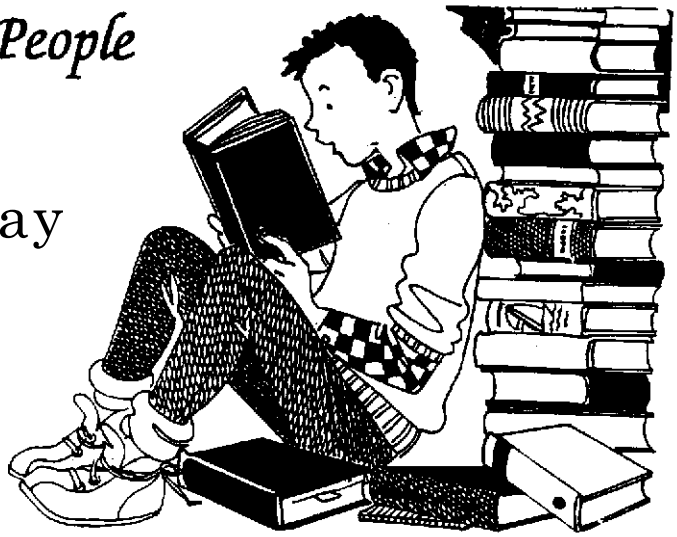
"What must I do to be saved?" What answer did Paul give to that question? What did he tell the Philippian jailer to do? Did he tell him to get out of the place quickly before there was another earthquake? No, it was not that kind of salvation the jailer was inquiring about.

Did he tell him to wait until the excitement was over? No. Paul knew

[continued on page 25]



The Hard Way



"Frank, I have one more errand for you; then you may go and play the rest of the afternoon."

"Yes, father, thanks. What is it that you want me to do?"

Frank's father went behind the counter and drew out a little drawer. The man handed his son a silver dollar and said: "You may carry this to Widow Boardman. Be careful not to lose it."

"I'll be careful," promised Frank, and then went out the door.

It was the first day of vacation. The boy felt happy as he trudged along the road. He was thinking of the good days ahead—two weeks and no school! Perhaps the pleasant day, the fresh air, and the sunlight had something to do with making him happy. Something else helped to make Frank happy, although he was not thinking about it. He had tried his best to do right. It makes a wonderful difference when we know we are doing our best.

Mrs. Boardman lived some distance up the road. Frank had already passed the schoolhouse, and the little pond, and was passing the willow grove, when suddenly he decided to make a whistle to blow along the way. So, putting the dollar in his jacket pocket, he climbed over the fence and cut several willow twigs. He went along with the twigs in his hand, until he reached a log lying on a grass plot by the roadside. Here he sat down and made two whistles. They sounded wonderful to Frank's ears.

As he shut the widow's gate, Frank put his hand in his pocket to take out the dollar, so that he might have it ready to hand her when she came to the door. It was not there. Thinking he had felt in the wrong pocket, he put his hand in the other, fully expecting to feel the dollar between his fingers. *It was not there!*

Frank felt alarmed. Could he have lost it? He searched carefully in every pocket, but the dollar was lost. He turned around and went slowly back, looking carefully along the road for the lost dollar. He searched around the log, in the willow grove, by the roadside, every step of the way, but no dollar was to be seen. He went over the road again with no better success. At length he sat down upon the log to consider what he should do.

The dollar was lost, there was no doubt of that. His father had told him to be careful, and he had not been. Now what should he do? His first thought was to go back to the store and tell his father all about it. This would be the right way; but he disliked to go, for he knew his father would blame him for his carelessness.

Frank decided he would not go to his father then. He would go and play with the boys awhile. Perhaps his father would never know. At any rate he would not tell him at once. So he got up from the log and walked slowly toward the schoolhouse playground. Soon he was playing with the boys.

In the evening Frank went home and sat down at the supper table with the family. Soon after the blessing had been said, while his brothers and sisters were talking with each other about what they had been doing through the day, father turned to him and said: "O Frank, did you carry the dollar?"

"Yes, sir," answered Frank promptly.

The question was asked so suddenly that he had no time to make up his mind what to answer. He felt less like telling the truth than he had at first. It seemed too hard. He thought to take the easier way by answering "Yes." The easier way! Poor boy, he had not learned yet that it was the hard way.

Soon after supper Frank went upstairs to bed. When he said his evening prayer he did not feel that God was listening to him, and he passed a restless night.

In the morning he woke up to find the sun shining into his room. Leaping out of bed in high spirits, he began to dress. Suddenly he thought of the lost dollar, and this blotted out all his happy feelings.

The day went by slowly. Frank was troubled by the fear that father would find out about the lost dollar; yet he found it harder every hour to

make up his mind to tell what had happened.

In the evening Frank could endure it no longer. The easy way had indeed become the hard way. While sitting in the front room he made up his mind to go and tell the matter. He started toward the study, where his father was. Every step in the right direction gave him new strength. He opened the study door and came to the table where his father sat writing.

"Well, Frank," father said kindly, "what is it?"

"O father," said the boy, but he could not go on. He bowed his head upon the table and sobbed.

In a few minutes Frank raised his head, and began again: "I want to tell you father"—but it was too much.

"Wait a minute, Frank. Let me tell you first," said father. "You want to tell me that you did not carry the dollar to Mrs. Boardman, that you lost it on the way, that last night you told a lie about it, that you felt wretched all the time. You wanted to tell me, but you did not dare. Is that it?"

"Yes, sir," sobbed Frank.

"You wanted to take a way easier than the right way, yet you have found it a great deal harder."

Frank knew that was true. He saw that he might have spared himself a great deal of uneasiness and sorrow by choosing the right way.

To help Frank remember, it was decided he should earn a dollar as soon as he could and take it to Mrs. Boardman. Frank set about earning his dollar, and before vacation was over, he carried it with a light heart to Mrs. Boardman.

The strangest part of the whole matter was that while Frank was returning from Mrs. Boardman's his shoe struck something hard; he looked down and saw the dollar he had lost!

SOME LITTLE FOLKS

There are some little folks that we never can please;
They fret about trifles, they trouble and tease,
Full of discontent, even at play;
Till their friends are worn out and are heartily glad
When bedtime is come, and each cross lass or lad
Is quiet and out of the way.

