

# The Gospel Trumpeter

“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. 41 July 2011 No. 7



Church of God Tabernacle in Newark, Ohio

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

*Psalms 122:1*

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"For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound,  
who shall prepare himself to the battle?"

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PRAYER: If you need prayer, please phone or  
write:

Roger Decker, Pastor  
83 Decrow Ave.  
Newark, OH 43055

Email: pastor@godsacres.us  
Phone: 740-344-2543 or 1-888-730-0461  
Fax: 740-344-4737  
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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.

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Brother Roger L. Decker . . . . . Editor  
Workers Too Numerous to Mention

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**THE CHURCH OF GOD BELIEVES IN:**

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

**SOME SPIRITUAL FACTS**

**PERTAINING TO THE CHURCH**

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

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Vol. 41 June 2011 No. 6

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# Guest Editorial

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

Psalm 122:1

## LET'S GO TO CAMP MEETING

It is the first of June and almost time for another camp meeting season to begin at God's Acres. In a few weeks (June 19), we will gather together on the old campground. It will be a time to worship together with the dear saints. As always, camp meeting is a special time of year when we gather in to enjoy the godly atmosphere. It is a time when, as saints, we can escape the hassles of life and have our souls refreshed. What a wonderful opportunity to feast on heavenly manna and to enjoy the good things God has to share with us.

The Lord always prepares a table for His people so He can encourage hearts that need to be uplifted. He is so gracious to enrich our hearts with greater wisdom and understanding. In addition to this, He challenges the saints to keep pressing toward the goal. We, too, are like the Psalmist who said, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD." He knew the importance of going to the house of the Lord. There he received help and instruction for his spiritual needs. We surely believe the Psalmist looked forward to joining others to fellowship and to hear the Word of God proclaimed.

All things are being made ready for your arrival at God's Acres. The saints have been working hard to get the campground and the facilities ready for your stay. The appearance of God's Acres is certainly important, but

that is not our highest priority. Having a spiritual atmosphere for people to come into is our greatest desire and purpose. Our burden and prayer is for the Holy Spirit to be free to work and to do as He pleases in the services. When He is in the midst and having His way, needy souls are able to find help and hope. Camp meeting is for the lost and the downtrodden and also a time for the saints to have their strength renewed and their souls encouraged.

We are living in troublesome times, seeing the forces of evil turned loose against the people of God. Forces led by Satan are determined to destroy our faith and to defeat us, if possible. Satan's purpose is to turn away as many as possible from the path of holiness and true righteousness. Dear one, we need all the instruction and direction that we can receive of the Lord. Learning about the good old paths and understanding those things that please God are as needful today as ever.

The Hebrew writer instructed us not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together (Hebrews 10:25). It is through hearing the Word of God, believing it, and obeying it that brings victory to the soul. In James 1:22 James also proclaimed good admonition when he said to be doers of the word, and not hearers only. Saint, this is no time to relax your efforts or to become indifferent, but rather it is time to do as

[continued on page 12]

# The Devil

*Brother Roger L. Decker*

## **Rightly Divide the Word of God**

As we study the doctrine of the devil once being an angel in Heaven, I will use the Word of God, which is the Voice in all spiritual matters. One false theory is used to prop up another false theory, and they all go together. The Word of God says in 2 Timothy 2:15, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

The word *dividing* as it is used here means "to make a straight cut." When you rightly divide something, you have to make a straight cut, and that is what dividing the Word of Truth means. The Holy Spirit does not teach multiple choice when it comes to the doctrines in the Word of God.

The children sing a song that says, "*The devil is a sly, old fox. I'd like to catch him and put him in a box; lock the box up and throw away the key for*

*all the dirty tricks he's played on me.*" No one likes the devil, and you should not like him.

Sometimes much credit is given to the devil, as if he could overpower each individual at will. Now, he does have power over the natural man, or the man void of the Spirit of God. However, he does not have power over the child of God. He has the power to tempt, but you can have power to say no to the temptation through the Spirit of God. You do not have to yield to the temptations of the devil. God's Word says in 1 Corinthians 10:13, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

The devil is powerful when it comes to temptation, deceit, and evil; but how is his power compared to God's? Luke 8:26-33 states:

"And they arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, which is over against Galilee. And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man, which had devils long time, and ware no clothes [we know where immodesty comes from; it is right in the Word of God], neither abode in any house, but in the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God most high? I beseech thee, torment me not. (For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For oftentimes it had caught him: and he was kept bound with chains and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and was driven of the devil into the wilderness.)

"And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? And he said, Legion: because many devils were entered into him. And they besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep. And

there was there an herd of many swine feeding on the mountain: and they besought him that he would suffer them to enter into them. And he suffered them. Then went the devils out of the man, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked." This shows you that even the swine cannot stand the devil.

How powerful is the devil? The Bible lets us know that Jesus cast out many devils. Again, verses 30 and 33 read, "And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? And he said, Legion: because many devils were entered into him. . . . Then went the devils out of the man, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked." Jesus cast many devils out of the man. Jesus said in Luke 11:20, "But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you."

### **The Devil's Purpose**

The devil's power is darkness. In Colossians 1:13 Paul wrote, "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." The devil loves to keep people from walking in the light, if possible. The devil is a spirit. Today many people dress up like they think the devil looks, with horns, a pitchfork, and a long tail; but in reality, the devil is a spirit. Jesus cast out many spirits. Ephesians 2:2 says, "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience."

When Jesus cast the devils out of the man who lived among the tombs, He cast out spirits. In Luke 8:29 we read, "For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man." John 13:2 reads, "And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to be-

tray him." What was John saying? He was saying that an evil spirit entered into the heart of Judas.

Everybody agrees there is a devil, and everybody agrees there is temptation. Most people know they have to be tempted to commit sin. Here is where the difference in doctrine is. Often people say, "Just preach Jesus," but you cannot separate Jesus from the doctrine. The factor that separates people is the doctrine.

First Corinthians 14:33 reads, "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints." Since the beginning, it has been the plan and the work of Satan to come against man and the work of God to distort, to confuse, and to deceive. His main goal is to lead man away from the divine plan of present and eternal salvation. In many instances, his work has been effective, and especially when he can take the divine, inspired Word of God and misinterpret and misapply the meaning in the message of God's Eternal Word.

Second Timothy 3:16 states, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God [that means it is God breathed; it was God who brought the Word], and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." You would not know how to live right if it were not for the doctrine, for the Word of God, and for being reproofed and corrected.

### **The Origin of Satan**

One false theory circulating around the religious world is that the devil was once a resident of God's eternal Heaven. This is false. If the devil could get into Heaven, anyone could get in there. Let us look at these verses that are misused so that you can get the truth concerning the subject. Again, 2 Timothy 3:16 states, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."

Let us start with the beginning of Satan. Is that not the best place to start? If you want to start on something, you should go back to the foundation, or the beginning. What is Satan? Some teach that he was a fallen angel. Did he get puffed up with pride and God cast him out of Heaven? Let me ask you these questions: Could you do the same thing if you were to go to Heaven? Could you get puffed up with pride in Heaven? Would God kick you out of Heaven? If you were to get swelled up with pride in Heaven, where would the temptation come from? Are you secure when you go to Heaven? With the false teaching that the devil was once in Heaven, there would be no security in Heaven. If an angel could supposedly get kicked out of Heaven, where would that leave you and me? These are some things to think about.

The best way to start at the beginning is to begin with the words of Jesus. He explained things so well. In John, Chapter 8, Jesus was speaking to the Jews of that day. The Jews always proclaimed two names: Abraham and Moses. Jesus had to deal with the Jews concerning Abraham and Moses throughout the Gospels. Even though they had been dead for many years, the Jews would always resurrect them, so to speak, in conversation.

John 8:39-43 reads: "They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God. Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word."

Jesus let them know who their father was. In verse 44 Jesus said,

"Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it."

Here we can find four things about the devil from his origin: First, he is a murderer. Second, he abode not in the Truth. Third, he is a liar. Fourth, he is the father of lies. You cannot go back any farther than the beginning. All these things were the devil's characteristics from the beginning. The *beginning* means "at the first estate." The devil is a murderer of souls; he destroys men's souls. He destroyed Eve's soul in the garden.

How does the devil work? Let me mention an example. Suppose he works in a congregation and gets a man crosswise. When a person gets miserable, he does not stay to himself. Misery loves to have company. Therefore, he works on others and makes them miserable. You see, the devil is a destroyer, and he works through people, and they destroy other souls who go along with them. He works through darkness and deception.

### What Are Angels?

You may say, "Well, the devil was an angel." Have you ever read that in the Bible? What are angels? Hebrews 1:14 tells us, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" What does it mean to minister to someone? It means, "to serve, to wait upon, to take care of." How do they minister? Matthew 4:11 says, "Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him [Jesus]."

Angels ministered to Peter in prison. Acts 12:7 says, "And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains

fell off from his hands."

We read that angels ministered to Lazarus in death in Luke 16:22, which states, "And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried." Psalm 34:7 says, "The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them."

Luke 20:28-36 reads: "Master, Moses wrote unto us, If any man's brother die, having a wife, and he die without children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. There were therefore seven brethren: and the first took a wife, and died without children. And the second took her to wife, and he died childless. And the third took her; and in like manner the seven also: and they left no children, and died. Last of all the woman died also.

"Therefore in the resurrection whose wife of them is she? for seven had her to wife. And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection."

Angels cannot die; they are immortal. If they do not die and they do not marry, then the number remains the same. In this life our numbers increase because people can marry and bear children, but the angels cannot. God started with angels, and the angels remain the same. Since they do not die and they do not marry, what He started with always remains the same. You see, an angel did not get kicked out, because the number stays the same. Angels are not free, moral agents. If they were, where is the plan of salvation for the angels?

Animals are not free, moral agents either, and there is no salva-

tion for animals. Man is the apex of God's creation. Inside you and me, God put the right of choice. God gave us the plan of salvation, but there is no plan of salvation for the angels. There is no plan of salvation for animals because they have no right of choice.

### A Proverb Against the King of Babylon

Now I want you to look at some Scriptures often used to prop up the theory that the devil was once a resident of Heaven where God dwells. Their favorite Scripture is Isaiah 14:12, which reads, "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!" They take that one Scripture out of context, but on the surface, it looks as though they are right. To rightly divide the Word of Truth, you must remember that you have to cut it straight.

You cannot rightly divide a Scripture and lift it out of its context. You have to consider the surrounding Scriptures and apply the verses before and after that one verse. That is how you rightly divide the Word of Truth. What was Isaiah talking about? Remember, now, Satan had already been around for more than three thousand years prior to this, long before Isaiah had ever come into the picture.

