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SOUNDING FORTH THE SEVENTH AND LAST TRUMPET

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Vol. 44 February 2014 No. 3



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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Of for 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@church-of-god-online.com](mailto:pastor@church-of-god-online.com)  
Phone: 740-344-2543  
Fax: 740-344-4737  
Print Shop Phone: 740-345-1312

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

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Vol. 44 February 2014 No. 2

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# Guest Editorial

## A Special Thanks!

We want to take this opportunity to express a special word of thanks to all of our readers for faithfully supporting The Gospel Trumpeter. We are grateful for your prayers, your thoughtful giving, and your letters of encouragement. Because of the combined efforts of prayer, labor, and finance, The Gospel Trumpeter continues to be mailed to thousands of homes, businesses, and institutions across the United States and many foreign countries. First of all, we are deeply indebted to God for the ability and strength He gives us, and then to our readers and the many faithful helpers who give of their time to publish the good news of the Gospel through the printed page. Certainly, the work of the Kingdom of God is a great work, and it is especially rewarding when we receive reports of how it is helping souls. We are thankful for the privilege that God has given us to be a small part in His great work.

Putting out a religious publication is not always an easy task. There are many aspects that go into it. For instance, selecting the helpful messages and the short articles that we feel God would have used in each issue of The Gospel Trumpeter involves time and consideration. It requires searching for material that will provide good spiritual food for the souls of our readers, something that will strengthen and encourage them. Finding the proper way of revealing the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the lost is always a great concern. It certainly takes

the Lord to guide and direct. Since this periodical has been in print, we have heard from many people who have been won to the Lord because of reading an article that brought an awakening to their souls. Thankfully, they turned to God for mercy and pardon. Having a part in winning souls for Christ brings great rewards to each worker. Never forget that everyone has a part!

Locating the finest sources to secure the best pricing when purchasing paper and other materials always presents a challenge. As you well know, the rising cost of materials and postal rates must also be considered. The Bible teaches that we are not to be slothful in business matters; therefore, we do strive to be as frugal as possible in our buying habits. By the way, have you moved recently? If so, have you sent us your change of address? When someone moves and fails to inform us, the Post Office returns the issue to us and then charges us for the return postage. This return postage at one time cost 10 cents per copy. It has now gone up to 55 cents for each returned copy. We sincerely ask you to send your change of address to us as quickly as possible so that we might keep this additional cost to a minimum.

Also, we kindly ask that if you submit a new name to be placed on the mailing list, please be sure that individual desires to receive the paper. There have been times when we have received a letter from a person who

[continued on page 19]

*Daniel 9:20 And whiles I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God;*

*21 Yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation.*

*22 And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding.*

*23 At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth,*

*and I am come to show thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.*

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

*25 Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore [which is sixty] and two weeks: the street shall be*

*built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.*

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

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



# The Setting Up of the Kingdom

*Part 2 of 2*

*Brother Roger L. Decker*

## Reviewing the Facts

Reading the same Scriptures that we read in part one of this message, we want to look again at the doctrine of seventy weeks in the Book of Daniel. We are going to have to review a little to tie the two

messages together. We found that the seventy weeks, taking a week to be seven years, comes to four hundred ninety years. A day represents a year, and certainly the Scriptures prove that. The Israelite spies spent forty days spying out the land of Canaan, and because of the people's

unbelief, they had to spend forty years in the wilderness, a year for each day. Jacob worked for Laban seven years, but Laban gave Jacob Leah to wed instead, so Jacob had to fulfill an additional week for Rachel, which was seven more years.

We showed in the previous is-

sue by the Scriptures how time was calculated. I want to remind you that seventy weeks equals four hundred ninety years, and we had the starting time of B.C. 457 (B.C. means "before Christ"). Four hundred fifty-seven years before Christ brings you to A.D. 30, the baptism of Jesus Christ. In A.D. 1, Jesus was four years of age. Again, a monk named Dionysius Exiguus calculated the Christian calendar for the Emperor Justinian, and in A.D. 26 he made a four-year error. Now, B.C. 457 and 490 brings you up to A.D. 26, but there has been a four-year error in the figuration of that calendar, and it is the same calendar that we use today.

Luke 3:21-23 states: "Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased. And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli."

Again, verse 24 of our Scripture text reads, "Seventy weeks are determined [the word *determined* means 'settled or fixed'] upon thy people [Israel] and upon thy holy city [Jerusalem of old], to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy."

If the seventy weeks had not taken place, then none of these things would have happened, and we can prove to you by the Word of God that every one of them has taken place. Daniel probably had one of the most pinpointed prophecies in the Old Testament, although he is considered to be a minor prophet. When it comes to the things of the kingdom, I believe he ranks right up there with Isaiah and other major prophets.

There are some things that were going to take place. One was, He was going to finish the transgression; He was going to make an end of sin. He was going to make reconciliation for iniquity and bring in everlasting righteousness. He was going to seal up the vision and the prophecy, and the most Holy was going to be anointed.

### The Measure of Sin

We want to look at these things that took place, and they all took place at Christ's First Advent, in the midst of the seventieth week. When Jesus comes again, He is not coming to set up His kingdom; He is coming to deliver up the kingdom. Thank God, we are enjoying the Kingdom of God today!

The sin of all sins that filled the measure was the rejection of Jesus Christ by the Jewish nation as a whole. In Matthew, Chapter 23, the word "woe" is used eight times throughout the chapter, and the word means "anguish, sadness, misery, despair, and wretchedness."