There are some little folks so good tempered and sweet
That to see their bright faces is always a treat;
And their friends can quite trust them, they know;
They amuse themselves nicely with some plan or play,
Take care not to worry or get in the way,
And are welcome wherever they go.

John 8:21 Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come.

24 I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.

Four Great Tragedies That Await the Sinner

Brother Larry Dishman

The Nearness of Death

The first really serious tragedy awaiting the sinner is the tragedy of dying without God. Facing death unprepared to meet God would be a great tragedy. Death is not a tragedy at all for the child of God. The Bible lets us know that it is a blessed thing. The Apostle Paul said in Philippians 1:21 that "to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." I believe that the grandest place on earth to sleep is in a saint's grave. Jesus took His death robe and folded it up as He came out of the grave. He could have cast it aside in a corner, but He did not do that. The Bible lets us know that He folded it neatly because He knew that one day you and I would need such a garment.

In Heaven the saved will have their heart's desire. While on earth, the devil will harass us; however, in Heaven we will rest from the weariness of the flesh and the grief of life's heartaches. We will rest from the sorrows and the anxieties of loneliness, persecutions, abuses, injustices, conflicts, and the burdensome toils of life.

There will be no need for hospitals, medicines, or ambulances there. We are going to have many victories to celebrate and many songs of praise to sing when we get to the other side. Thanks be to God for the prospect of a resurrected body that will never get weary, tired, or worn out. Heaven will be worth it all!

There will be no inclination whatsoever toward evil in Heaven. Evil will not be a possibility in God's Heaven. The day will come when all disappointments will vanish away if we will stay true to God and be what He would have us to be. No sermon or book can describe what awaits those who love God. Our intellectual comprehension is too narrow to understand what Heaven is going to be like, but it is certain that we will be amazed when we step over to the other side. Heaven will be beyond our wildest imagination, and by the grace of God, I

intend to make Heaven my home no matter what I have to go through in this life.

Once I read a story about a little girl who was born blind. She had never seen the light of day. She had several unsuccessful surgeries, but finally a noted surgeon operated on her eyes, and the operation was successful. As the last bandage was removed from her eyes, she flew into her mother's arms, and then to the window and the open door. As the beauties of the earth filled her vision, she ran back to her mother, screaming, "Mother, why didn't you tell me that it was so beautiful?"

Her mother took her hand and tried to wipe the tears from her eyes and said, "I tried to, but there were no words to describe it."

I believe when we see what God has prepared for those who love Him, we will say to our Savior, "Why didn't You tell us that it was so wonderful?"

Then He will brush the tears from our eyes and say, "I tried to tell you, but there were no words to describe how wonderful Heaven is."

Death will not be a tragedy for the child of God when he or she leaves this world. Faith and confidence assure us that Heaven is awaiting the saved on the other side, but for the sinner and the backslider, death will be a great tragedy. One thing certain about life is that one of these days each one of us will have to leave this world. Death is on the way to my address, and it is on the way to your address. Death is no respecter of persons. Each step takes us closer to the grave, and someday we each will have to bid farewell to every earthly tie.

Death Is But a Step Away

First Samuel 20:3 states, "There is but a step between me and death." Friend, you may take that step very quickly. Every tick of the clock is taking you nearer to eternity. The clock of life is wound but once, and no man knows when that hand is going to stop, at an early or late hour. You could die suddenly and be ushered into eternity without any advanced warning. Therefore, it pays to consider the nearness of death and the awfulness of death if you are unprepared to meet God.

Friend, death occurs like a single file line of people, one by one, stepping off the scene of action. I do not know where I am in that line, and you do not know where you are in that line, so it pays to make your calling and election sure. It pays to have a "know so" salvation so that when your time comes, you will be ready. Your stay on earth is only temporary, and every step you take is borrowed. Each breath you take could be your very last.

If you die lost, after death there is no probation or mercy. A person who dies cannot come back from death and make preparations for eternity. Whatever preparations you make must be done *before* you die. The tragedy of dying unprepared to meet God demands your solemn consideration. Only when you prepare for death will you be safe, peaceful, and happy. Friend, death is a solemn event through which each of us must pass. There are only two exceptions recorded of persons escaping death in the history of the world. The Bible states that Enoch and Elijah were translated, but everyone else has had to take this step with death. The hour of death will be the most solemn hour in your life.

Much of the time people go about life and do not spend much time looking up at the stars. They seem so far away that they pay very little attention to them. Likewise, it is hard to get people to really think seriously and soberly about their soul's condition because death seems so far away. Often the youth think: "I'm a young person. I have a life to live. Death is a long way from me."

Friend, when you are lying in a hospital bed with an oxygen tent over you and the doctor stands back and shakes his head, the nurses have a worried look on their faces, and your loved ones have tears falling down their cheeks, death will not seem so far away. You should not wait until such a critical hour to consider your eternal welfare because you may wait too long. There is no promise in the Bible that says you can get saved on your deathbed. I believe it is possible, but not probable. A few folks have been saved on their deathbeds, but people who live with the selfish attitude, "Just give me a few minutes before I die and I'll get right with God" leave this world unprepared to meet God, despite their last minute prayers and their crying.

Death Will Seal Your Destiny

Concerning deathbed repentance, Charles Spurgeon said there is only one case recorded in the Bible. Only the thief on the cross beside Jesus got saved in the last hour of his life; therefore, no one should presume that this will be the case with him or her. No doubt, Charles Spurgeon worked with thousands of people in his lifetime. He wrote in a book that he had dealt with many people on their deathbeds, and a number of those people who supposedly got saved on their deathbeds got well, but none of them lived for God. He said they all turned their backs on God and continued to live in sin.

It takes more than worldly sorrow to get saved. It takes godly sorrow for an individual to really get saved. Friend, it is not enough just to be sorry that you are dying. You must become sick of sin and sick of the way that you are living; then you must repent and place your faith in the Son of God. If God were to pull back the curtain of time and allow you to see how close you are to death, no doubt, your face would turn pale, your knees would begin to knock, and you would quiver in your soul. Yet you go on without the Savior, and you know that you are not right with God.