Let us go back to Isaiah, Chapter 14. There are two main objects in this chapter: one is the kingdom of Israel and the other is the kingdom of Babylon. Verses 1-3 read: "For the LORD will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land: and the strangers shall be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob. And the people shall take them, and bring them to their place: and the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of the LORD for servants and handmaids: and they shall take them captives, whose captives they were; and they shall rule over their oppressors. And it shall come to

pass in the day that the LORD shall give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve."

Verse 4 says, "That thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased!" A *proverb* is a parable or a taunting speech, or it can be insulting remarks. Who was this proverb against? The Scripture says he would "take up this proverb against the king of Babylon." What caused the king of Babylon to lose his throne? Who was the king of Babylon? Why was this called "the golden city"? Nebuchadnezzar had a dream, and only Daniel could give the dream and the interpretation. The Prophet Daniel said in Daniel 2:38, "And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold." Isaiah was prophesying of a parable, or a mockery, of the downfall of a mighty, powerful, puffed-up king, the king of Babylon, and that king was King Nebuchadnezzar. The proverb has not ended.

Verses 5-8 read: "The LORD hath broken the staff of the wicked, and the sceptre of the rulers. He who smote the people in wrath with a continual stroke, he that ruled the nations in anger, is persecuted, and none hindereth. The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet: they break forth into singing. Yea, the fir trees rejoice at thee, and the cedars of Lebanon, saying, Since thou art laid down, no feller is come up against us." Oh, what a mockery against that king!

Verses 9-12 continue: "Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like

unto us? Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee. How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!"

### Who Was Lucifer?

Throughout Isaiah, Chapter 14, it speaks of King Nebuchadnezzar, and yet some say that verse 12 supposedly changes to the devil. On the contrary, when the first eleven verses are talking about the king of Babylon, King Nebuchadnezzar, it does not suddenly change to the devil. *Lucifer* is a Latin word for "day star." This is not talking about Satan. It is a proverb spoken against King Nebuchadnezzar.

Verse 13 says, "For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, [You would not have to ascend someplace if you were already there. Where did the king say it? He said it in his heart.] I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north." Verses 15-17 continue: "Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners?" Who was it? It was a man, King Nebuchadnezzar. You will notice that the one who did the falling was already here on earth.

Daniel 4:28-36 states: "All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar. At the end of twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon. The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty? While the word was in the king's

mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee. And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws.

"And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me."

Here is where the king really got his eyes opened and finally received good understanding. This is something that ought to help us. Verse 37 reads, "Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase [or bring down]."

### Did Satan Fall From Heaven?

Another Scripture often used by those who promote the doctrine that

the devil was once in Heaven is: Luke 10:17-18: "And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." Now we come to the New Testament. The seventy had seen the devil cast out of people. Isaiah saw it, and then Luke wrote about it. In these Scriptures we find the seventy return with joy for the victories that they had done in Jesus' name. They rejoiced in the fact that the devils were subject to them through His name. You need to understand what Jesus was saying. Remember, they rejoiced in the fact that the devils were subject to them through His name. He did not say that Satan fell from heaven, but rather that he fell as lightning falls from heaven. He beheld Satan as lightning falls from heaven. This heaven is the aerial heavens, not where God dwells. The overthrow of Satan in someone's life is compared to lightning falling from heaven.

Just as a flash of light, as lightning lights up the sky, you can see the quick change that takes place when the devil is cast out of one's life. Just that quickly, when God enters a person's heart, there is a change and the devil is cast out. First Thessalonians 4:16 tells us, "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first." The dragon here represents pagan Rome. It was pagan Rome that was cast out. Pagan Rome was an instrument of the devil, called the dragon.

One time Jesus rebuked Peter in Matthew 16:23 and said, "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me." Peter was not Satan, but he was an instrument of Satan at that particular hour.

Now, there was war in heaven, but it was not where God is, because evil cannot get into God's Heaven. Therefore, the war could not have taken place up there. An

angel cannot get out of line with the other angels. The heaven that he was talking about is the same heaven that King Nebuchadnezzar got exalted up to. It was a place of control. Pagan Rome was in conflict with Christianity, so there was a war going on. Pagan Rome, the dragon, and its ministers were at war, going against the morning-time church with Jesus Christ's Apostles. There was a constant battle. You can read about this in the Acts of the Apostles. Chapter after chapter tells about the war that was going on.

Paganism, or the dragon, got cast down. Revelation 6:2 says, "And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer." What is this a picture of? The morning-time church going forth, conquering and to conquer. Look at the battle in Acts 17:22-23: "Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you."

Paganism had all kinds of gods, but I will not go into that right now. However, those gods were switched over to the statues in Roman Catholicism. Roman Catholicism has all kinds of gods too. The war was a spiritual conflict. The people were not out on a battlefield. In 2 Timothy 4:7, what did Paul say? "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." He stated in 2 Timothy 2:4, "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier."

### **Why the Devil Is Necessary**

Where did the devil come from? Isaiah 45:5-7 says: "I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no

God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the LORD, and there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things." Colossians 1:16 reads, "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him."

Revelation 12:7-9 reads: "And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him."

Let us look at Michael. Who was Michael? Michael is Jesus Christ; that is another name for Jesus Christ. Daniel 12:1 says, "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book."

Jude, verse 9, states, "Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee."

The devil is necessary. Is it not terrible to have some evil thing necessary? The devil was created to give you a choice. When you get saved, you do not just become as a robot, where God winds you up and you act like a robot that has no choice but to do His will. No, we have a choice. That is the reason

people praise God, because they chose Him instead of the devil. So God blesses them for the choices that they have made. We are creatures of choice, and to have a choice, there has to be at least two ways. Also, this is the only way you can truly serve God. You serve God through love; that is the reason you make the right choice.

The devil has one thing in mind, and that is to bring darkness upon you. He would love to get you not to walk in the light. He wants to bring deception and destruction upon you. Remember that his final aim is for you to be lost forever. He

not only wants you to be lost, but he wants all of those over whom you have influence to be lost as well. The devil is a spirit, and he will lead his captives into trouble; he will leave them in a hopeless state forever, if possible.

Then there is the other part: With the finger of God Jesus can cast out the devil. Many people continue to serve Satan. Friend, if you do that, you are going down a dead-end street, because somewhere on the highway of destruction, you are going to run into something that you cannot handle. Yes, you can be sure that it is com-

ing. It comes down every highway, and the only way out of it is to turn to God.

The devil has lots of tricks. God created man upright, but man sought out many inventions, or many different ways of handling things. The devil was created by God. The first time you read about Satan in the Bible, you read that he murdered a soul. He was a murderer from the beginning. The only way to overcome him is to have Jesus in your heart and to walk in the light.

*(Compact Disc TR-471A)*

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## Prayers That Never Die

*One breathe a prayer that reached God's throne  
And helped a troubled heart;  
But claimed no honor for his own,  
Though 'twas a blessed part  
He had in such a work as this  
Which God could never do,  
To bring sweet peace and holy bliss  
Had he not prayed clear through.*

*One breathed a prayer that saved a life  
From darkness and despair.  
That helped him look beyond the strife  
For grace his cross to bear;  
And thus along his pathway up  
He, too, reached forth a hand  
To share another's bitter cup  
And for the right to stand.*

*One breathed a prayer that saved a soul  
For heaven's crowning day,  
When he should reach his final goal  
Where saints forever stay;  
And where there's rest, and sweetest peace  
Not found on earth below,  
And where God's glories never cease  
As ages come and go.*

*They breathed the prayers that never died  
With fleeting things of time,  
But reached beyond this earthly tide  
To live forever sublime,  
Because they helped to reach a throng  
And win them to the Lord,  
Who'll honor Him in praise and song  
When heaven's their reward.*

*Selected*

## MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

**Summersville, WV**  
July 1-3

**REVIVAL:** The Church of God, 74 Armstrong Road, Summersville, WV 26651  
Evangelist: Brother Michael Wilks, Newark, Ohio  
Service times: Friday 7:00 p.m.; Saturday & Sunday 10:30 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.  
For further information contact: Pastor Earl R. Borders at telephone: 304-872-4047  
Visit our website @ [www.ChurchofGodSummersvilleWV.com](http://www.ChurchofGodSummersvilleWV.com)

*Leviticus 1:1 And the LORD called unto Moses, and spake unto him out of the tabernacle of the congregation, saying,*

*2 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any man of you bring an offering unto the LORD, ye shall bring your offering of the cattle, even of the herd, and of the flock.*

*3 If his offering be a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish: he shall offer it of his own voluntary will at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD.*

*4 And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him.*

*5 And he shall kill the bullock before the LORD: and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall bring the blood, and sprinkle the blood round about upon the altar that is by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.*

*6 And he shall flay the burnt offering, and cut it into his pieces.*

*7 And the sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire upon the altar, and lay the wood in order upon the fire:*

*8 And the priests, Aaron's sons, shall lay the parts, the head, and the fat, in order upon the wood that is on the fire which is upon the altar:*

*9 But his inwards and his legs shall he wash in water: and the priest shall burn all on the altar, to be a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD.*

*10 And if his offering be of the flocks, namely, of the sheep, or of the goats, for a burnt sacrifice; he shall bring it a male without blemish.*

*11 And he shall kill it on the side of the altar northward before the LORD: and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall sprinkle his blood round about upon the altar.*

*12 And he shall cut it into his pieces, with his head and his fat: and the priest shall lay them in order on the wood that is on the*

*fire which is upon the altar:*

*13 But he shall wash the inwards and the legs with water: and the priest shall bring it all, and burn it upon the altar: it is a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD.*

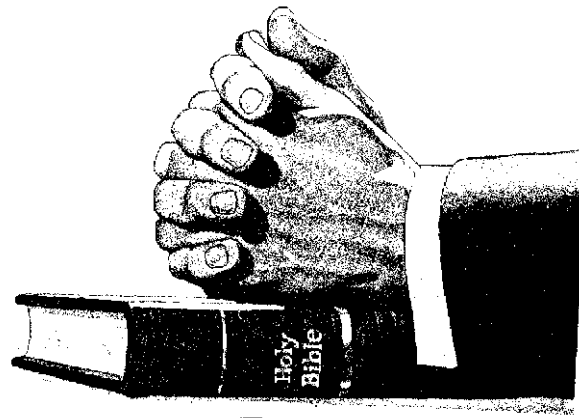
*14 And if the burnt sacrifice for his offering to the LORD be of fowls, then he shall bring his offering of turtledoves, or of young pigeons.*

*15 And the priest shall bring it unto the altar, and wring off his head, and burn it on the altar; and the blood thereof shall be wrung out at the side of the altar:*

*16 And he shall pluck away his crop with his feathers, and cast it beside the altar on the east part, by the place of the ashes:*

*17 And he shall cleave it with the wings thereof, but shall not divide it asunder: and the priest shall burn it upon the altar, upon the wood that is upon the fire: it is a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD.*

# God Accepts Nothing But Our Best



*Brother E. David Stegmeier*

## **Willingly Giving Your Best**

There is a very precious story that I want to use to introduce my subject. A little girl went to school one day. This little girl belonged to a very poor family. Her father had

died many years earlier, and she and her mother lived in a little house. One day at school the teacher asked all the students in class if they could bring a toy to school, because they were going to have a toy drive for the children's home. This little

girl went home, looked into her toy box, and found her best doll, Betsy, and took it to school the next day. She placed it in the box for the children's home.