Matthew, Chapter 23, is like reading a final eulogy at a disaster that has taken or will take place. It is as though Jesus was giving His final eulogy on the nation of Israel as a whole. Daniel prophesied that after seventy weeks, the transgression would be finished. What was he saying? Israel of old filled up the measure, and there was not room for any more sin. The rejection of Jesus Christ was the sin of all sins, and that is the sin people are going to be judged with at the judgment bar of Jesus Christ. They finished the transgression and filled up the measure.

Matthew 23:32 says, "Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers." Christ knew that they were now contriving His death, and He also knew that in a few days they would accomplish it. It was just as though Jesus was saying: "Go on with your plot. Walk in the way of your heart and in the sight of your own eyes and see what will come of it. What

you are about to do, do it quickly. You are going to fill up the measure of guilt that will then overflow into an overflow of wrath."

Have you ever read the historical event of Josephus? You need to read the "Antiquity of the Jews." It is one of the most gruesome chapters in that historical book. Surely it had to be the wrath of God. Where much is given, much is required. Israel had the oracles of God first. In John 1:11 John said, "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." Jesus Christ came to the Jews first. God loved Israel of old as much as He loves Israel of new. Do not think He loves us with a special love and sent those people to hell over the least little thing. God worked with Israel of old repeatedly. He sent them the law, and they had the law of conscience, the Law of Moses, and the prophets; then Jesus Christ came, but when they rejected Him, that filled up the measure.

We are under those same laws. You may say, "You're under the law of grace." Yes, but we have had the Law of Moses, the prophets, the Apostles, and Jesus Christ. God has given us what many people in dark countries have never heard. God has given us tools to work with, the Truth, His Spirit, and His Word. He has given us unity and knowledge and wisdom, and God expects something in return.

There is a measure of sin to be filled up before utter ruin comes upon families, churches, and nations. God will bear long. The Bible says God is long-suffering. He is more long-suffering than people are. At times, some people may give up praying for somebody, but God does not give up. He will bear long with people, but the time will come when He can no longer forbear. Jeremiah 44:22 reads, "So that the LORD could no longer bear, because of the evil of your doings, and because of the abominations which ye have committed; therefore is your land a desolation, and an astonishment, and a curse, without an inhabitant, as at this day." Genesis 15:16 says, "But in

the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full." Here we read of the measure of the Amorites that was to be filled. Dear one, you need to be careful. The Bible speaks of carefulness and vehement desire.

### **The Wrath of God**

In Matthew 23:33 Jesus said, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" These words come from the mouth of a loving Jesus Christ. He called them "serpents." He knew what was in man, and He knew those people were like serpents. They had a phony outside, but within they were malignant, and they had poison under their tongues. They had the seed of an old serpent. He said they were a generation of vipers. They and those who joined with them were a generation of enraged, spiteful adversaries to Christ and His Gospel. Today one of the worst enemies I know of that the Christian church is facing is Islam. It is deadly. Do not ever think there is any love in it.

Those Jewish leaders loved to be called of men, "Rabbi, Rabbi," but Jesus called them serpents. He told men their true characteristics. This was the truth of what was inside those people. They were very contemptuous and very proud. They were contentious people, and Jesus labeled them correctly when He called them vipers and serpents. He said, "Fill up the measure." In the measure is love, mercy, grace, long-suffering, peace, and joy; but that all had been pushed away upon the rejection of Jesus Christ. The measure was full of the wrath of God; it was wrath like man had never seen. We know that the Flood was wrath on the whole world, but the Flood would be considered mercy compared to the desolation of Jerusalem.

When Prince Titus surrounded the city of Jerusalem, he started out with kind of a merciful attitude. He hit them hard, and then he backed

off, thinking they would surrender. When they did not, Prince Titus came in and showed no mercy. Some Jews escaped over the walls and hid in the woods, and the army searched them out, brought them back, stood them up, and slit them open with a sword. One man laying there, whom they always claimed was out of his mind, said, "The wrath of God is coming! The wrath of God is coming!" They tried to shut him up, but before he died, they knew he was right.

This was wrath like no one has ever seen. Not one Jew escaped, even if one was a cute little child. The only ones who escaped that wrath were the ones who believed Jesus Christ when He warned, "Flee to the mountains." That is the best place to go yet. You need to go right to the height of the Mount Zion, to the Church of God. That is where you need to flee today to escape the wrath that is to come.

### **Wrath Without Mercy**

Matthew 24:21 says, "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." Luke 23:28 reads, "But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children." Ephesians 2:4-5 says: "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)." Second Peter 3:8-10 states: "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. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night."

Not many people like to think about the judgments of God or Jesus'

Second Coming. You can hardly get some who claim to be Christians to talk about these things. It must have been similar back in Noah's day. Remember, it had never rained, and no doubt, people said: "What's some lunatic doing out there preaching? He doesn't have any church or congregation set up. All he has is his family."

As people walked by, no doubt, some yelled back at him and mocked him, but he just kept doing the work that God told him to do. Nevertheless, the day of the Lord did come! Those people who could put their hand on the ark were just as lost as those who were a hundred miles away. There are going to be people who hang around the saints of God who will be just as lost as people in the darkest countries.

The day came for Israel when the measure was filled up, just as the day came when the door of the ark was closed, and the day came when fire and brimstone rained down on Sodom and Gomorrah. When the Jews filled up the measure, they suffered the wrath of God without mercy or love or forgiveness. It was the worst tribulation ever to come upon a people, and it happened in A.D. 70 to the Jewish nation. You need to study Josephus. Josephus is probably the most pronounced historical writer of Jewish history that the Christians use. He recorded war by war of the Jews.