Oh, how quickly the death summons comes, but oh, how long

eternity is! Death brings eternal doom for the sinner. Your mind cannot fathom what a fearful awakening is awaiting if you face death unprepared to meet God. Every sinner who closes his eyes in death will open his eyes in a devil's hell. Every sinner who leaves this world unprepared to meet God will be exactly as the rich man mentioned in Luke, Chapter 16. The Bible says that he "lift" up his eyes, being in torments in a place where it was too late to pray. Think of the tragedy of lying upon a deathbed, gasping for breath, feeling the death rattle in your throat, and dying without God. Death without God is the entrance into hell.

Immediately after you die, you will pass into the eternal world and your destiny will be made known to you. Death will seal your destiny. If you die without God, it will be a total loss. You will lose Heaven and you will lose your soul.

What happens to the sinner who dies? He sinks beneath the blackest shades of eternal night. It did not take the rich man long to realize where his final destiny was going to be. The day that you must die could soon arrive. What are *you* going to do about your soul's condition? I have been at the hospital when people were dying without God, and oh, what a miserable future lies ahead for them!

The Loss of Your Soul

The second tragedy awaiting the sinner is the tragedy of losing his or her soul forever. Matthew 16:26 says, "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" The loss of a soul is a great tragedy. The tragedy of not knowing the Savior and missing Heaven is a tragedy of all tragedies.

If the devil were to walk up to you and say, "Listen to me, don't get saved, and I'll make a deal with you. If you'll promise me that you'll never get saved and give me your soul, I will give you a deed to the whole world. The whole world will be yours—all the houses, all the gold, all the silver, all the land, and everything else in the universe. All the honor and all the wealth will be yours if you will give me your soul." If you were to take the devil up on such a deal, it would be tragic, because your soul is far more valuable than this whole world. However, if you are not careful, you will lose your soul for much less than that. Just a little pleasure here and a little pleasure there, and you can lose your soul for all eternity. Friend, think about the tragedy of losing your soul.

Within each human being is a treasure of incalculable value, and that is the soul. It is the part of man that will live as long as God does. Every man's soul is immortal and can never be annihilated. Even in ten million years, it will not enter into a state of nonexistence. The soul within you is going to be alive somewhere a million years from now, and you will be conscious of your surroundings. The soul of man does not die with the body. The soul of man is of immense value.

One song says: "*Shall I die without a Savior? Shall I lose my precious soul? Shall I cross death's chilly river? Shall I miss yon brighter goal?*" Do you have time for Jesus? Are you too busy to think about the things of God? A songwriter, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, wrote: "*Have you any time for Jesus While the fleeting moments roll? In this mortal life too busy, Lord, too busy When you can't think about your soul.*"

Are you going to sell your soul to the devil for a few years of pleasure, for a few years of doing your own thing and fulfilling the desires of the flesh? Are you going to sell your soul just to have a few days of what you call happiness? Nothing is worth losing your soul over.

Facing the Judgment

The third tragedy is the tragedy that follows death. Hebrews 9:27 declares, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." The tragedy of facing the Judgment unprepared to meet God is a great tragedy. Think about it. Friend, the Judgment is as certain as the sun coming up in the morning. The Day of Judgment is certain; it is a future fixed event on the calendar of God.

I want you to think about this for a moment. Everything that God has said would happen concerning judgment took place just as God said it would. What God said concerning the days of Noah when the Flood came happened exactly the way God said it would. God foretold of judgment against Sodom and Gomorrah, and you can read in the Bible that judgment fell on Sodom and Gomorrah exactly as God said. You can read throughout the Bible of many times when God foretold of coming judgment, and every time judgment came to pass just as God said it would. This final Day of Judgment will take place, and you cannot escape it when that time comes. No matter how popular you may be or how wealthy you may be, you cannot avoid it.

The sinner in the grave is still awaiting the final Judgment, because the results of their evil influence is still being accumulated. Romans 2:6 says, "Who will render to every man according to his deeds." Each of us is making a daily record, which is registered in God's Book of Remembrance. The Lord keeps a full, accurate, and true record of each life, and not a single item is left out of His record book. What is recorded in the Book of Remembrance under your name? What sins are recorded there against you?

I have been told that some scales are so accurate that a piece of tissue paper on each side of the scales of exact size would balance perfectly. These scales are so accurate that if you were to take one piece of tissue and write your name and address on it with a pencil and placed it back on the scale, it would overbal-

ance the other. That is getting near to perfection.

Now, the Judgment balances weigh not only the deeds but also the motives concerning why you did the deed. You need to think about that. Men in the legal system may weigh the deeds of men, but God weighs the motives behind what they have done.

On that final Day of Judgment, every wicked deed will be accurately and fairly punished. That will be a day when God will straighten out the accounts that are not settled down here. Every action will be exposed at the judgment bar of God. No power of wickedness, however great, will be able to escape from the trial of that day. No crime committed in this life will be concealed there.

Sometimes you may look at people and wonder how they can do such wicked things and get by. They are not really getting by, because they will have to face God's spiritual x-ray machine, so to speak. Every man will get exactly what is due him. Every skeleton will come out of the closet, so to speak, at the Judgment. Every deed will be brought forth as each soul stands accountable to God.

Friend, you will not receive a second chance. God remembers the sins that others might have forgotten. All the facts will be made known at the judgment. Each sinner must endure the penetrating gaze of the eyes of the One sitting on the throne as He searches out the very secrets of men's hearts.

Sinner friend, when the Judge of all the earth opens the Book of Life and finds that your name is missing, what are you going to do? What will you do when you hear the terrible words, "Depart from Me; I never knew you"? You will be paralyzed with fear at the thought of what is awaiting.

By the time I was eighteen years of age, I had lived a life of sin. I had no excuse because I had a Christian mother and a Christian father. I knew better, but sin took me further than I wanted to go, it kept me longer than I wanted to stay, and it cost me more than I wanted to pay. Eventually I was brought under conviction through the preaching of God's Word. The thought of facing my sins at the Judgment terrified me.

First Timothy 5:24 states, "Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after." The good news is that you can send your sins on before you. You can be saved and have your sins placed in the sea of forgetfulness, never to be remembered against you again.