When her mother picked her up that afternoon from school, she

could tell that her little daughter had been crying, so she asked her, "Honey, why have you been crying?" The little girl told her mother that she had brought little Betsy to school and put her in the box for the toy drive for the children's home. The mother asked her: "Why did you give your best doll? You love little Betsy."

The little girl looked up at her mother with tear-filled eyes and said: "Because all my other dolls have broken arms or legs or missing eyes. If I had given one of them, Mother, that would not be giving my best to someone else. I want some little girl to have all the fun and all the joy that my little doll, Betsy, has given me. If I had put anything less in there, that would have meant that I was giving less than my best."

My lesson is this: God accepts nothing but our best. No matter what your job is in the work of God, you ought to give the Lord your best. If you clean the restrooms or whatever you do, you ought to do your best. God wants your best, and He is worthy of your best.

I want to focus on verse 3 of my Scripture text, which reads, "If his offering be a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish: he shall offer it of his own voluntary will at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD." I do not believe that anyone should have to beg you to give God your best. You should voluntarily give Him your best. In our Scripture text, if an individual was rich and could afford it, he was supposed to bring a burnt offering with which he was to honor God from his cattle herd. This animal was to be a male without flaw, or perfect, and he was to offer it voluntarily, which means of one's own free will, not influenced by another or constrained. If an offering is going to please God, dear one, it must be done from a heart of love and not by constraint. It must be done willingly, and it must be your best.

Some people say they do not believe there is a God; that is a very serious thing. There *is* a God. Some day we each will stand before Him, and those who do not believe will be convinced then, but it will be too late. They will find themselves in hell. Some people even say, "At least I will have company." Dear one, hell will be no picnic.

### Serving God on His Terms

The Old Testament patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) built altars and made sacrifices to God wherever God told them to go and live. The worship of God was first and foremost in their minds. Cain and Abel offered the first sacrifices recorded in the Word of God. Genesis 4:4b-5a says: "And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect." Verse 7a says, "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door." Sin will destroy you. You must do your best to keep the devil at bay.

The respect of God is contingent upon the respect that God has for you, and that is contingent upon the quality of your sacrifice. I want to give God my best. If you want the approval of God, your gift must be your best. In 2 Corinthians 5:9 Paul said, "Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him." Cain, rather than taking care of his shortcomings, began to envy Abel and harbored feelings of resentment against him. It was not long until he murdered Abel. No doubt, Cain was proud and somewhat arrogant.

I have noticed through life that sometimes carnal people have problems with spiritual people. Rather than praying, reading the Bible, and drawing closer to God, they pick at spiritual individuals.

When I was a child, my mother was very godly. I remember that we had a large young people's group, and some would pick at the spiritual ones. Mother said, "That is the

way Cain was with Abel." The spiritual ones are oftentimes persecuted by those who are carnal.

There are two types of worshippers in the religious world: those who approach God on their *own* terms and those who approach God on *His* terms. You are not going to get to God and get God's approval on *your* terms. You have to come to God according to His terms. It must be your best.

When you go to church, you should dress in your best clothes. You do not need to have expensive clothes, but the clothes should be clean and modest. If you had the opportunity to visit a dignitary, such as your governor or the President, certainly you would dress well for the occasion. You are going to meet with King Jesus when you go to church.

Every time you go to church, you approach God. How do you approach Him? How are you trying to serve Him? Are you serving God on your terms or on His terms? After the great flood, Noah offered sacrifices of thanksgiving. The Word says Noah built an altar to the Lord and took of every clean beast and of every clean fowl and offered burnt offerings on the altar, and the Lord smelled a sweet savor. When you offer a sacrifice to God, what does He smell? Is He pleased?

God is pleased with offerings that come from a voluntary heart. The first thing Noah did was build an altar rather than build a dwelling for himself and his family. Today people say, "We have to build this house." If the Christian has to move, the first thing he does is make sure a true Church of God is there. If there is not, he will not move there.

### Offering an Acceptable Gift to the Lord

The Book of Leviticus pertains to the Levites, as it is said. The Book of Exodus was used as a guide for the priests in their ministry. These Books have great value. They illustrate the sacrifice of Christ and

the importance of a life of separation and obedience. We find in the Bible a number of sacrifices in the Old Testament, each portraying the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The burnt offering shows Christ's perfect dedication to God. This was offered without spot to God in complete obedience to the will of God. The great offering typifies a perfect character that emits a sweet fragrance to God. The peace offering shows the making of peace between God and men, and the reconciliation of the Jews and the Gentiles. There was a time when God was angry with man.

The sin offering typifies how Christ was made sin for us. The trespass offering shows how Christ removed the debt that you and I owed and how He paid it completely. All these sacrifices have been fulfilled in Christ. The ceremonial law, as we know it, was a type of the spiritual rule of Christ, a type of the spiritual Christ in our hearts.

Our Scripture text says in verse 3, "If his offering be a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish: he shall offer it of his own voluntary will at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD." Can you give anything less than your best? I do not think so. If you do, you are not giving the Lord the glory that is due Him.

First of all, your sacrifice needs to be without blemish. You must first be without sin. To really offer an acceptable gift to the Lord, you *must* be without sin. The Church of God teaches there is no sin in the church. The Bible speaks about perfection. An offering must come from a perfect, blameless heart that is pure of sin. First Peter 2:22-23, speaking of Christ, says: "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." In this verse *The Living Bible* says, "He never sinned, never told a lie, never answered

back when insulted; when he suffered he did not threaten to get even; he left his case in the hands of God who always judges fairly."

Second, when you bring the offering, you must do it freely. I will just be honest with you. I struggle to pay my taxes, but I love to give money to God's cause. Giving to the Lord must be voluntary, from a heart that is willing. Psalm 110:3 reads, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth." In the Old Testament God had to take those people by the hand, but in their hearts they wanted to be back in Egypt. His people are a willing people.

### No Substitute for Obedience

Years ago, when I was a little guy, my mother was the song leader, and in our song hymnal was an old song entitled "Our Best." We used to sing it a lot when my mother directed the songs, and this song says:

*Hear ye the Master's call, "Give Me thy best!"*

*For, be it great or small, that is His test.*

*Do then the best you can, not for reward,*

*Not for the praise of man, but for the Lord.*

*Wait not for men to laud, heed not their slight;*

*Winning the smile of God brings its delight!*

*Aiding the good and true ne'er goes unblest,*

*All that we think or do, be it the best.*

*Night soon comes on apace, day hastens by;*

*Workman and work must face testing on high.*

*Oh, may we in that day find rest, sweet rest,*

*Which God has promised those who do their best.*

*Every work for Jesus will be blest,  
But He asks from everyone his best.  
Our talents may be few, these may be small,  
But unto Him is due our best, our all.*

When you are in the house of God, you need to be sure your thoughts are the best. Are you giving it your best? How about your talents? your time? your possessions? Obedience must be complete before you offer your gifts. You do not give your gifts in lieu of obedience; obedience must come first. You may say, "I am going to do this because I have not been where I should be." No, you ought to take care of your disobedience, and then bring your gift.

First Samuel 15:22 says, "And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." Saul attempted to substitute sacrifices for obedience, and that does not work; that will not please God.

Our grandson sings a song entitled "What If I Give All?" It reads:

*He heard the preacher say  
A single dime can feed  
A hungry boy or girl  
With nothing to eat  
So he pulled a dollar  
From the pocket of his jeans  
And he asked his mama  
How many will this feed?  
She just smiled  
And when she told him ten  
He reached back again.*

*What if I give all I have?  
What will that gift do?  
My child, a gift like that  
Could change the world  
It could feed a multitude  
He didn't close his eyes  
Or turn away  
I can see him standing tall  
He saw the need  
And I can hear him say  
What if I give all?*

Three birthday dollars  
Could have bought a special  
toy

But he reminds me  
Of another little boy  
Who gave to Jesus  
A gift of fish and bread  
I wonder if he said,

What if I give all I have  
What will that gift do?  
My child, a gift like that  
Could change the world  
It could feed a multitude  
He didn't close his eyes  
Or turn away  
I can see him standing tall  
He saw the need  
And I can hear him say  
What if I give all?

And long ago a Father and a Son  
Saw the children lost in sin  
Can you see the tears  
In Father's eyes  
As Jesus said to Him,  
What if I gave all I have?  
What will that gift do?  
My Son, that gift  
Will change the world  
It will free the multitudes

What if I give all I have?  
What will that gift do?  
My child, a gift like that  
Could change the world  
It could feed a multitude  
We cannot close our eyes  
And turn away  
When we hear His Spirit call  
We see the need  
Now let Him hear us say  
What if I give all?  
What if I give all?

### Could You Do More for Jesus?

I ask you to be honest. The Lord deserves the best. Are you giving your best or are you holding back a little? Could you do a little more for Him? Could you help in a greater way?

Another old precious song says this:

*Give of your best to the Master,  
give of the strength of your youth  
Throw your soul's fresh glowing  
ardor, into the battle for truth  
Jesus has set the example, dauntless  
was He, young and brave;  
Give Him your loyal devotion, give  
Him the best that you have.*

*Give of your best to the Master, give  
Him first place in your heart  
Give Him first place in your service,  
consecrate every part  
Give, and to you will be given, God  
His beloved Son gave  
Gratefully seeking to serve Him, give  
Him the best that you have.*

*Give of your best to the Master;  
naught else is worthy His Love  
He gave Himself for your ransom,  
gave up His Glory above  
Laid down His life without murmur  
you from sin's ruin to save  
Give Him your heart's adoration, give  
Him the best that you have.*

*Give of your best to the Master  
Give of the strength, of your youth  
Clad in Salvation's full armor;  
Join in the battle for truth.*

Young person, while you are young, you ought to throw yourself into God's service 100 percent. God will bless you. You may question: "What about my school? What about my job?" You need to put first things first, then do your homework, and then do your other work. You must put God first.