Josephus himself said, "Surely this must be the wrath of God." It was wrath without mercy, and wrath without another chance. The measure was full, and nothing came out of God except anger and wrath toward them. Peter spoke of the Lord coming as a thief in the night and the earth being melted and burned up. Then in 2 Peter 3:11 he wrote, "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness." There is a day coming when, again, we will see wrath as never before, and it is going to be in the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

## The Seventieth Week

What else was going to happen in that seventieth week? There was going to be an end to sin. Sin came to an end, and this is the reason Jesus came, to save sinners *from* their sins, not to save sinners *in* their sins. If your house were on fire, and the fire department came, the headlines the next day would tell how you were saved. The firemen would not save you by leaving you inside a burning house. They would rescue you from the house. That is what happens when Jesus Christ comes into your heart. He does not leave you in sin; He delivers you out of sin.

Matthew 1:21 says, "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins." I repeat, He does not save people *in* their sins, but He saves people *from* their sins. Romans 6:18 states, "Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." The old law was a shadow, or a type, and a schoolmaster to bring you to Christ. Hebrews 10:1 reads, "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect."

In Galatians 3:24 Paul wrote, "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith." We know that the old law was a shadow of things to come; it was a type, not the reality. It was like a schoolmaster, bringing us to the Master. When you get to the Master, you no longer need the schoolmaster.

Romans 6:1-2 lets us know that we are not to live in sin. God forbid! Those verses read: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"

First John 3:6-10 states: "Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen

him, neither known him. Little children, let no man deceive you [men are out there doing just what the Scripture says: they are out there to deceive you]: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested [or made known], that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him [the seed is the Word of God]; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother."

Jesus came to bring an end to sin. When He moves into your heart, sin comes to an end in your life, and then you adhere to His Word. The Bible teaches that it is commanded that you live holy. God is not going to command something that you cannot do. First Peter 1:15-16 says: "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy." Luke 1:68-75 reads: "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David; As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; The oath which he sware to our father Abraham, That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life."

How can you stop the flow of sin? You need to get to the fountain. There is a fountain opened up. Zechariah told us about it in Zechariah 13:1 when he said, "In that day there

shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness." We have to be washed in the fountain and have faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ, Who cleansed us.

First Corinthians 6:9-11 says this: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. [This is what the congregation at Corinth was made up of. What does that next verse say?] And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified [or set apart], but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

### Reconciliation for Sin

What else was going to happen in the seventieth week? There was going to be a reconciliation for sin. Jesus Christ came to reconcile us back to God. Colossians 1:19-22 reads: "For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight."

Christ came to heal the breach and merge the chasm between God and man. There was no way we can get to God except through Jesus Christ. We must know one thing quite clearly and always retain it in our memories: the initiative for reconciliation was with God and not with us. We did not reconcile ourselves. Christ reconciled us back to

God. God's attitude to men was love and never anything else. It was God who began the whole process of salvation. It was because God so loved the world that He sent His Son. There was one objective in sending His Son into this world, and that was to reconcile all things back to Himself.

How was the process started? The means of reconciliation was in the blood of Jesus Christ. The dynamic reconciliation was the death of Jesus Christ. What did Paul mean when he said in Romans 8:32, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" In the death of Jesus, God was saying to us, "I love you enough to see My Son suffer and die for you." The Cross is proof that there is no length to which the love of God will refuse to go in order to win men's hearts. A love like that demands an answering love. If the Cross will not awaken love in men's hearts, nothing will.

Ephesians 2:14-17 says: "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh."

### **Everlasting Righteousness**

What else happened in the seventieth week? God granted everlasting righteousness. What is a grant? It is a gift. We did not earn it. It was not by our good works, but rather it was a gift. It was a grant given to us by God. We did not deserve it, but it was granted to us. We can serve God right among our enemies, and we do it without fear. We do not have to be separated from the

world to live for God. We do not have to live in a monastery somewhere. We can go out and work and do business with the world. We can buy and sell and yet not be tainted by the world.

Second Corinthians 5:21 says, "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Titus 2:11-12 reads: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." Romans 6:13 states, "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." He will bring in everlasting righteousness.

### **Sealing the Vision and the Prophecy**

What else was going to happen? Christ was going to seal up the vision and the prophecy. Jesus Christ sealed Old Testament prophecy, and He did it when He fulfilled it and by the shedding of His blood on the Cross in direct fulfillment to Old Testament prophecy. He sealed it with His blood. In the vision, the prophecies pointed to Jesus Christ. Everything the prophets spoke of was fulfilled. The prophets never spoke beyond the seventieth week.

Hebrews 1:1-2 says: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds."

Matthew 17:1-5 reads: "And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold,

there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."

### **The Most Holy One Is Anointed**

What else was going to happen? The most Holy was going to be anointed. He was talking about Jesus Christ. Luke 1:35 reads, "And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Luke 4:33-34 says: "And in the synagogue there was a man, which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice, Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God." Jesus Christ is the apex of holiness.

Acts 10:34-35 says this: "Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: [He received a truth that he did not have before. He thought God was a respecter of persons. The reason God sent him down to Cornelius' house to the Gentiles was that he thought only the literal Jews were God's people. When God lowered the sheet to him when he fell into a trance, he learned a valuable lesson. God picked the most prejudiced Jew of all the Apostles and sent him down to Cornelius' house. He was filled with prejudice, but how God worked with him! He even stayed at the house of Simon the tanner. The Jews were not supposed to have anything to do with anyone who handled dead animals in any way.