The Awfulness of Waking Up in Hell

The last tragedy awaiting the sinner is to awaken in hell. When King Belshazzar saw the handwriting on the wall, it was spelling out his doom, and he knew it was too late.

You may not believe in hell, but not believing in hell will not diminish the reality of a devil's hell. You cannot argue hell out of existence. Even though you may not believe in hell, it will be just as hot for you when you get there as if you had believed in it all your life. The fires of hell burn so violently that all the water in the seas could never quench them.

When you have been in hell for one hour, you will have suffered more than ten thousand tongues could ever tell. Hell is a place of intense suffering. The pains of hell will be so intense that there will be no possibility of sleeping or fainting, not even for a moment. The sad thing is that it will last forever.

To suffer immeasurably without hope of escape is more than the mind can fathom. Friend, it is unreasonable to assume there is an eternal Heaven but not an eternal hell. The same Scriptures that speak of an eternal Heaven also describe an eternal hell. Eternal punishment is as much a truth in God's Word as the rewards of the righteous. Hell is one long night, and after you have been there for ten billion years and look toward the future, you will only be able to see eternity stretching on and on without hope. No tongue can describe and no imagination can conceive the awfulness of hell.

Would you think about this for a moment? I have often thought of the horror of arriving at the gates of hell. Oh, how terrible it would be to see that the gates of hell are opening for you! If you, as a sinner, see that hell is your home, your peace and quietness will fly away forever, and you will mourn and weep and gnash your teeth in pain, but all in vain. Friend, to put off getting saved is too great a risk!

While Satan is trying to destroy you, God has provided a way for you to be saved. If you are serious about escaping hell, the time to act is now. You must repent of your sins and receive Jesus Christ as your Savior. He is God's sacrifice for your sins. If God would give me the ability to paint a picture of what it means to be unsaved without God and without hope, heading toward the Judgment and an eternal hell, I am confident that every unsaved person would get saved immediately. Sinner friend, backslider, if you could see the Judgment as it is going to be, if you could see hell as terrible as it really is, and if you could see a Holy God who is going to punish sin, you would fall down on your knees right now and ask Jesus Christ to be your personal Savior.

You may say, "I don't intend to be lost." You need to be awakened, sinner friend, because you are already lost. You do not have to do another thing to be lost, but the good news is this: Jesus Christ is anxious to save you from hell, if you will yield your heart and life to Him. The only way to avoid hell is to stay out of hell, and the only way to stay out of hell is to repent and believe the Gospel. Facing the Judgment unprepared to meet God is avoidable. Losing your soul and

dying without God is avoidable. Everyone who ends up in hell will be able to look back in life and see that he or she had at least one opportunity to get saved. How about you, friend? Are you going to look back and see that you could have gotten saved? Will this message stand before you throughout eternity? Will you be saying, "Oh, if I could just go back and relive that day, if I could just go back and have that opportunity again! What a fool I've been!"

Life's greatest blunder is to put off serving Jesus Christ. This is a mistake beyond repair and a tragedy for which there is no remedy. Once death overtakes you, this tragedy is final and irrevocable. A storm of wrath is gathering, but mercy has provided a shelter. However, if you neglect or refuse to enter that shelter, that refuge, the thunderbolts of eternal fury will burst upon you, and you will not escape. Won't you plead to God for mercy while the door of mercy is still open?

(Compact Disc TR-195M)

[Camp Meeting Report—contin. from page 2]
who believes and obeys. The pure Word not only saves the soul but also cleanses the inner man from all filthiness of the flesh. There was no lack of the Truth during this camp meeting. Faithful men of God boldly proclaimed the wonderful Words of Life to all in attendance. The ministry once again revealed to each of us the way to live a more perfect and consecrated life before the Lord.

We have now completed another glorious camp meeting and have come to the end of another year in the history of our lives and of the church. Hopefully, as we begin another new year, we will allow God to draw us closer to Him and to be more useful vessels for Him in the year to come.

What a Horrible Dream!

I dreamed that the Lord took my weekly contribution to the church, multiplied it by ten, and turned this amount into my weekly income. In no time I lost all my furniture and had to give up my automobile. Why, I couldn't even make a house payment! What can a person do on $10.00 a week?

Suppose the Lord took your offering and multiplied it by ten and made that your weekly income. How much would you earn? This question might give you some fresh insights into the stewardship needs of the church.

Jeremiah 3:14 Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion:

15 And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.

Returning to God

Brother Wayne Hafley

Have You Given Up Serving God?

In the Scripture reading God said that He was married to Israel. Some people take those verses of Scripture and say that when you backslide, you are still connected to the Lord, but that is not true. God is showing His love to the backslider. He does not want to deal with them harshly or with wrath. If you are a backslider, He is letting you know that He loves you and wants to deal with you gently to get you to return to Him. He does not want to bring wrath upon you. He wants to handle you in such a way that you will come back to Him willingly.

I want you to notice that when the Scripture says to return to the Lord, God said that He would give pastors according to His heart who will feed His people with knowledge and understanding. When people return to the Lord, He will bring them to Zion, and that is where He wants them to stay. When people leave Zion and go into denominations, they backslide and commit spiritual adultery. It is terrible to leave God out of your life and go back to where you once were and to mess around with Babylon. God wants you out of Babylon, and He wants you to stay out of there. When God gives you the Truth, He wants you to remain in the Truth. You need to be where it is preached by a true pastor.

In our Scripture text God lets the backslider know that He wants him to return. The word *return* lets you know that Israel had gotten off the right track. It implies that they were not where they once were; they had moved. Many people have made wrong moves already, and some are thinking about making wrong moves.

Dear one, do not let anyone or any spirit entertain you about giving up on God. No matter what problem you are having and no matter how much confusion you are in, you do not have to backslide. Thank God, God is still sitting on the throne, and you can go to the throne room to God and find help and strength in the time of need! Friend, if you begin to dry up spiritually, you will get weak, and you will become confused. If you are not careful, the

devil will get you to become discouraged to the place where you are ready to give up and not go to church at all, but you do not have to do that.

In the midst of confusion, thank God you do not have to get on the broad way. You can stay in the narrow way. You do not have to backslide on God. Many people backslide on the brink of a miracle, just when God is ready to help them.