What if you give all? Unless you are giving your all, you are not pleasing God. I am trying to encourage you and challenge you to do better. Are you truly doing your best? Will you give God your best? You need to witness for Him and be your best on the job, at school, and in the rest of your life. What if you give all? If you are not giving your all, won't you seek the Lord so that you can give Him your best?

(Compact Disc TR-618E)

[Guest Editorial—continued from p. 2]

Paul said in *Philippines 3:14*, "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." If you expect to make it through with victory, you must press firmly against the odds.

Camp meetings are designed with our spiritual welfare in mind. Our deep desire is to provide a spiritual atmosphere for those who come to God's Acres. We encourage you to attend the camp meeting to have your soul fed and your spirit refreshed. Although the cost of gasoline has skyrocketed, we are trusting that the Lord will make a way for you to attend. The Lord will surely amply repay every effort and sacrifice that you make.

Brother Decker extends a special invitation to each of you to join us here at God's Acres for the camp meeting. If you have not been here for a while, we will be eager to see you. Last, but not least, if you have not begun to pray for the camp meeting, we earnestly ask you to do so. God's direction and presence is most certainly needed in every service. Please pray for God to send the messages needed. Having Him in our midst as the Honored Guest is of utmost importance. He is the only hope of redemption for those who are lost.

#### Sowing and Reaping

*"He which soweth sparingly shall also reap sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall also reap bountifully."*

2 Corinthians 9:6

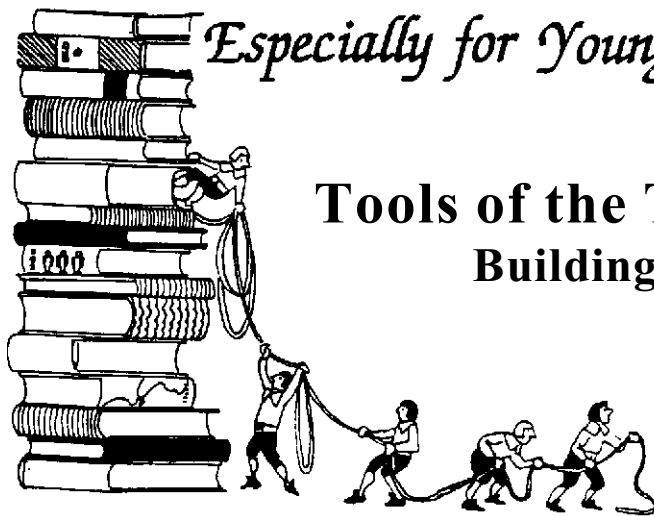
WHAT we reap depends upon what we sow.

—"Do men gather grapes of thorns and figs of thistles?"

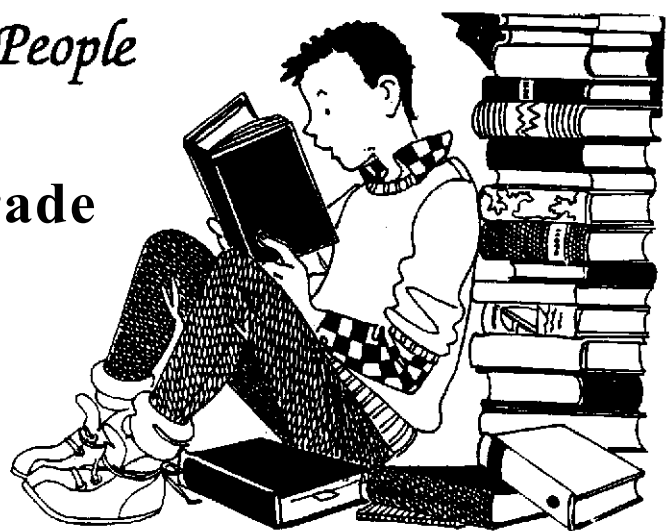
—"He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

—"Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

*Especially for Young People*



## Tools of the Trade Building



Matthew 7:24-25 reads: "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock." Psalm 127:1 states, "Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain."

In this lesson, I will relate something pertaining to my occupation or profession in the way of tools. I am a builder by trade. First, I would like to give you a brief background. I started working with my father more than twenty-five years ago. At that time, we mainly built houses and various other dwellings. Building those projects required the use of many different construction tools.

I like to work with my hands, and I like to see something accomplished physically. I find great satisfaction in seeing something improved. When an old house is remodeled and made into something very nice, the difference can be seen right from the start. If you were to take a before and after picture, you would see the difference. If you were to purchase a vacant piece of ground and build a house on it, you would see that something has been accomplished.

As I think about taking an old house and bringing it back to life, so to speak, it reminds me of a life in shambles. Just as the old house has broken windows, siding flapping, and doors hanging open, that is the same way many people appeared before they were saved. Their lives were in shambles, but the Lord took their wrecked lives and put them under construction. In the building process He added some things, removed some things, and changed some things. He makes us better, and we thank the Lord for that.

Salvation is what really brings the change and makes life better for everyone. It made my parents happy when I got saved. Christian young person, if your parents are saved, they are well pleased with you. That is the most important thing for you in this life. Sometime in your future, you may need a job, but the most important thing that you need to do is to keep your experience with Jesus Christ. You are building a spiritual house that you are going to live in forever.

Every one of us is in the building process. Before a person is saved, he has not built the way that God intended. These are the things I want you to consider. The foundation of a house is so important. You must insure that what you construct can withstand whatever may come in the future. I would not want to be in a tent if a

tornado were to come through. I would want everything to be secure. We must have our lives in order so that we can withstand the storms that come along. Our God has enabled us to do that, but we must follow His explicit instructions. Psalm 127:1 says, "Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it." Many people are building for the future, but unless the Lord is in the building of our lives, we may not withstand the storms that come. We must not leave the Lord out of the picture. He is very important! I once tried to build without the Lord, but I built on sinking sand, as the Scripture says. It was not very long until storms came along, and my foundation started to slip. Young person, you need to make sure that you do what pleases the Lord now, and it will be a help to you when you get older. You need to realize the value in that.

We each are building a structure, saint and sinner alike. The saint puts forth effort to see the Kingdom of God furthered. God puts that desire within you when you get saved. After you are saved, you will want to see others saved. When you find something better, you want to tell everybody about it; that is the way it works. If you are not sold on something, you cannot convince anyone else of it. Once you know that you have the best, it is not hard to sell salvation.

Young person, if you are saved, you and others are workers together with Christ. You want to see more souls get saved. One song asks, "Are you building up or are you tearing down the Church of God?" Every child of God is in the construction phase, not the destruction phase. We each are workers together with Christ.

In the business of building, I have been taught and have tried to establish this philosophy: "It may take more time, it may cost a little extra, but if you do it right the first time, it will pay in the long run." Doing it right the first time may require more effort and cost more money, but if you do it right the first time, the chances are, you will never have to do it again. It is the same way with the things of God. If you will do it right the first time, you will not have to keep backing up, retracing, and backtracking. I do not like to redo something. Once is enough.

If you will walk in Truth, God will establish your steps so that you can be exactly what you ought to be; then you will not have to retrace them. In other words, "Don't half do something; do it right or don't do it at all." Young person, you need to make your decisions with the future in mind. You must think about the end result of your actions. Consider how you would be affected by the moves and the decisions you make.

Many people think about the physical and the material things of this life, but they do not think about things in the spiritual realm. If they buy a car or a house, they want the best. If they buy clothes, they want the best. However, when it comes to spiritual things, they feel they can be a little lax.

The first thing a person should do before building is sit down and count the cost of what they want. It would be foolish to say, "I've got a hundred dollars, and I want to build a new house." That house would not get very far. Before building, you must sit down and go into the details and think it through: "What is this

going to entail when I start? I don't want to lay the foundation block and then run out of money."

When I was a child, I went to school on a road where the foundation of a house was laid, but nothing was ever built on it. Thirty years later it still sits there, and I wonder, "What happened?" It is better never to have started than to start and not finish.

When we start living for God, we should count the cost with full intentions to finish, by the grace of God. Serious consideration needs to be given to see if people have the means to do what they plan. In building a house, it may mean a loan payment for thirty years. One thing that many people lack today is a commitment. They say, "Well, if I can't pay for it, I'll let the bank have it back," or "If I can't make the payments, so what?"

You cannot be that way with the Lord. You will not even get started if you have that kind of attitude. You cannot start living for God with the attitude, "If this happens, I may not be able to live it." You must count the cost and determine that you are going to live for God no matter what comes your way. You need to commit to upholding your end of the contract in building.

A vow should be taken before the Lord, promising that you will be true to Him no matter what. Some of the same things that a literal builder must consider enter into building a spiritual house as well. Luke 14:28-30 says: "For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish." Again, it is better never to have started than to start and not finish. Some people have started well for the Lord, but the terrible thing is, they gave up. Why did they start and not finish?

What a distressing thought! They had a good start, but they never finished. Something happened. Perhaps they did not count the cost or something got in their way. Some things need to be fixed and settled before getting started.

One tool that I use as a builder is a hammer. I am thankful for power nailers and the different kinds of tools used to shoot nails, but a hammer is still a tool that I use. Two other tools that I have are a measuring tape and a level. They are some of the first tools that I take out of the truck. I use these tools to determine if something is placed correctly.

Once I have measured something, then I use a level to make sure it is plumb. Somebody might look at something and say, "Well, that looks good." However, he may be standing on a hill looking at it. How something looks depends on where you are standing. When you use the level and see that both of the bubbles are right in the middle, you know that it is correct. So it is with the Word of God.

You may hear something and think, "Well, that sounds right," but when you measure it with the Word, you realize that thing is way out of balance. A true level is something that you can measure from, and when something is standing exactly plumb, you can take a measurement from it and know it is correct. You can gauge anything by it. That is how the Word of God is. You can take a true measurement from it and know exactly where things stand.

As a builder, I know that I can trust my tools. If the bubbles are in the middle of the level, it is right on the mark. I can take the square and set it up, and it should line right up with that. Young person, you have something more sure than any one of those tools, and that is the Bible. When something does not line up with God's Word, do not start building on it. If you do build on it, soon your dwelling will be completely out of kilter.