In essence, Peter said, 'I have received a truth and I found that God is no respecter of persons.'] But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."

It does not make any difference whether one is a Gentile, a Samaritan, a Sadducee, or a Pharisee, if he works righteousness, he is accepted. Today it makes no difference whether you were born on the wrong side of the tracks, so to speak. God is no respecter of persons. If you work righteousness and do what is right, you are going to be accepted of God.

Verses 36-38 continue: "The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:) That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him."

### Confirming the Covenant

There is another confirmation that God had of the new dispensation and in the seventieth week. Our Scripture text in verse 27 says, "And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week [the word *midst* means 'in the middle,' or three and a half years] he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate." When Daniel said, "And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week." What does the word *confirm* mean? It means "to verify, to validate, to back up, to prove, or to substantiate."

Mark 16:20 reads, "And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen." In the midst of the week that follows the sixty-ninth week (the seventieth week), there

was a Cross, and Old Testament sacrifices came to an end. The start of the seventy weeks was B.C. 457 to A.D. 33, or 490 years, and Jesus had confirmed the covenant for three and a half years before he was cut off. We need to be thankful for the Cross. If it was not for Jesus dying on the Cross, where would we be? I trust that you can see how Daniel pinpointed the kingdom that we so wonderfully enjoy today.

Luke 17:20-21 reads: "And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you." Romans 14:17 states, "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." What a kingdom!

(Compact Disc TR-1063E)

## You Tell on Yourself

You tell on yourself by the friends you seek,  
By the very manner in which you speak,  
By the way you employ your leisure time,  
By the use you make of dollar and dime.

You tell what you are by the things you wear,  
By the spirit in which your burdens bear,  
By the kind of things at which you laugh,  
By the music you listen to on the radio.

You can tell what you are by the way you walk,  
By the things of which you delight to talk,  
By the manner in which you bear defeat,  
By so simple a thing as how you eat.

By the books you chose from the well-filled shelf,  
In these ways and more you tell on yourself;  
So there's really no particle of sense.  
In an effort to keep up a false pretense.

Selected

"These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren."

Proverbs 6:16-19



*Isaiah 12:1 And in that day thou shalt say, O LORD, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me.*

*2 Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the*

*LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation.*

*3 Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.*

*4 And in that day shall ye say, Praise the LORD, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people,*

*make mention that his name is exalted.*

*5 Sing unto the LORD; for he hath done excellent things: this is known in all the earth.*

*6 Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee.*

# The Lord's Expectation of You



*Brother Irwin Seshier*

## **Be Determined to Follow Christ**

I am glad that one day salvation came to my house, and it has been happy going ever since I have found Jesus. It is a completely different life when Christ is leading the way. The troubles will still be there, persecutions will come, and the trials will still be there; but we have Jesus Christ to turn to. We have One upon whom we can lean. As Christians, surely we all go through the trials that the world does, but the world does not have Jesus. We have One who hears us when we pray. We have One who wants us to go to Him in prayer to bring the very

things that we need to go to Him about.

I am thankful for salvation, and I am thankful for what it can do to a man, woman, boy, or girl. I am thankful for how salvation can change one's heart and life. With salvation you can see a change in men's and women's hearts and lives. That is the fruit of salvation. I thank God that a change takes place.

We are fighting an enemy that wants to rob our souls. The devil wants to take each of us down. He wants to take away the very things that we have gained ground on. He wants to cause us to back away, let down, and give in to him; but we

must not do that. The Lord has done so much for us. The Lord has fought our battles, so we do not want to fail Him. We expect God to save and to heal, but what does God expect from each of us?

In today's world an employer expects much from his or her employees. We are living in a society where cutbacks and layoffs are occurring every day. Therefore, the demands on the current employees often double. Every day millions and sometimes billions of dollars exchange hands in businesses. The Lord has something greater in store, something more than the wealth of this old world, something more than

land and houses.

As the people of God, we have to be willing to face the expectation of following Christ all the way. We must determine that no matter what comes our way, we are going to follow Christ. No matter what family says, no matter what this group says, no matter what that organization says, we are going to be led by the Spirit of God. God is not going to force anyone to serve Him. There has to be a willingness on our part. We are going to have to be determined to follow Christ. The Lord is not going to grab a person by the arm and say, "You had better serve Me." That is not how the Lord works. He hung on a Cross for you and me, suspended between earth and Heaven. I am thankful for the mercy of God and that He saw that I was a needy creature. I needed help in my soul.

Dear one, you must have a burning desire and a strong determination down in the very depths of your soul that you are going to serve the Lord. Do you want to go all the way with Christ? Do you want to follow the path that He followed before you, the persecution and the mockery? John 12:26 says, "If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour."

It is past time to get in line with the Word of God. You need to be obedient to the Word of God. The Word of God will not line up with you. It is time to get attitudes out of your heart. You should not think, "Oh, I'll do something about it later." Today is the day of salvation. It is time to measure to the Word of God and get in the center of God's will.

### **Time to Go God's Way**

Great expectations are on the horizon, but those expectations can falter or fall through if you do not get your mind on Christ. It is time to look at those expectations that the Lord wants you to see. Being able to know and understand what the

Lord has in store for you is worth more than this whole world. You cannot put a dollar amount on it. It is priceless to know that salvation is the dearest of all things on this side of eternity, but it is amazing that many people take it so lightly. They do not care about their salvation. I appreciate my salvation, and I cherish it highly.