Isaiah 62:1-3 reads: "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD shall name. Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God." You can have a crown of glory and victory, and you can be on fire for God.

His Power Can Keep You

In 1 Peter 2:9 Peter said, "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." There are many callings mentioned in the Bible. God calls people out of sin and out of Babylon.

Backsliding can be described as a husband and a wife separating. We want to look at it in that way. We need to give God all the honor, the praise, and the glory for what He has done. When you live joyfully and have praise in your heart to God, you will not backslide. However, when you lose that, you are no longer honoring Him. When a husband and wife separate, one has lost the honor of the other. I honor my wife, and she is to honor me as the head of the home. Paul said in Ephesians 5:25-27, 32: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. . . . This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church."

You should not lose your praise to God for salvation. In Revelation, Chapter 4, they laid their crowns down and gave them to Him and honored Him for the victory they had in their lives. Revelation 5:12 tells us, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." I have seen people who used to raise their hands in praise to God, but today they do not show much emotion or honor to their Savior. We ought to worship God, adore Him, and praise Him for the Lamb that was slain. I thank God for salvation! I thank God for the blood that was shed and for the sacrifice of the Lamb in the New Testament. Thank God, He will wash you and cleanse you from all sin. That is what bought the church. It is what brought us out of sin. If you will seek God, He will do everything in His power to keep you from backsliding.

When you begin to lose honor for your companion, it will not be long until you start looking somewhere else, and the same is true spiritually. I love the Lord, and I praise Him for going to the Cross and dying for my sins! Worthy is the Lamb! In John 1:29 John said, "Behold the Lamb of God."

Revelation, Chapter 14, says that they followed the Lamb and worshiped Him. We need to honor Christ for His atonement and for who He is. He has a name that is above all other names. He is the only One who is worthy of our praise. He did for me what no one else could ever do. There is no greater love than that a man would lay down his life for his friend. He did so much for me! I do not want to leave Him. No matter how rough times may be and no matter how much we have to suffer for the name of Christ, He is still worthy. We need to honor His Word. You cannot honor Him without honoring His Word. Also, you need to honor His church, His bride. She is the only one of her mother. Christ purchased the church with His own blood.

Babylon Opposes God's Law

Christ is mine, and I am His. He bought me, He owns me, and He has the right to be Lord of all in my life. You need to honor Him, submit to Him, and let Him rule your life. If you do that, you will not backslide.

If you are living for God, you need to keep your heart centered on God and put your whole heart into His service. You cannot be true to God and not put your whole heart in His service. When you are married, you must get your eyes off all others. Married people ought to be jealous for their spouse. This is not an angry jealousy, but it is for the love in their hearts for each other.

If you love the church, you will stay with the church. You will not start running around looking at something else or looking at Babylon, the mother harlot. In the Revelation, Chapter 17, God calls Babylon a harlot, and she can be easily identified by her spirit. She opposes God's law. A harlot is unfaithful. Sectarian churches and denominations are unfaithful to Christ. They are guilty of compromising on God's Word, compromising with sin, and compromising on God's holiness. Even some with the name Church of God have compromised holiness.

Israel played the harlot. God was against that in the Old Testament, and He is against it yet today. When Israel went into Canaan, God told them to leave the heathen women alone, but they went in there and married them and broke God's law. It is spiritual adultery to leave the Truth and go where false

doctrine is taught, even if they have the name Church of God over the door. If they are not going to be Church of God, they should take down the sign and change the name.

It takes more than having a sign over the door to be the Church of God. Isaiah 4:1 says, "And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach." Backslidden preachers often take backsliders with them. You should not try to flirt with Babylon. You ought to be true to God and honor Christ.

Hebrews 12:22-23 states: "But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect." If you have already come to Mount Zion, you need to stay there.

You are on your way to backsliding when you lose your honor for God. A husband and a wife's home is in danger when they quit honoring each other. Husband, your wife ought to be the best-looking woman in the world to you. Some women may be a little thinner and a little younger, but they do not have the love that your wife has. If you are married, you are to leave others alone no matter how good they might look to you. Babylon decked herself out, and she might look good to you, but you ought to leave her alone. A person who has gone into Babylon is void of spiritual understanding.

Backsliding Begins in the Heart

Some people have so let down on holiness and have become unfaithful to God. If you will not take a stand against evil, against that which is wrong, you are on your way to backsliding. You should be stirred up about what is going on around you that is leading men and women to hell.

Pastors are sent for a defense of the Gospel and to stand in the gap. God also gave evangelists, teachers, and preachers who will stand in the gap. If you will not stand for something, you will fall for anything. Some people have no backbone whatsoever. Woe to those who call good evil and evil good!

God's church is to be without mixing. In your marriage your companion is to leave all the others alone. You are not to join yourself with a harlot. If you become unfaithful to the standard, to the worship services, and to the revivals, that shows that you are unconcerned and on your way to backsliding. Serving God is not an in and out service. You must be persistent, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. If you are a part of the church of the Living God, you should not go after anything else. You are to leave the world alone and leave Babylon alone. You must shun the very powers of evil.

If you look at pornography, your mind is going to have lust in it and your heart will not be pure. When you lust after evil, you are in a backslidden condition. The fleshly body is made from the dust, and you need to stay really close to God and keep your mind on things that are pure and honest. If you are not careful, you will give in to temptation. James 1:14-15 tells us: "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

The Bible says that if a man lusts after a woman, he has already committed adultery in his heart. If you do that, you are breaking God's marriage law, and your heart is not pure. Proverbs 4:23 states, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." Backsliding starts in the heart. Lust forms in the heart. There is a lot of that going on today. The Internet is full of pornography. A child of God will not look upon that. The Word of God instructs you to set no wicked thing before your eyes. It will draw you away from Christ.

Keeping Your Commitment to God

The computer can be a time robber. It is a good thing to use, but it can become very time consuming. When you do not spend enough time in prayer and in God's Word, you are on your way out. When you do not spend enough time with your companion, your marriage will be in jeopardy. Married couples need to spend time together. When you got married, you made a commitment to each other. Husband, she is yours until death do you part. When you get saved, you make a commitment to God. You dedicate yourself to the Truth of God's Word, and you ought to stay with it. You need to stick to your word and stay with the Church of God.