When I am building and get something plumbed and squared, then I fasten it, and that is where it will stay. I establish that this is where I want it to be, and I do not want it moved. There are some things you have to establish spiritually. When you count the cost of living for God and get things in the proper spiritual perspective, you need to make sure that you keep it fixed and do not move away from it.

There may be times when you do not understand something spiritually. If that is the case, you should not say, "That's not right." It might be that your spiritual eyes are a little blurry. You need to ask God to make it clear to you. Use the level (the Word of God) to measure with. As God makes things clear to you, then you should be immovable. In the good times and in the bad times, you need to stand firmly on what you know is true.

It is important to start building, but it is just as important to finish. When building a house, the most critical part is its foundation, because everything rests upon that. The foundation supports the walls, the floor, and the roof structure. That is the reason it is so important to make sure the foundation is properly established. If not, the building can waver and the footers can freeze out. A footer is part of the foundation. It is the furthest part down, and it is what the block is laid on.

The footer should be poured on the original soil. It must be on something solid, because once the building is built, if it is not supported properly under the footers, the walls will crack. One time we had to look at a house that had one end leaning out, and it was cracked in many places. As we looked at the foundation under the footer, we discovered that the footer was poured on leaves, sticks, and all kinds of rubbish. The builder of that house did not dig deep enough, and when the first freeze came, moisture got underneath the foundation and froze and raised the foundation. The owners of that house lost a lot of money, be-

cause the builder did not dig deep enough for the foundation so the footer would hold the foundation in place.

The same is true spiritually. You cannot build on just any kind of rubbish and expect to have a good foundation. A bad attitude is not something that you can build on, because it will cause you trouble. If jealousy or hatred is in your heart, you cannot build on them. If you try to do so, you can be sure that your foundation will be insecure. It will not stay in place very long. Everyone's foundation will be tried by something, and the true condition of the foundation will be revealed. The foundation must be built on something solid, something that will not move.

Another important thing that I use is a blueprint. For building any house or structure, the builder has a print to follow. That print tells how deep the footers must be, what should be put underneath them, and what kind of rebar should be put in them. These are very detailed instructions that the builder must follow.

An architect is one who draws up the blueprints. He has studied to know what is needed in order for these things to be performed. If the builder does not follow what the architect has prescribed, the builder will be responsible. Should something go wrong and the inspector checks it out, the architect can say: "I showed this explicitly in the blueprint and described how much rebar to put in the footer, how to pour the walls, and where to put drainage pipe to get rid of the water. I made sure the builder knew to do all these things to secure the foundation." The builder is held responsible to the owner and to the architect. He must follow the blueprint. Young person, God has designed everything around us, and He has described in explicit detail how to follow His instructions. The Lord wants you to have a proper dwelling.

Another tool that I use is a saw.

It is very useful when I need to cut something down to size. I have had to rip a 2x10 down to a 2x4 to make it fit into a wall. In certain applications, I might have to do a lot of cutting, and I might have to plane it. This does a finer detail work than the saw does. Sometimes there is a knot on the side of a board, and I use a chisel to smack it off.

Spiritually, there are a lot of things like that with you. Sometimes the Lord has to take a saw or a chisel and cut this or that off. Then He has to fine tune you a little bit with a plane until everything fits. Ephesians 2:21 says we are "fitly framed [joined] together." For that to happen, the Lord might need to cut something off or add something. When He sees that you are ready, then He will place you where you fit. However, sometimes it does not feel good when He does it. If something is too big and the builder tries to force it in, it can cause problems. It is much better to whittle it down a little, and then you can put it in. It is the same way with people. If they get too puffed up, it can cause a lot of trouble.

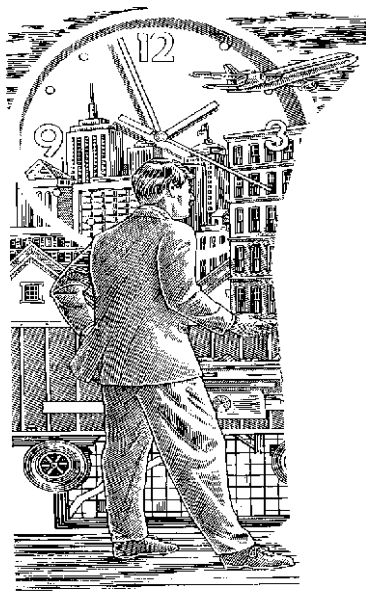
My Scripture text in verses 24-25 read: Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock."

Young person, I would like to see you be successful in endeavoring to live for the Lord. You will be if you go the way that He has designed for you. You have the opportunity to pray, to read the Bible, and to get instructions from God. We are in the midst of a shaking time. It is a trying time and a proving time. Our dwellings are going to be shaken. It must be built and founded upon Jesus Christ. There is only one sure foundation. He will hold you fast and keep you.

Brother Max Smith

*Romans 13:11 And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.*

*12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.*



# Are You Aware of the Time?

*Brother C. H. Dickerson*

## **A Solemn Warning**

Sometimes we can get busy doing something and not realize what time it is. Time can get away from us. The same thing is true spiritually. We are living in a busy time. This busyness is nothing more than a trick of the devil. He wants to keep us so busy that time gets away from us. Soon a day is gone, a week is gone, a month is gone, and finally a year is gone. Some people decide they are going to really settle down and serve God and really work for Him; but a month goes by, and soon a year goes by, yet they are not any closer to God than they were last year. In the Scripture text Paul gives us a solemn, serious warning. He let us know that we need to be alert spiritually.

If there was ever a time when we needed to be alert spiritually, it is the day and age in which we are living. Paul emphasized that we must sell out to God completely. He stated in the Scripture text, ". . . now is our

salvation nearer than when we believed." In other words, now it is nearer than when we first got saved. If you remember when you got saved, you saw a vision of being lost, and that vision of being lost produced your unconditional surrender to God.

People used to tremble when they heard the message of salvation and realized they were lost and on their way to a devil's hell. If conviction did that to you back then, you ought to tremble even more, because you are much closer to your eternal destiny. If you got saved a year ago or even less than that, and you trembled when you saw your condition then, you are closer to eternity than when you first believed. That ought to make you really tremble.

Many people are drifting. Jesus said that "your redemption draweth nigh" in Luke 21:28. In James 5:9 James made the statement, "Behold, the judge standeth before the door." With these thoughts in mind, this necessitates a complete dedication

and sanctification to do God's will. Today lots of gainsayers are in our world. They try to contradict the fact that Christ is coming or they want to make you think that it is a long way off. Some people question, "Where is the sign of His coming?" No doubt, you have heard such things as that.

Those people are nothing more than gainsayers, and this is just another trick of the devil to sow a seed of doubt against God's Word. The devil is working to put a little doubt in our minds about God's Word in one place, then it is not hard to sow a doubt in another place, and then in another place, until people will not believe God's Word. Undoubtedly, you have heard it said many times that Jesus is going to come. God does not count it as days, months, or years because He is eternal. Second Peter 3:8 says, "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."

Despite what people say, Christ

is going to come. If you are going to make it to Heaven, you must sell out to God completely. Are you aware of the time? As you consider this, I want you to realize that the devil has one thing in mind. The Apostle Paul said in Ephesians 6:11, "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." The devil wants to sow doubt in your mind concerning the effectiveness of God's Word. He will try to get you to doubt it.

### **Being Willingly Ignorant**

God forewarned of scoffers through Peter's writings. In 2 Peter 3:3-4 we read: "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." Has the devil ever approached you with a question such as that?

Peter said that in the last days, scoffers would say, "Where is the promise of his coming?" Has that thought approached your mind? The devil is doing his best to put doubt in your mind concerning the truthness of God's Word. If he can do that, then he will get you to be careless in the way you live, in the way you dress, and in the way you act.

Salvation is known in part right now. In a sense, as a Christian, you are on probation. For example, suppose somebody is in court over something, and the judge sentences him to prison for five years, but because he had not been in trouble previously, he puts him on probation. That probation is simply this: if he does precisely what he is told and reports to someone often, then the suspended sentence stands. At the end of the probationary period, the sentence will be annulled. If he should break the probation, then he must serve out the full term.

If you are saved, that is what God has done for you. You are on probation. As a sinner, you were

sentenced to hell, but God put you on probation when He saved your soul. He said He would suspend that sentence and you could eventually make Heaven your home, if you will do what the Judge tells you to do. Also, you have to report regularly to the Judge. When this life is over, you can make Heaven your home if you have stayed true to your commitment to the Lord.

Peter talked about bringing in complete salvation. People want to deliberately ignore the reality of God's definition of time. Again, 2 Peter 3:5 states, "For this they willingly are ignorant." Some people want to question God's Word, and they are willingly misled because they choose to believe what they want to believe. Peter said in verse 4 that scoffers question, "Where is the promise of his coming?" He said in verse 5, "For this they willingly are ignorant" because they do not want to measure to the Truth. They do not want to do what God says; therefore, they are willingly ignorant. They do not believe what God says, so they do not want to believe that Christ is really going to come.

### **"The Lord Is Not Slack Concerning His Promise"**

Second Peter 3:6-9 reads: "Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 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."

Why is Jesus tarrying? According to the Book of Revelation, we are living on borrowed time. Why is that? God does not want anyone to perish. He is giving extra time not

only for our benefit but also for reaching out to others. What is happening? It is backfiring, and even the saints of God are getting careless. Many people have given up. Since you first got saved, how many people do you know of who once had a good experience with God but have given up? Where are they today? Again, verse 9 tells us, "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."

Peter continued in verse 10, "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise. . . ." You need to dismiss this Babylonian doctrine stating that Jesus is coming to steal away His bride as something totally false, because the Scripture definitely states in verse 10, ". . . in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that therein shall be burned up." Peter let us know here that when Jesus comes, He will not steal anything. He bought the church; He paid the price for her. I repeat, He does not have to steal anything.

Why do people steal? They desire something that does not belong to them. When you own something, you do not have to steal it. A thief may go somewhere and see a purse sitting unattended and reach in and steal some money and put it in his pocket. On the other hand, if the purse is yours, you can pick it up and walk away with it freely. When a thief steals something, he has to hide it, so no one will see it. That is exactly the way many people are living. They are living like the devil, yet they say God is going to come and steal His bride away. He bought her, and He paid for her, so He does not have to steal her. One of these days, He is going to come as a thief in the night, not to steal something, but when people least expect Him. We are in that day.

## "The Coming of the Son of Man"

In Matthew 24:37-39 Jesus said: "But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."