It is great to have a good job, a good education, a nice home, a nice car, a good family, and money in the bank. However, what are all those things compared with an old-fashioned Holy Ghost, up-to-date salvation? You cannot put an expiration date on salvation. You have to keep it up to date all the time. Do not drift away from God.

Theodore Roosevelt once said, "A thorough knowledge of the Bible is worth more than a college education." That is true. You can gain all the knowledge in this old world and be the most intelligent person walking around; but if your heart is not right, what have you gained? Nothing! You could know all the ins and outs of business, accounting, and investments, but if your heart is not right with God, what have you gained?

What will a man give in exchange for his own soul? People have exchanged worldly habits, personal glory, drug addiction, gambling, prostitution, prestige, glamor, boyfriend or girlfriend relationships, and the frivolous things of this old world. People have done a lot of exchanging. Have they gained anything with God? No, not if they have not sought salvation. People are experimenting with things that they never thought they would experiment with. Why? Sin never truly satisfies.

Friend, it is time to go God's way instead of your way. Too many people are going their way, and where is it leading them? It is leading them to death and destruction. You are fighting a battle that you will never win if you think that you can go your way and prosper spiritually without God. You cannot

prosper spiritually without Jesus Christ in your heart and life. He has to be the center of your affections, the center of everything that you base your life around. He has to be the apex of everything in your life.

### **Modern Religion**

Modern religion has made it so convenient for people to go to hell. Someone once made this statement, and it bears repeating, "Modern religion is sending more people to hell than the barrooms, the drug addiction, and the prostitution rings." Why? Modern religion makes it convenient for people to slide into hell without seeing their true condition.

The Gospel will let you see your true condition. I thank God for the Truth! The Gospel will let you see where you stand with God. Church is not just a convenient place for you to go and shake somebody's hand and say, "I'll see you next week," and you are off on your own. When you go to the house of God, you should know that you have heard from God and that you have been with the people of God. I am thankful for a place to go to church where God is.

Modern religion has made it so convenient for people to think they are right with God when they are not. In modern religion, there is really nothing for an individual to give up. They think they can still hold on to worldly things and yet make Heaven their home. I am thankful that when I sought genuine salvation, I wanted to give up worldly things. If you get sick of the way you are living, you will be willing to say, "I want to do whatever You want me to do, Lord, and I want to give up whatever You tell me to give up."

Modern religion does not look at it that way. It says: "You can hold on to this, possess that, go here or there, dress this way or that way. We don't want to inconvenience you and cause you to change into something according to the Bible dress stan-

dard." Salvation will cause you to dress right, live right, and talk right. Salvation makes your talk clean. You do not talk the filthy way you used to talk. You will no longer visit the filthy barrooms you used to go to. You will not keep company with the old crowd. You will give up those things because you want to give them up.

If you truly get saved, you will not wring your hands and say: "What about my friends? What about this or that?" Let God take care of those things. I am thankful that I was willing to give up all to walk with God. That is where the hangup is for many people. They say, "I would serve God, but I want this." You have to have Jesus Christ and let Him take care of all those other things. You must let Christ take control of your life. The enemy will say, "Well, what about this situation?" or "You can't give that up." The devil is a liar. With Jesus Christ all things are possible!

Jesus Christ has the authority and the power to raise the dead. Do you not think He could take care of your little problem? If He could heal the blind man, do you not think He could take care of your situation? If He could heal the lame man, do you not think He could take care of you?

When I went to an altar of prayer to get saved, I was sick and tired of the way I was living, and I was more than glad to give up whatever I needed to so that I could get my heart right and get my life straightened out. There was something about the saints of God that I wanted.

### **God's Law of Sowing and Reaping**

It is past time to do what the Lord expects you to do in your life. It is time to get deeply rooted in the things of God. Yes, there is pleasure in sin. If there was no pleasure, people would not be drawn to it and held in its clutches; but friend, there is also something deceiving and destructive about sin. There is a reaping that comes after the sowing.

Do not think you can go out and sow your wild oats without reaping somewhere down the line.

There are consequences for chasing after sin's pleasures. Hosea 8:7 says, "For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind: it hath no stalk: the bud shall yield no meal: if so be it yield, the strangers shall swallow it up." There is a danger in sowing wild oats. Why? You will reap what you have sown. You do not know where you have sown because you have sown to the wind. Do not think, "Well, nothing is going to happen." Those oats are going to sprout. Something could come along that you really do not want to know anything about.

Sometimes people think the Lord will forget the things they did in sin. Well, the Lord can forgive their sins, but people still reap what they really do not want to think about. Some people may say, "Oh, don't bother them; they are just sowing their wild oats." Those oats are going to grow somewhere, and those oats are going to grow even more than they really want to see them grow. Those wild oats that they have sown are going to be harvested one of these days. They will reap things down the road of life that they really do not want to face.

The mercy of salvation is that God will forgive you of the sins that you have committed, but there are things that you still are going to have to face. Thank God, you can have God on your side to help you with those situations. He will never leave you alone. He will not say, "Well, you did it, and you are on your own." You can lean upon Him to help you through every trial, even though you once went against the mercies of God. He will still be there.

I am thankful that mercy walked in, saw my need, saw exactly where I was, and saw exactly where I was headed. God forgave me, saved me, and removed my sins as far as the east is from the west. That is the Father I am talking about! That is the wonderful Savior I want to

introduce you to.