Second Corinthians 11:1-2 reads: "Would to God ye could bear with me a little in my folly: and indeed bear with me. For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." The church is to stay pure and holy as a chaste virgin to Christ.

In Luke, Chapter 15, when the prodigal son left his father's house, he wasted his substance on riotous living. When he decided to come home, he was willing to go home and be whatever his father wanted him to be. He went back confessing, "I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son" (Luke 15:21). His father was ready to take him back. That is just like our Heavenly Father.

Spiritual adultery is a condition of the heart. Where your heart is, there your treasure is also. If you lose your first love, Christ will have something against you, and it calls for repentance. Revelation 2:4 states, "Nevertheless I have somewhat

against thee, because thou hast left thy first love."

Christ had somewhat against them. I want you to notice that in this church age, they did have some good qualities. They had some things that were commendable. However, they also had something wrong: they had left their first love. Notice that it does not say that they had lost their first love, but they *left* it. They were not putting it into practice.

You cannot be neutral about the things of God and stay saved. There is no retirement for the child of God in this world. Christian retirement is out of this world. I want to be a faithful servant and never backslide. I want to be like Paul in 2 Timothy 4:7 when he said, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith."

In Jeremiah, Chapter 2, God asked Israel, in so many words, "Why did you leave Me?" They had no occasion against Him. Backslider, why did you go away? There is no reason for backsliding, because God has not done you wrong. He has done His best for you, yet you left Him. It does not make sense. You have no reason to leave Him.

The reason some people backslide on God is that they fool around, and then their hearts become deceived. Often they begin to grumble and complain about the Bible standard; then they start hunting for somewhere else to go to church that has a lower standard. They like the name Church of God, so they look for one where they are not as straight. Remember, God's Word requires the same thing from all of us. It is the Word of God that will judge us all in the end.

"A Deceived Heart Hath Turned Him Aside"

Isaiah 44:20-22 says: "He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand? Remember these, O Jacob and Israel; for thou art my servant: I have formed thee; thou art my servant: O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me. I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee."

A deceived heart feeding on ashes cannot find enough strength to live for God and live holy. Ashes do not have any nutrients or strength in them. God said to come out of Babylon. You cannot live on the crumbs of Babylon. The sound of the millstone, or the sound of the grinding at the mill, is no longer down there. They do not preach the one church. They are just as liberal as they can be. You had better get out and get some food for your soul. You can get the bread of life at the Father's house. You can start enjoying the Truth and living for God and being victorious.

Saint, you ought to be serious about holiness. You should not listen to anyone who has compromised on the standard. In Galatians 1:6-7 Paul said: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another." God loves singleness of heart.

Ezekiel 33:11 says, "Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" Backslider, God wants you to take heed and return. He is a loving God. He wants you to return. It is not God's will that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. God does not want to deal with you in wrath. He delights in mercy. On the other hand, if you refuse to return, God will bring down His wrath upon you.

Backslider, you are in a very dangerous position. The goodness of God ought to lead you to repentance. God is willing to take you back. He wants to. He is pleading and doing everything He can to get you to return to Him. It may seem as though everything is going really well in your life, but God is trying to handle you with love to get you back. If He cannot win you with love, He will work in other ways. We are not serving God just to escape His wrath. We are serving God because we love Him. That is just one of the benefits that we have. We serve a merciful God, but we also serve a God of wrath.

Where do you stand? If God were to call you home right now, where would you stand on the Day of Judgment? Friend, if there is any doubt in your life, the Bible says to make your calling and election sure. You can know that your name is in the Lamb's Book of Life. You can know that nothing is between you and the Savior. What a beautiful life! Romans 8:1 reads, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." If you are fooling around, you will have condemnation. If you will be honest of heart and turn to God, He will bless you abundantly. I cannot praise Him enough for what He did for me. You are highly privileged for God to visit you.

(Cassette C-5113E)

Life may be short, but it gives most people time to outlive their good intentions.

[Faith — continued from page 13]
the angels would shout over one sinner who fell on his knees, and he was not afraid of a little excitement. It's worth it!

Did Paul tell the jailer to give up his bad habits, to quit his meanness, and to be decent? No. That is nothing but reformation. It is like whitewashing a dirty house or tying artificial flowers on a rose bush.

Did Paul tell him to change his environment? No. If your automobile will not run, you cannot make it go by taking it out of the garage and putting it in the parlor. It has to be fixed on the inside. It is not a new town or a new suit of clothes that a man needs; it is a new heart.

Did he tell him to go and join a church? No. Joining a church does not make a man a Christian anymore than going to an insane asylum makes him a lunatic. Something has to happen before he gets there.

Did he tell him to follow his conscience? No. That is what Germany did. A man's conscience may be scared and land him in hell!

"What must I do to be saved?" Well, what did Paul tell him to do? Only one thing: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." What does that mean? It sounds very easy, doesn't it? Well, it is just as easy as it sounds.

In the first place, when the Bible says to believe, it is always confidence, trust, and faith that are meant. That is what Paul was talking about. He was telling the Philippian jailer to put his confidence, to put his trust, and to put his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is only one kind of faith. You need to get that settled in the beginning. A man says, "I want to believe, but I haven't the right kind of faith." If you have any faith at all, you may be sure it is faith of the right kind. There is only one kind of faith, and it is the same kind you exercise every day in regard to other people. If you went around without any faith in anyone, people would say, "The poor fellow is not right above the eyes."

Suppose you want to fly to another city, but you never start because you haven't any faith in the airline management's word that they would fly their planes as their schedule says they would.

Suppose you would like to deposit some money in the bank, but you haven't enough faith in the teller to believe that he is not a rascal.

"Oh," says the banker, "you preachers are too impractical. You are too visionary. You talk too much about faith. That doesn't interest the businessman, except for a few moments on Sunday morning." But how long could a banker operate his bank if it was not for faith? Every time a man makes a deposit in the bank, he is exercising faith in the banker, in his ability to run the bank, to invest the funds wisely, and faith in his character, faith that he will not run off to Canada with the cash.