People have more today than they have ever had. I remember a day when an individual who had \$70,000 was rich, but today \$70,000 would hardly be a year's wages. There are scoffers all over the world who are trying to put doubts in people's minds.

The devil wants you to doubt the Word of God. If you doubt one thing in the Word, you will doubt something else. If you doubt that He is coming, then you will doubt whether you have to live so carefully. You will begin to think, "Do I really have to live holy? Can I get by with little things?" Then on and on the devil will continue to work. This is what the devil has set out to do. He is fulfilling what he said he would do. You need to keep one thing in mind: Jesus said He is going to come, and He will come. The only reason He is tarrying is so that many people can get saved. He is going to come when people least expect Him.

If the devil can convince you that everything is the same as it has always been, that is when Christ will come. When you relax your efforts, He will come as a thief in the night and find you wanting. It is necessary that every generation be assured of Christ's return. Luke let us know that the reason people have lost their vision, or let down, is due to unbelief. People do not really believe. The Scripture plainly teaches that unless you believe, you cannot be saved.

Romans 13:12 says, "The night is far spent, the day is at hand." "The day is at hand" means that it is right there—any time, any minute, any second. Christ, our Captain, places

the Christian on full alert. He said in Matthew 24:44, "Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." Jesus said to be ready, because the hour is coming. I wonder, could you say right now, "Come on; I'm ready" or would you want to pray? Would you want to renew your commitment to God? Would you want to ask God to forgive you for something? When He comes, it will be too late to do anything. It will be too late to ask for forgiveness. It will be too late to straighten up anything. It will be too late to bow at an altar of prayer. He said, "Be ye also ready." He *is* going to come. He has promised that, and we are long overdue.

## The Uncertainty of This Day

Approximately every two thousand years something happens. In the first two thousand years, the earth was destroyed by water, and in the second two thousand years, Christ came in His first advent. We are past two thousand years again.

Jesus said in Matthew 24:22, ". . . but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." I repeat, we are overdue for Christ's Second Coming. Jesus emphasized that we must be ready. Are *you* ready? It takes complete dedication and complete sanctification to be ready. You must be sold out to God completely. Are you willing to change your plans in a minute for what God wants? You might have lots of plans made, but when God says to be ready and says to do this or that, you ought to be ready. You must be on alert.

Paul said in 1 Thessalonians 5:1, "But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you." He said there is no reason for him to write to them, but he said to be ready.

Paul said in verses 2-8: "For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and

they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.

"Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober [let us practice self-restraint; the Lord did not say that He would take temptations away from us]. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation."

There is a reason for the uncertainty of this day. If God did not keep Christ's coming secret, people would relax their efforts completely. If people knew precisely when He was coming, they may not go back out into sin, but they may relax their fervent efforts. When people do not know, they will endeavor to stay prayed up and will faithfully read the Word of God. Jesus lets us know that we must be on fire for God. If we were positive that Jesus was not coming for a certain length of time, we might relax our prayer lives, our church attendance, and our studying of the Word. The only One who knows that time is God; not even the Son knows. Therefore, you need to be ready for Christ's return, because you do not know when He is going to come. He is waiting at the door now.

## Walk as the Wise, Not as Fools

I remember when we were at an army training camp, and we had an inspection. They said we were going overseas. One day they blew a whistle and told us to pull out everything we had, because we are going overseas. Everybody grabbed everything they had, packed it in their duffel bags, and was ready to go, ready to march onto the ship. Then they said that it was just a dry run and told us to go back to the barracks. They did this two or three times.

One day they told us to get

ready to go again. Many of the men thought this was just another dry run, so when they blew the whistle, some of them stuffed paper in their duffel bags to make them look as though they were full, but this time they marched us to the ship. Those who stuffed their duffel bags with paper had all the equipment that they needed for battle back in the barracks. Therefore, they had to buy new equipment.

God is telling you to be ready with full gear, because He is coming. Only those who look for Him will be eternally saved. Our Scripture text tells us in Romans 13:11, "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed."

Paul wrote in Ephesians 5:14-15: "Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest [or those who are not alert], and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. See then that ye walk circumspectly [or carefully], not as fools, but as wise." Now, the Bible gives us a definition of fools and a definition of the wise. Have you read about the man who built the barns in Luke, Chapter 13? He realized that his barns were not big enough, so he had a decision to make. He decided to build bigger barns and take care of his soul later, but God said that he was a fool, because that night his soul was required of him.

Christ let us know that wise people seek Him. Friend, you might have a high education, but if you do not seek Christ, according to Christ, you are a fool. Whether you seek Him or not is not an indication of how intelligent you are. Many men are very intelligent today. They can send a man to the moon and back. They can build rockets and send them precisely to a particular building in a town. Nevertheless, according to God's Word, they are still fools because they do not know anything about Christ.

Again, Ephesians 5:14-15 states: "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall

give thee light [this should make you tremble, because we are right on the threshold of His Second Coming]. See then that ye walk circumspectly. . . ." Day by day, you must watch carefully what you say, what you do, the way you talk, what you think upon, and what you hear, because His coming is close.

### **The Heartbreak of Being Unprepared**

One of the heartbreaks of Christ as He looked over Jerusalem was due to their unpreparedness. The Lord showed His people precisely how He was going to come to them on one occasion. Zechariah 9:9 reads, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass." There should have been no doubt in those people's minds when they saw Him coming as He was on the road that day. Some people saw Him coming and said, "This is what He promised," but others said that He was just Joseph's son. When He rode back and looked over the town, He wept.

Jesus said in Luke 19:42, "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes." If they had listened to what prophecy told them, they would have recognized Him, but it was hid from them. God is telling you the same thing. Jesus was stirred because of the blindness and the hardness of their hearts. The hearts of His own people would not receive Him.

John said in John 1:11, "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." Why? Because of the hardness of their hearts. There are results to these conditions. The warning of Christ's coming should alert us of the high priorities in life. When you hear that Christ is coming, you need to prepare. He is not coming to set up a kingdom. He has already done that.

He is not coming back to live on this earth for a thousand years. He let us know that it is eternal.

Solomon wrote in Ecclesiastes 11:3, "Where the tree falleth, there it shall be." The condition of your soul when He comes will be your condition for eternity. You know He is coming, but no one knows exactly when that will be. This ought to cause you to set high priorities in your life, knowing that He *is* coming. You ought to think of your eternal destiny and your influence on your children. You are leading your children somewhere. No one is as great to them as Daddy and Mommy.

Knowing that Christ is going to come and knowing that you are going to spend eternity somewhere, you need to have some high priorities in your life. Child of God, I want you to realize that you are a gazing stock. Someone is watching your life every day. Someone is listening to what you say and observing your attitude. The time given to each of us in this mortal body is to be used for the preparation and the watchfulness of the Lord's return. This is made clear in the parable of the ten virgins (see Matthew 25:1-13). You can read that they all slumbered and slept. Again, in Ephesians 5:14 Paul said, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead." While they slept, while they were in a state of being inactive, the Bridegroom came, and the five foolish virgins who ran out of oil were excluded from entering. They were virgins. Yes, they had made preparation and went to meet him, but they became careless.

Multitudes of people have made preparations and have come to the wedding. We read in Matthew 25:5, "While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept." I repeat, they were spiritually inactive. Many people are getting careless today.

### **Why Is Being Ready Important?**

Paul said in 1 Corinthians 7:29, "The time is short." I wonder if you realize how late it really is. Do you realize what the time is? Why is be-

ing ready so important? There are many reasons, but I am going to give you two of them. We are in an earthly body, and we are in the world. Both of them are bent to do evil. If God were to remove His grace from you, soon you would be in sin.

It is very important that we continue this readiness, because we have two antagonists working against us: the body and the worldly atmosphere. There is nothing out in the world to encourage you, and there is nothing in the physical body to encourage you. As a Christian, the only readiness you have is the Spirit of God in you that gives power over the world and your physical body. You do not have to go out into sin to become inactive in the things of God. It is not just inviting people to church that makes us active.

When you do not work for God, it is easier to become idle in the Kingdom of God. Becoming inactive is exactly what the ten virgins did. That is what Paul spoke of when he said, "Awake thou that sleepest."

Jesus warned us to seek first the kingdom of God in Matthew 6:33. We must put the things of God first in every aspect of our lives. Paul provided us with a good example to follow in 1 Thessalonians 1:9 when he wrote, "For they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God." We are waiting for His coming. The devil is seeking to destroy you, and the only way to escape his ensnarement is through sanctification.

Jesus told Peter that the devil wanted to sift him as wheat. The devil wants to ensnare you, and he is watching your every move, every attitude, and everything you set your eyes upon. He has one thing in mind, and that is to ensnare you. Paul told how you can be kept from being ensnared, and that is the only way.

Two things are working against us every minute of the day: being in this world and being in the flesh. This old earthly body gets tired. Also, it sees and enjoys earthly things. We are in the world, and the devil has dressed up the world to

make it look very attractive. The beer joints and the night clubs have flashing lights. They are all lit up, but when you drive by most churches, the lights are out. All people are going to stand before the judgment bar of God, but most people are not ready for His coming.

### "The Day of Christ Is at Hand"

Second Thessalonians 2:1-2 reads: "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand." Our salvation is by hope. After John got off the Isle of Patmos, he penned in 1 John 3:3, "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." If you have this hope, you will purify yourself a little more, because he may come before the end of the day. You need to gird up your mind, or your thinking. You must be careful of what you do, where you go, and what you do not do.

This necessity for preparedness and readiness for Christ is made clear by the Scriptures. Paul said in Colossians 2:6-7: "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving." Paul said you should walk in Him, get rooted and built up in Him, and be established in the faith so that nothing can shake you loose, and then grow in Him. You should not do it grudgingly but with thanksgiving. I thank God for the Truth and for the strength that He gives. When the devil approaches, we can say no.

Paul also told how to do it. He said in Galatians 5:16-18: "This I say then, [How can you grow in the things of God, get established in the things of God, and have this assurance?] Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the

flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law."

Paul said in verses 24-25: "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." In the Scriptures we are shown over and over that He is coming. All you have to do is read the Word of God. I have heard even sinners say that they believe that the end is almost here. If you believe that, you will watch and be ready. If you do not believe, then you will appear before Him condemned and ashamed. God assures us repeatedly that Christ is coming. Are you aware of the time? Jesus said in Revelation 16:15, "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame."

John said in 1 John 2:28, "And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming." If you will abide in Him and live according to the Word of God, you will not be ashamed. You will have confidence that He will take you home. As Christians, we have a hope. What is our hope built upon? It is built upon doing God's will. If you do not do God's will, you cannot have this hope, not a legitimate hope. God has a blueprint that you *must* follow.