There might be things down the road of life that you do not want to face. When your health is gone, you will wish that you had never smoked a cigarette. The Lord will bring to your mind the very memory of the first time you took a drag on a cigarette and nearly gagged yourself to death. That was the Lord trying to tell you not to do it, but you overstepped the mercies of God and went on and did it anyway.

The Lord will bring that back to your memory, and you will think, "I wish I had never even seen a cigarette" or "I wish I had never stolen that money from my mother's pocketbook to go buy cigarettes." That will come back to your memory as you are lying there and your body is wracked with pain. You could be facing financial ruin because of trying to supply sinful habits. Sometimes people spend nearly their entire paycheck on cigarettes, alcohol, and gasoline.

I approached a young woman at the gas station once and said: "I just don't see how people do it. How can they afford the price of gasoline and cigarettes and beer?" She said, "Well, that's the reason I don't drive." At least she gave me an honest answer. She was more willing to spend her money on cigarettes and alcohol. One day people will think back to all the bad investing that they did because of worldly habits and think about what they could have had.

Friend, you might want to forget about the reaping, but God does not forget. The Lord's memory of what you did twenty, thirty, forty, or even fifty years ago is as keen and as sharp as if it happened a second ago. You cannot hide anything from God. If you profess to be a child of God, God knows if you run down the pastor. You cannot run down a brother or a sister and expect to prosper with God, no matter how long you have been going to church or how many Books of the Bible you can quote. If you run down a brother or a sister or one in authority, you

are not going to prosper with God. The Lord knows.

### **The Results of Having a Shallow Experience With God**

Friend, it is time to come clean and get things straightened out with God. There is too much shallow worship going on today. Shallow worship will lead to a shallow experience. As I said earlier, it is time to get rooted and grounded. That way you will not be overwhelmed with all the trials that come your way. The Lord despises shallow worship.

If your expectation level starts to wane, you might not appreciate what the Lord has so richly blessed you with. When your expectation level starts to wane, often it is replaced with a spirit of murmuring and complaining. Child of God, you must be careful not to murmur and complain. Why? The Lord could take away the things that He has so richly blessed you with. Have you read about the children of Israel? They had a habit of murmuring and complaining, and the Lord did not overlook it.

Deuteronomy 28:15-21 reads: "But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee: Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field. Cursed shall be thy basket and thy store. Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. Cursed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and cursed shalt thou be when thou goest out. The LORD shall send upon thee cursing, vexation, and rebuke, in all that thou settest thine hand unto for to do, until thou be destroyed, and until thou perish quickly; because of the wickedness of thy doings, whereby thou hast forsaken me. The LORD shall make the pestilence cleave unto thee, until he have con-

sumed thee from off the land, whither thou goest to possess it."

This is an example of what happens when people turn away from God and His mercies. The people were cursed. I would not want to be in a position where God cursed anything I did. It makes sense to follow God and to be in the center of His will. The Lord is the same yesterday, today, and forever. God does not change. God does not say, "I will do it for this person, but I won't do it for that person." God is no respecter of persons. He is going to treat all people the same way. There are no big I's and little you's in the true Church of God.

What is your expectation level when it comes to the standard of God's Word? Worldly fashions come and go, but the Word of God remains the same. Hemlines go up and down, but the Word of God remains the same. Hollywood does this and that, but the Word of God remains the same. You do not have to go out and spend a lot of money this month and then next month spend more money to change with the fashions. The Word of God is as straight as an arrow. You need to line up with the Word of God concerning how you ought to dress. A true child of God does not waver and does not question the Bible standard.

When the Lord says, "You shouldn't do that" or "You should not put that on," you should say, "Thank You, Lord; I'll obey You." Why? A child of God wants to please God. You are not here to please man. Worldly fashions come and go, but a true child of God is not taken in by ever-changing fashions. You dress right because you want to live right. Why? You are a representative of the Church of God. When people see you out in public, they know that you are a child of God. You will not let down the standard in one place and then pick it up some place else. You should be Church of God from head to toe.

When the message comes across the pulpit about the standard, some

people fail to obey it. They fail to measure to it, and they wonder why they have so much anxiety and strife in their lives. They are disobedient to the Word of God. Sometimes people say, "Well, that doesn't apply to me." The Word of God applies to everyone.

### **God's Way Is the Best Way**

When your expectation level is high on the things of God, the man of God cannot preach it too close for you. You want it close. You have nothing to hide. You do not sit and stew about it and think, "Well, that is just his opinion." No, it is the Word of God, and it is sent through the messenger of God. If you fight the message of God, you are looking in God's face and saying, "I don't want it, God!" You had better be careful. Your expectation level will go to rock bottom.

When your expectation level is high and the man of God is preaching it just as close as he can preach it, the child of God is like a little bird in a nest wanting more and more of the Word of God. The child of God says: "You can't give me enough of it. I want more of it. I want to live right so that I can make Heaven my home." You are going to thank the Lord one of these days that a man of God stood up and told you the truth. Wishy-washy, modern-day preachers are causing people to lose their souls. The desire of a true child of God is: "Show me more, Lord. I am going to measure to what You show me. Give me more Truth!"