In the next place, this ought to help you to see that believing on the Lord Jesus Christ is not the same thing as believing about Him. To believe something about a man is merely the result of a mental operation. To believe on a man is to put your confidence in him and trust him for what he is able to do for you. I may believe that the surgeon is able to remove this gnawing cancer from my body. I show my faith in the surgeon when I trust my body to his knife for the operation. I may believe the banker to be a good financier and an honest man. I show my faith in him when I hand him my money and put it at his disposal.

Some scientists in Scotland once offered a lad a nice little sum of money if he would allow himself to be let down with a rope, over a cliff in a mountain gorge, in order to get a rare specimen of flower growing down there. The lad looked at the money and longed for it because his parents were poor; but when he looked down into that fearful chasm, two hundred feet deep, he shuddered and said, "No." After some persuasion, he replied, "I'll go if my father will hold the rope." That was faith. Of course, there was a mental aspect to it—what he knew and what he believed about his father, about the strength of his father's arms, and the love of his father's heart. He believed in the Bible sense: he believed on his father; he had faith when, by an act of his will, he allowed his father to fasten the rope about his body and lower him down.

Yes, believing *about* is different from believing *on*. Suppose there is a bridge before me. I may believe that it is strong enough to bear me up. I believe on the bridge when I trust my weight upon it to go to the other side.

A man may say, "I believe in Christ; I have always believed in Him." But when I ask him what he means, I find that he is talking about mere mental acquiescence. You may believe a ship is seaworthy and can carry you over the ocean to Europe. That is an exercise of the brain. But when you trust yourself to the ship to make the trip, that is a matter of faith. So you may believe all you want to about Christ, but that will never save your soul. You believe on Christ when, by an act of your will, you trust yourself to Him so that He can do His saving work in your soul. The very minute you so trust Him, that very minute, you are saved. You may ask, "Is it so simple as that?" Yes, it is. You can see why it is so when you stop a minute and ask who it is you are to believe on and trust in this way. Well, who is it? The verse, the text we have chosen, tells you. It is the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the order in which we think of it, we are to believe on Him, first of all, as Jesus. He is called Jesus to emphasize His redemptive office. "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." There is no use in quarreling with God about His plan of salvation. It is God's law that has been broken. His absolutely perfect justice demands that satisfaction be made, and certainly no reasonable

man will deny to God the right to say how that satisfaction may be brought about, so long as He does not violate the principle of justice itself or infringe upon the rights of others. So, in Jesus, God came Himself and satisfied the demands of justice for us; and when you accept Jesus as your Savior and believe upon Him as your Savior, God lifts the sentence of death off your soul; and so through, and because of, your faith in Jesus and His sacrifice for you, you will then be saved.

No one disputes the fact that Colonel Robert G. Ingersoll (a Civil War veteran and orator) was a brilliant man, but when handling religious subjects, he impressed the unbiased portion of his audience with the feeling that he was inclined to do a little too much of his thinking between his nose and his chin. When asked one day if there was a God, and if there was a future life, and if there was a hell, and if there was a Heaven, he said that he did not know. When a man does not know and is not sure, and at the same time has no better faith to give than he tries to get another man to throw away, he is engaged in a low and a mean sort of business. One might as well knock the crutch from beneath a cripple and leave him lying helplessly in the gutter. That would be an act of nobility compared with this other thing of which I speak.

A man who does not know and is not sure is most certainly, of all men, the most foolish when he ridicules God's way of salvation. Two friends were talking. They discussed the question of punishment for sin in a future life and settled it to their own satisfaction that there was none. They argued that God is a God of love and could not allow anyone to suffer. They decided that hell was a myth. The conversation ceased, and then a man who had been a silent listener said, "Suppose it's true after all?" The words seemed to cut the air and to fall on their ears with crushing force, and the men were silent. God had spoken through that man.

Suppose it is true after all that God must punish sin! Suppose it is true after all that Jesus is the world's only Savior! Suppose it is true after all that the much despised blood of Jesus is the only thing that can cleanse a man from his sins! Suppose it is true after all!

Then we are to believe on Him as Lord. He is called the Lord to emphasize His kingly office. He is to be your King, and you are to let Him reign in your life. A king has authority over his subjects, and if he has the power, he protects them. Our King is all powerful. I like to think of Him not only as my Savior but also as my Keeper.

"Satan trembles when he sees the weakest saint upon his knees." If you will take the Son of God as your Lord in every trouble, in every sorrow, yes, and in every temptation, you will find him by your side, and by His grace you can overcome. What is it that God has said about this? George Keith put it in song: "*The soul that in Jesus hath leaned for repose, I will not, I will not desert to his foes; That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake, I'll never, no, never forsake.*"

We are to believe on Him as Christ. This name is used to emphasize his priestly office. He is the Anointed One of God, and as the Great High Priest, He is standing just now before the throne of God, interceding for all who believe on Him and accept Him. It makes one feel like singing, "Hallelujah, what a Savior!" A Jesus who redeems, a Lord whose arm is swift as a ray of light to help me when my feet commence to slip; and if I should go down, a Christ to stand before God and make it right. Yes, hallelujah, what a Savior!" "Believe on the Lord and thou shalt be saved." What I said earlier, I repeat: the very minute you believe on Him, that very minute, He will save you.

"But, preacher," you say, "you don't mean to preach instantaneous conversion, do you, that a man can be saved in a minute?" Yes, most assuredly. You might as well expect to shoot off a gun by inches as to expect a man to be converted by degrees. I was born by the side of the Tippecanoe and can swim as easily as I can walk. I have saved a few people who got in beyond their depth, but I never found one of them who did not want instantaneous salvation from drowning. If I should go to you and say, "Look here, your life is so vile, you are so low down, and so far gone that God will have to work on you seventy-two hours at least before you can have any assurance of salvation!" you would answer: "Why, I can't wait seventy-two hours to be saved. I may be dead and in hell before that time. What I want is to be saved and to be saved now!"

Oh, my friend, that is what you want. At least, that is what you need, and I pray God that you may see it now. If you cannot die for your own sins, then Someone must die for you, and there is only One whose death for you can atone for your sins in the sight of God. I have told you who He is. I have preached to you in this message.