You need to eat the whole Word of God. John said it is good to eat, but bitter to the belly. God's Word will have an effect on you, and this is what many people do not like. Nevertheless, this is the recipe to make Heaven your home. If you have God's Spirit, that is the way you will desire to go. This flesh will try to draw you away. It is your choice what you are going to do. He is coming! We do not know when. It could be today, tomorrow, or another day but HE IS COMING! The question is, are you prepared? Are you aware of the time?

*(No cassette available)*

*James 3:1 My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.*

*2 For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.*

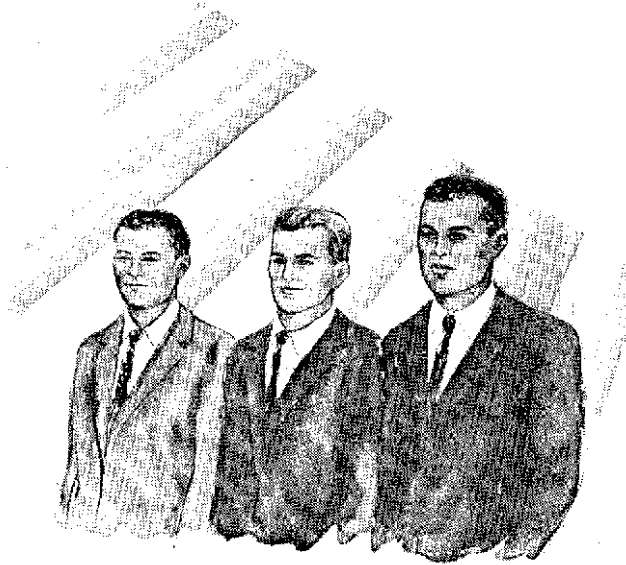
*3 Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body.*

*4 Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever*

*the governor listeth.*

*5 Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!*

## "How Great a Matter a Little Fire Kindleth!"



*Brother Daniel Webster*

### **The Importance of Each Member in the Body of Christ**

I want to look at the power there is in a little member. Sometimes the devil likes people to think: "I'm insignificant; nobody is going to miss me if I'm not at church. I'm of no importance whatsoever." The devil wants to get people to sit out of services when they could be there, because they feel that they are not needed or that they are unimportant. Well, God does not make any mistakes, and everyone has a purpose. God allowed you to be born for a reason. You have a reason for living. If you have been born again, God saved you for a purpose. You have been placed in the body of Christ. Every member in this body is important.

In Romans, Chapter 12, Paul spent much time trying to tell people the necessity of every member in the body. In verses 4-5 he said: "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." We are members of this same body. Every blood-washed soul who has been washed by the blood of the Lamb has been put into the body of Jesus Christ. That is what comprises the Church of God. Man has nothing to do with it; it is God's church. God put us all together in His body.

From the very beginning, God intended to have one body of people claiming Christianity. Just think where the world would be today if

we had only one group of people for Christians. That is what God wanted. That is the reason He put the name "church of God" in the Bible. Paul addressed the Corinthian letter, "Unto the church of God" in 1 Corinthians 1:1, as well as in other places. God wanted one body. Every member in that one body is important. Not one person is insignificant.

As the church, we are working on a city. The Bible calls her the great city, and she is the new Jerusalem that came down from God out of Heaven. As you think about a city, there are great buildings in that city. When you go to the capital city of a state, it has a capitol building and perhaps other ornate buildings in the area. Then somewhere in the background they have a water treatment

plant, a sewer plant, and a rubbish collection facility. Normally, we do not go to see these facilities, but they are important.

I remember years ago in New York City the garbage collectors went on strike. The men did not collect the garbage for a few days, and the stinky, rotten garbage began to pile up. That is an important job!

There are janitors and other people who work in buildings that are never noticed, yet all their functions are important. We cannot set aside one member of the body of Christ and say that he or she is not important. Consider your own human body. There is not one member of your body that you would willingly say, "Let's just cut this out; I don't need it." Every member in your physical body is important. God put body parts in the body for a reason. Some doctors may not have any idea what a certain body part is for, but God put it in there for a purpose. We might not know what purpose it serves, but God knows.

The point that I am trying to bring out is that many people feel that they are insignificant, but we each have an important place in the body of Christ. Now, in a sense, it is good to feel unimportant, but not to the degree that it causes you to become inactive or to the place where you just do not even want to be around. An ungodly spirit can work on you to cause you to think: "Nobody would miss me. Why should I bother? Why should I make the effort to go to church today? Nobody ever notices when I am not there." Dear one, that is not true.

First of all, the pastor notices, and it may discourage him. It concerns him and troubles him when people are not there and he has not heard from them. Those who sit near you notice when you are not there, and others expect to see your smiling face. Some people may say, "Well, I don't do anything." If you come in with a smile on your face, I guarantee you that is a great encouragement to the preacher. The pastor likes to see the smiles on people's

faces, and he likes to see people paying attention to the Word of God. If you do not do anything else but sit and listen and nod your head in agreement every now and then, God will be blessed and the preacher will be blessed, and you will have done a great work in the house of God. You are important. Every member is greatly needed in the body of Christ.

### **Gifts and Functions in the Body**

The Apostle Paul went on to say in Romans 12:5-9: "So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness. Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good."

We each have different gifts and various functions in the body, as well as different understanding, even of the Scriptures; but we all are needed in the body of Christ. Your point of view is just as important as my point of view. Your reaction to the Gospel may not be exactly the way I react to it, but when I am born again and you are born again, God is going to teach us from His Word, and we will learn the Truth together. When we have the right spirit, we are willing to put up with one another and understand one another. Sometimes another person might not have the understanding that you have or someone else might have a greater understanding than you have. Nevertheless, we all get along together and work together. Why? Because this body of one people that God has called out has one calling and one name. That does not mean there is one giant congregation, but it is all the people born of Christ, led by God's Holy Spirit, and obedient to

the Word that God reveals to them. When people do that, they are members of the body of Christ.

We are all members one of another. Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 12:7, "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." The manifestation of God's Spirit is given to every one of us, and every person for the profit of others. There are religions that teach that if you have the Holy Ghost, you will speak in some strange language that you do not understand and that it is for your own personal edification. Again, Paul said, "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." The gifts of God are given to edify everyone, not just self. When someone has a selfish spirit, God is not in it. There are lots of religions out in the world that edify self, but God's Spirit teaches us that the manifestation of the Holy Spirit is given to every man to profit the whole body, or for the profit of all.

Paul continued in 1 Corinthians 12:11, "But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will." The office that God puts you in is of His choosing; it is not your own choice. It was not my decision to become a pastor, but it was God's call. I did not become a pastor because the people voted me in. As a congregation, we all prayed earnestly. I could have either ran and got in trouble with God or obeyed His call, so I obeyed His call. It was God's divine call. Every one of us is placed in the body of Christ as God sees fit.

### **God Sets the Members in Place**

I do not have some gifts and abilities that others have. Some people can play instruments of music for the glory of God. I have no such talent. Others can teach a Sunday school class, and many are good students. Some can sweep the floor really well. Others notice certain work that needs to be done on the property. Not everybody sees work that needs to be done. God wants us

to look around and see what kind of work there is, and when we see it, not necessarily appoint somebody else to do it, but to do it ourselves. God will direct us if we let Him. Sometimes God reveals things to people and they want to close their eyes, but God says, "Do what you need to do so that I can use you in a wonderful way."

In 1 Corinthians 12:18-19 Paul said: "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body?" You see, there are all kinds of members in the body of Christ, just as many different members make up the physical body. Otherwise, we would just be one giant finger, a giant eyeball, or a giant heart. We have many members that comprise the human body. When I was in high school, as a group of students, we made up what is called the "student body," and we all had one thing in common: we all were high school students. Likewise, the body of Christ is the group of people who have been born again, and we are led by the Spirit of God. We are the body of Christ, and we all are important in the body.

God sets the members in the body as it pleases Him. If they were all one member, then where would the body be? Verse 22 says, "Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary." Even the members of your body that you cover and that nobody pays any attention to are necessary.

We need the little members. A few years ago I accidentally cut two or three knuckles on my hand, and I could not use those fingers for a while. Losing the use of those fingers really hindered me in doing my job. Even one knuckle of a finger is important.

In verse 5b of our Scripture text, James said, "Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!" Sometimes we have wild fires in our country that are caused by lightning or a cigarette butt thrown out a vehicle

window. Just a little spark, and soon hundreds of thousands of acres burn, started by one little cigarette.

### Trusting in the Lord

Let us look at a few examples in the Scriptures of some that seemingly were of no value that God used in a great way. First, I thought of Moses. God called Moses to deliver His people. At first, Moses said, in so many words, "I can't do that. I don't even know how to talk. People are not going to pay attention to me."

Exodus 4:1-5 says: "And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The LORD hath not appeared unto thee. And the LORD said unto him, What is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod. And he said, Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from before it. And the LORD said unto Moses, Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail. And he put forth his hand, and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand: That they may believe that the LORD God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee."

Verse 17 reads, "And thou shalt take this rod in thine hand, wherewith thou shalt do signs." That rod was just a piece of wood, but God said, in essence: "I can use that worthless piece of wood and show them that I will deliver a whole nation with your using that rod." So He did; God used that rod of Moses' and helped Moses to deliver an entire nation from bondage.

Next, I thought of Samson. We can read of the great might of Samson and how God blessed him and used him in great ways. Many times the Spirit of God moved upon him. It tells us in Judges, Chapter 15, that the Philistines were trying to capture Samson, and he broke loose from them. Verse 15 states, "And he found a new jawbone of an ass, and put forth his hand, and took it, and slew

a thousand men therewith." He slew a thousand men with an old jawbone, just a worthless piece of bone. With that jawbone God blessed him and was able to use him in a wonderful way.

In 1 Samuel, Chapter 17, Saul talked to David. Sometimes young people feel they are of no importance. They are young, and nobody is paying any attention to them, but that is not true. Young person, the devil wants to convince you that you have no value. David was just a youth when he killed Goliath. He was willing to be obedient to God, and God used him.

We read in 1 Samuel 17:33-36: "And Saul said to David, Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him: for thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth. And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock: And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him. Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God."

Verse 40 says, "And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a scrip; and his sling was in his hand: and he drew near to the Philistine." God used David and directed that stone exactly to the right spot. One little stone brought down that great man of war. Though Goliath was a mighty warrior, God used a young shepherd boy to slay him.