Friend, the devil wants to rob you of your high expectation levels. He is trying to zap you of all the spiritual strength you have. It is going to take all the strength you have to keep what you have. I am not going to give in to the devil and allow him to take the things that the Lord has blessed me with. The devil wants us to be at odds against one another. He is out to destroy every one of us. It is time to awaken to that. It is time to rebuke that old spirit in the name of Jesus. Away

with this old spirit that wants to come in to hinder, to rob, and to divide God's people. We are to show the world a better way to live, but they will not see it if the devil gets his way.

Today some people would rather sit and listen to an old dried-up preacher talk about everything from politics to the weather, but you dare not mention salvation. I am thankful that we have a place where the Spirit of God still dwells, where the people of God want to come and get their souls fed. Friend, salvation makes you free and keeps you free. Thank the Lord, I am no longer in bondage to the devil. I am thankful for what God has done.

How is your expectation level? I do not want to go back down to Egypt's bondage, so to speak. When I fled Egypt (or sin), I did not look back to the things I left behind. The devil will come around and say: "Look what you are missing. Look what you gave up." I say: "Devil, you are a liar. You were a liar from the beginning. You have nothing to offer me. You can't give me anything. Jesus Christ gave me eternal life. Match that, Devil!" The Word of God says if I am faithful to the end, I am going to have a home in Heaven. The devil has nothing to compare with that.

I have never seen such a time when people cower so easily to the enemy. The enemy has nothing to offer you but heartaches, depression, and discouragement. Many people allow him to perch on their shoulders and listen to what he has to say. He has nothing to say but a lot of worthless words.

### **What Is Holding You Back From Serving God?**

Salvation keeps you free. Someone once said, "Either the Bible will keep you away from sin or sin will keep you away from the Bible." I am thankful that the Lord has done excellent things. In the Old Testament of the Bible, you can read about what He did for Noah, Joseph,

Daniel, the three Hebrew boys, and David. In the New Testament you can read about what He did for Paul and Silas and many others. He is no respecter of persons. He did those things for those people because their expectation levels were extremely high. They expected God to do those things for them. Why? Because they were in the center of God's will and they did what God instructed them to do.

Are you doing what is expected of you when it comes to your service to God? Only you can answer that question. You must have a burning desire and a true commitment down deep. It must be deeply rooted and settled. Friend, it is not too late to have the determination and the dedication to do something about it. Someone once wrote: "*Courage* is the strength or choice to begin a change. *Determination* is the persistence to continue in that change." Do not allow little things in your life to hinder you and cause you to give up on God. The time is going to come in your life when you are going to need God more than ever. What other people say should not stop you from serving God. You need to go on with the Lord regardless of what people say, think, or do.

Sinner friend, what is holding you back from serving the Lord? Is it the lust of the flesh, the pride of life, worldly habits, or worldly entertainment? Nothing in this old world can satisfy like Jesus. You may say, "I've heard that all my life." Well, it is true! Nothing satisfies like Jesus. It is wonderful to know that you can pillow your head at night and know that your sins have been forgiven.

You need to raise the bar on your expectation level of serving the Lord. Athletes who train for the Olympics give up their entire lives to spend their time practicing and training seven days a week, 365 days a year, just hoping to go to the Olympics. Remember that does not insure the opportunity to go. A person could train all those hours and not even be selected to go. When a high jumper does that high jump and clears the bar, he probably thinks, "I have accomplished a feat, but I know I can do better. I can jump higher." What about your service to Christ? Do you think you could do a little more? Do you think you could put forth more effort? Do you think that you could push a little harder?

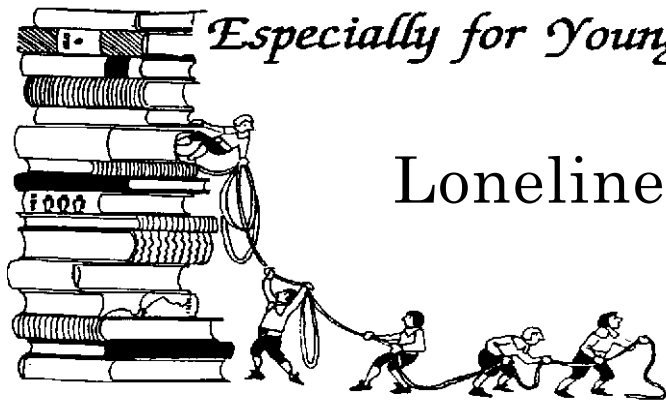
Your soul and the souls of others are at stake. I am talking about eternity. We want to see more people saved and able to experience the joy and the happiness and the peace that comes from being free from sin and having Jesus in their hearts and lives. If you are not serving the Lord with a clean, pure heart, it is going to be as Hebrews 9:14 states, "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" If you are not serving the Lord with a clean heart, it is nothing but dead works. It is time to be alive in Christ. What is your expectation level? What does God see as your expectation level of Him?

*(Compact Disc TR-292E)*

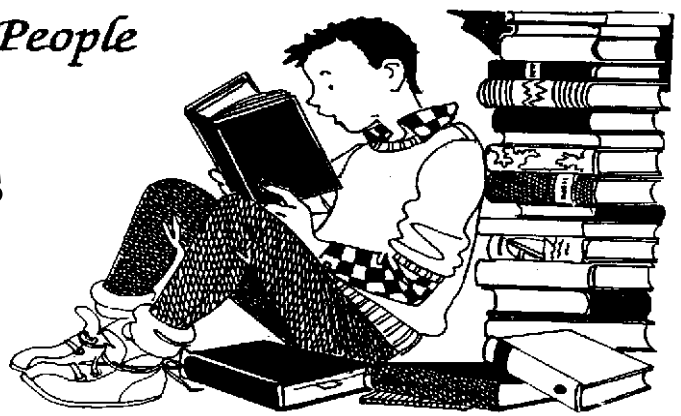
"Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, Provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest."