The story of Arnold von Winkelried is old, but it is so thrilling and so inspiring that it must not be forgotten. A great army was marching through Switzerland, and everywhere its path was marked with blood and the ghastly ruin of war.

The Swiss men, rich-veined with patriotic blood, had gathered from the mountains and the valleys to fight for their homes and their fatherland, but they were untrained and armed only with what weapons they had found. They could not break the well-formed phalanx of the enemy marching close together behind their shields and threatening spears. The Swiss said: "We are lost; our homes must perish and our land go into bondage!"

Then Arnold von Winkelried stepped out and said: "Men of Switzerland, listen to me!" They asked, "What will you do?" He replied, "This day I will give my life for my

country. In yonder valley lies a happy home where my wife and children await my return, but they shall see me no more. Follow me," he cried. "I will break the lines, and then do your duty. Fight every man as best you can, and Switzerland will be free." Singlehandedly and alone, he sprang forward, going where the spears were thickest, and shouting as he ran, "Make way for liberty! Make way for liberty!"

A hundred gleaming spears were turned to catch him on their points. As he gathered them up in his breast, the enemy broke its ranks, and through the gap made by his gallant sacrifice, the Swiss poured in terrific onslaught, and won a battle the like of which the world had never heard. No wonder, when you go to Switzerland today and mention the name of Arnold von Winkelried that the faces of those who live in those world-famed hills and valleys will light up and their eyes fill with tears because of his blessed memory.

But there was One, two thousand years ago, who did a grander thing than that, whose sacrifice set a whole world free. All the powers and principalities of evil were lined against us, and hosts of Satan, black-pinioned from hell, held us at their mercy. Every method of attack had failed; every divine maneuver for our rescue had been thwarted by the wiles of the devil, and our sinful weakness and humanity stood hopeless and undone.

Then Jesus Christ stepped out, and the hosts of Heaven said: "What will You do?" He replied, I will this day give my life for the world." He said to the battered and besieged sons of men: "Follow Me, and I will break the lines; then do your duty, and fight as best you can, and you shall be free."

Singlehandedly, with the instrument of His death, He rushed upon the ranks of hell, and into His own bosom, where dwelt the soul of God, He gathered all the fiery darts that hell could hurl and opened the way of salvation for all who will follow Him.

Will you follow Him today?

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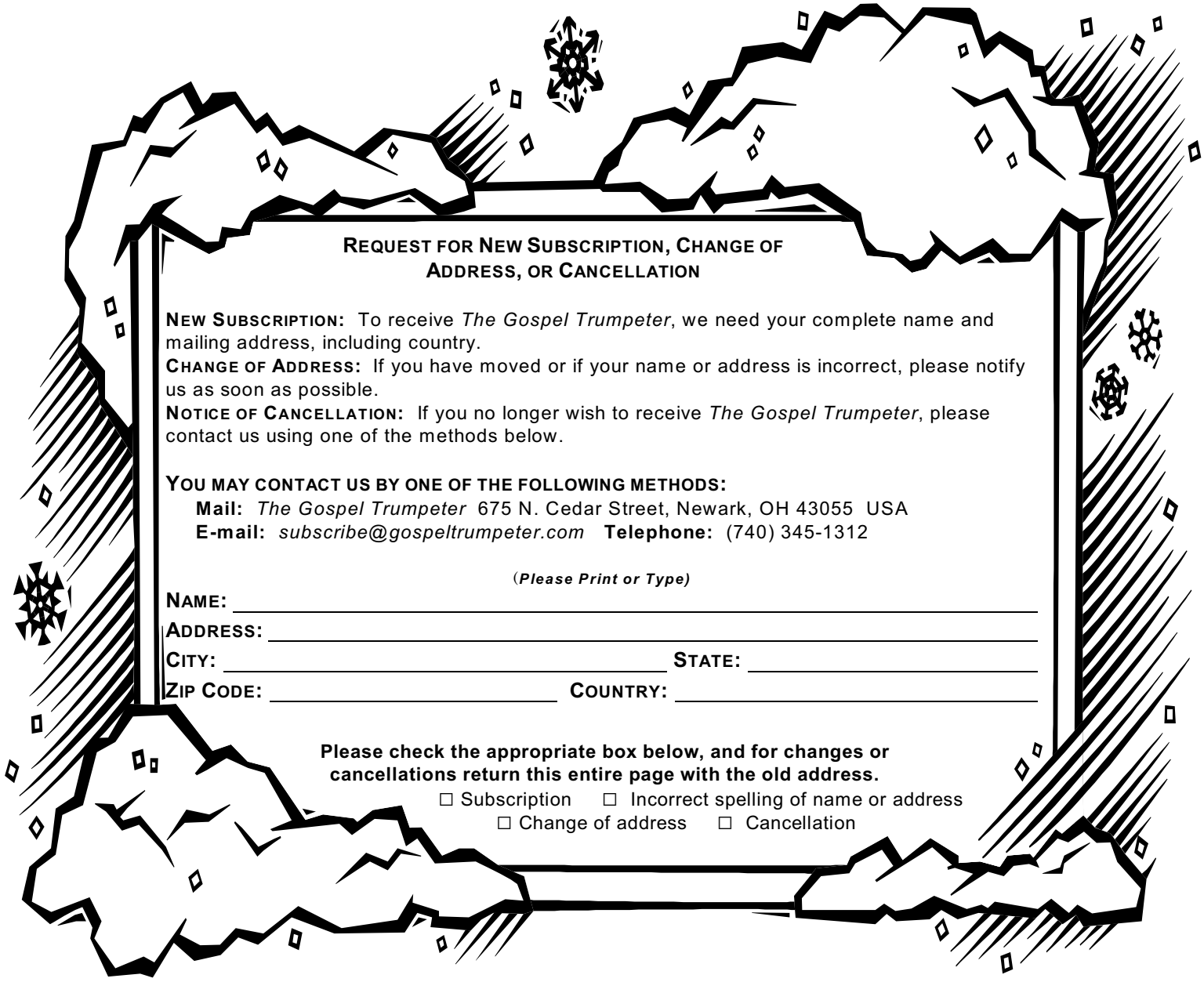

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