The story has been told that the reason David chose five stones was not because he thought he might miss, but because he had four brothers, and he wanted to make sure he had one for each of them. That is how much confidence he had in the great God of Heaven. He said that

God brought him through, and he was able to slay a bear and a lion with God's help. Surely, even though David was just a young lad, that big Philistine was no greater than those beasts. David knew that he could take care of Goliath with the help of God.

### **God Uses Small Things to Get Greater Glory**

Young person, you can rest in your victories of the past and rejoice in them. You can know that God brought you through the temptations of the past, and He will help you to do greater works for Him in the future. You should never give up, get tired, or get discouraged in working for God. He can use young people. He needs young people to live for Him in this dark world. There are people that only other young people can reach. Young man, young daughter, you have the opportunity to reach out and touch the lives of other young people who are your age.

The Apostle Paul tried to encourage young Timothy, and he said to him in 1 Timothy 4:12-14: "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery."

You should not let someone discourage you because you are young. God wants to use young people just as much as He does the older people. God will give you grace, help, and confidence. God wants to use you to the glory of God. Solomon said to remember the Lord in your youth. You should not wait until you are old to serve the Lord, when you will not be able to do much for God. You should get saved and live for God while you are young, and then God can use you in a wonderful way.

Often God uses the small things in life to get the greatest glory. In 1 Kings, we can read that He used a little widow woman who was poor. She did not have anything at all. The Bible tells us that she was getting ready to die, and she was collecting a few sticks to make one last meal for herself and for her son, but God came on the scene and spoke through the Prophet Elijah.

First Kings 17:8-16 reads: "And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee. So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, the widow woman was there gathering of sticks: and he called to her, and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink.

"And as she was going to fetch it, he called to her, and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand. And she said, As the LORD thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die. And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go and do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son. For thus saith the LORD God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the LORD sendeth rain upon the earth. And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat many days. And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by Elijah."

The Lord could have directed Elijah to a city and found someone wealthy to sustain him, but He sent Elijah to a widow woman who had only one little handful of meal left

and just enough oil to mix with it to make one little cake so that she and her son would be able to eat one last meal and then die. Elijah told her to make him one first. That widow woman knew that all she had was enough for her son and her to have one little cake. That was all the meal that was left in the barrel. She went in her house and, by faith, she reached down into that barrel and said, "All right, I will make one for the man of God first." Just think of that! Ordinarily, you would want to give that to your son first, would you not? She gave it to the man of God first, and God turned around and sustained that widow woman with meal and oil until the famine was over. God was there to bless her.

### **God Uses Little Things to Confound the Wise**

We have examples of when God used little things in Jesus' day. He fed the multitude with a little boy's lunch. There was so much left over that the Bible says they had twelve basketfuls left. Do you see what God can do with just one little meal? He took the lunch from one boy and fed the multitude. There was so much left over that each of the twelve disciples had a basketful. Little is much when God is in it. God can use the little things, and He wants to use the little things. He looks for little things to use for His glory.

It is a good thing for us to think of ourselves as being small, but not so small that we feel too insignificant to be used of God at all. God is able to use us, and God wants to use each and every one in the body of Christ. The reason these things happened is not because we are so great, but it is because we are willing to yield ourselves to the Spirit of God.

The Prophet Zechariah wrote in Zechariah 4:6, "Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts." It is the Spirit of God that works through the mem-

bers of the body of Christ to get the jobs done. It is not by a person's greatness or ability; but it is what God can do through a person that works, and God gets the glory. A person must yield to God and allow himself or herself to be used of God.

When Moses came off the mountain one time after spending time with God, the people had to put a veil over his face, because his face shone so much with the glory of God that they could not stand to look on him. The presence of God was in him, and he was being used of God. We can have that same kind of glory, not by our own might, not by our own power, but by the Spirit of God. The Apostle Paul stated in 1 Corinthians 1:27, "But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty."

I am reminded of a time, even in this great nation of ours, with all the knowledge that people have, when a small thing caused great problems. On the California coast, we have some of the richest farmland that is available, and they grow all kinds of crops there. I remember a few years ago that they were devastated by tiny little flies that were destroying crops, and they could not get rid of them. They had no control over those tiny flies that caused big problems for those farmers. Again, the Scripture says, "God has chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise."

### **The Leadership of the Holy Spirit**

Friend, do not let the devil tell you there is no use for you. Many sinners in the world are taking their own lives because the devil has convinced them that they are worthless and that nobody cares for them. That is the kind of people that God wants to get hold of. When we feel we are nothing, God can use us. As long as we stay small in our own minds, then God can use us.

In the Old Testament you can read that the Prophet Samuel had to

reprove King Saul one day because he had gotten too big in his own sight. Samuel said in 1 Samuel 15:17, "When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the LORD anointed thee king over Israel?" Again, it is a good thing to feel small, but not so small that we are not willing to be used. God wants to use us, direct us, and help us.

God wants to use young children. Sometimes our little boy gets really excited about the things of God. He loves to be in church, and he enjoys the things of God. We have a tape player for him at home, and every night he wants to listen to preaching as he goes to sleep. He gets thrilled with it. He comes to church and praises God; he gets happy. Psalm 8:2 says, "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightiest still the enemy and the avenger." God wants to use young ones to the glory of God.

In Luke 21:15 Jesus said, "For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist." It takes the Spirit of God to give us the words that we need to speak. We cannot go out on our own and thump the Bible, telling people that they need to do this and that. What He wants us to do is through the leadership of His Spirit. He will direct you to one individual, here or there. You might have an opportunity to talk to someone about the good things of God in an exciting way. You cannot sell something to someone if you are not sold on it. You cannot convince someone that he ought to have this great salvation if you do not believe it. What good is that? When you are sold on salvation, then it is not hard to show someone else how good it is.

In my business I sell certain products. I have a brand that I believe is the best, so that is what I sell. It is a little pricier than most, but I am not ashamed to tell people that they get what they pay for. If you

show them it is the best there is, it is not difficult to sell. It is the same thing with the Gospel. When you show people that you have the absolute best and there is none better, it is not difficult to convince others. God said there is none other like the church. She is the only one of her mother. There is nothing almost like the Church of God. It is the only one that is free from sin. The others make room for sin in one form or another. They say, "Well, we all are sinners saved by grace." No, we are not. We are saints of God saved by grace. We used to be sinners, but we are not sinners anymore, thank God.

### **Using What You Have for God's Glory**

The Bible tells us that even Jesus came in a lowly way. He came in a very humble birth and died the worst, humblest way anybody could ever die when He was hung on the Cross. Acts 4:11-13 says: "This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus."

Had you seen me years ago when I first came to God, you would be amazed at the transformation. The first time I was in church in a long time, I went dressed in a flannel shirt and blue jeans, my hair was down over my shoulders, and I had a full beard. I am just one of those individuals that God saw fit to use. I thank the Lord for that. I am glad that He looked into the future and said, "You know, there is something in that fellow that I can dig out of there and work with."

You do not have to go to college to preach the Gospel. God can use an unlearned person like me. He can use ignorant people. Before I was

saved, a man tried to tell me about salvation. He had learned how to read after he got saved by reading the Bible. I have heard of others who learned how to read by reading the Bible. It is not the knowledge that we have in our heads that God is looking for; He is looking for vessels that are willing to be used by Him.

When men looked on Peter and John, they said, in essence, "Surely they have been with Jesus." Peter and John were unlearned men. They were not educated men. Certainly, I wish I had more knowledge, but I am willing to use what I have for the glory of God. If God wants to use you, do not say, "Well, I don't know anything; I can't be used." That is the kind of people God wants to use and can use.

Now, if you have gained much knowledge, God is willing to use you also. God has a place for every member of the body to be used of Him. He will not discard or set aside any humble vessel. Acts 7:35 states, "This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush." Moses was rejected of the great population, yet God used him and made him to be the deliverer of God's people.

In Revelation 3:8 Jesus said, "I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name." You might have little strength, but God is able to use you. He will use those people who realize that their strength and sufficiency is of God, not of themselves. The ability to stand for God is not because we just grit our teeth and say, "Yeah, I'm going to make it." No, it is by the grace and the power of God. He helps us and gives us that ability. One Scripture that I have relied on repeatedly is Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." I am able to do all things through Christ which

strengthens me.

In 2 Corinthians 12:8-10 Paul said: "For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."

It is when you realize that you are weak that God can make you strong. As long as you think you can do something in your own strength, then you are going to fall. The Word of God tells you to take heed lest you fall. When you boast in yourself and think you are something, you are going to fall. Paul said when he was weak, then he was strong. There is no shame in weakness. God wants you to have humility. He wants to have you in a place where you realize that your strength comes from God; then you can be used of God. Strength comes through the Spirit of God working in you and directing you.

### **Are You Willing to Yield Yourself to God?**

The morning-time church turned the then-known world upside down. Just a small group went out and started to preach the Gospel. Acts 17:6 reads, "And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also." In Athens Paul got that whole city in an uproar by preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ. One man and God are all it takes to be successful for God. It only takes one person who is willing to yield himself to God, to deny himself and do what God would have him to do. God can use a humble person in a wonderful way.

Dear one, you have been brought

into this world because of God's plan. He has a purpose for you. God wants you to realize there is power in Him. He can use a weak vessel in a great way if that person is willing to yield himself. The Bible says in Luke, Chapter 16, that when we are faithful in the least things, then we will be faithful in the greater things. It seems that many people want to start at the top instead of at the bottom.

When I was young, my first job was delivering newspapers. When I went to be interviewed for that job, the man said that many, many successful people started out as paper boys, because they learned responsibility and commitment. You see, when I delivered the newspaper, it had to be on people's porches by a certain time or the phone was ringing with people calling, wondering where the newspaper was. People get excited when they do not get their newspaper on time. It is too bad that they did not get a little more excited about digging out their Bibles and finding out what God has to say about things.

Not one job in the Kingdom of God is of less importance than another. We all are members in particular. The Bible says we have been knit together into one body through love. The love of God flows from heart to heart, and we are one body. Will you yield yourself to what God wants you to do? If you will, I guarantee you that God is going to bless you.

You may say, "Well, I can't sing very well, and I can't do this and that." There are lots of things that you can do besides singing. You can be a prayer warrior. You can shake people's hands at church and say, "Welcome, we are glad to see you." That is a wonderful blessing. God wants you to do what you are able to do. He does not expect you to do what you cannot do. If you do what you are able to do, God will bless and use that; then you will be a blessing to others. If you desire to be a blessing to others, God will answer that prayer and make you a blessing. Will you obey the Lord?

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