Proverbs 6:6-8

*Especially for Young People*



## Loneliness



Loneliness is . . .

I watched you tonight. I wished for an opportunity to talk with you. I watched your beautiful face as you sang and worshiped. You reminded me of myself seven years ago. And then, after church I watched you as you got into that car with a boy who does not know God. Oh, yes, he was at church tonight. He even went to the altar and shed a few tears. I am sure that you would not accept the idea that, for him, this is just a means to an end.

Seven years ago I was in your shoes. I had known God since my early teens and had grown up under God's anointed preaching and teaching. I did not lack boyfriends, or dates, as is so often the case with Christian girls in churches where the girls outnumber the boys. Some wonderful, consecrated young men came my way. However, Satan, who watches diligently and waits patiently to ensnare a soul, saw me one day as I was lukewarm. Oh, I was still going to church and playing my accordion and singing and doing all the right things outwardly, but I had never really had that special moment with God when His will and mine were made one.

I met a young man at work, and before long, without anyone else knowing it, I felt I could not live without him. He knew about genuine Christianity, and when he went to church with me, he went to the altar and cried; so I married him, while my family and those who loved me wept and agonized.

It was just six months later that

I realized my soul was in danger and that I had to have a touch from God. I prayed through and got a grip on God, and then the battle began. No, he was not going to church anymore. I could count on my fingers the number of times he went during the last seven years. Before I married him, the thought of living alone without him was unbearable. How lonely it would be! I thought, but now I know what loneliness really is, and I'd like to tell you about it.

Loneliness is receiving a blessing from God and going home to a man you cannot share it with. He is not interested. He is watching television.

Loneliness is going to church services alone and watching the young couples enjoy God's blessings together. You can go alone or stay home alone. He has other interests.

Loneliness is feeling the urgency of Christ's coming and knowing that the one you love most on earth is not ready and shows no sign of caring.

Loneliness is seeing two children born and knowing that if your influence is to outnumber his, it will be a miracle.

Loneliness is going to camp meeting and seeing young couples everywhere who are truly one and dedicated to God's work. And there goes that young man who loved you once and wanted to marry you. He is preaching the Gospel now, and he has never married. God help me. I must not think of it.

Loneliness is lying awake, struggling with suspicion that he is

unfaithful. Then comes the unbelievable pain of knowing for sure. He does not care if I know. She even calls me on the phone. After a time, he makes an effort to break it off. I vow to do everything humanly possible to keep the marriage together. I will love him more and pray for him more. Seven years of my life are involved in this! There is a little boy and a little girl.

Loneliness is now! My children and I will go home to a dark, empty apartment that will be my home until the lawyer says it is all over. I, who have always been afraid to be alone, now welcome the peace and solitude.

As I look in the mirror, I see that seven years have not changed my face so much, but inside I am old, and something that was once alive and beautiful is now dead. Of course, this is not an unusual story. The remarkable thing about it is that I am still living for God. I am thankful for my family and their prayers and intercession for me.

Oh, I am praying for you, Christian girl! Please believe me when I tell you that no matter how wonderful he is, how loving, how tender — you cannot build a happy life upon disobedience to God's Word. You see, no matter what the future holds for me, I have missed His perfect will for my life. I will never stop paying for breaking a commandment of God! Don't let it happen to you!

Selected

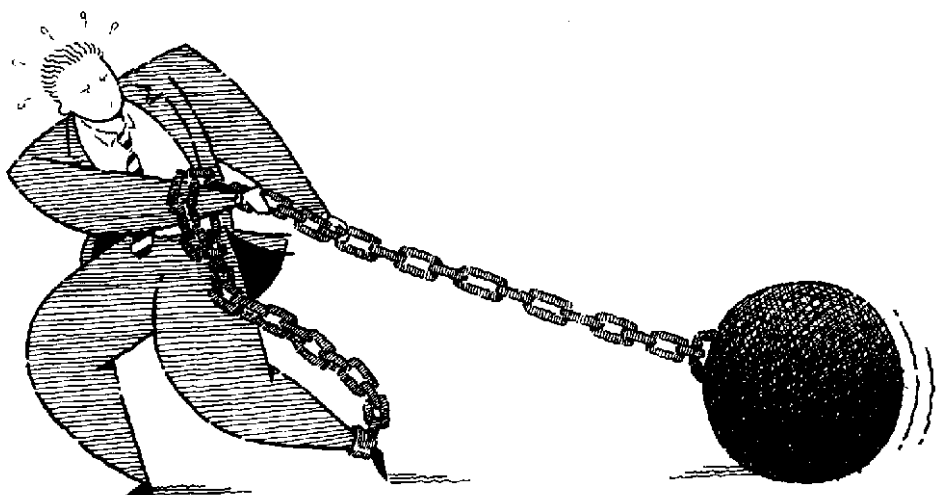
*Genesis 3:6 And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she*

*took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.*

*7 And the eyes of them both were*

*opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.*

# SIN



*Brother Mike Wilks*

## **Missing the Mark**

This Scripture records the first account of sin in the world. We go from the wonderful account of the Creation, of God speaking the world into existence, to the first sin being committed. Unfortunately this is our heritage. Mankind has a problem, and it is called sin. Sin is a transgression of the divine or moral law committed consciously. The Greek explains sin as missing the mark or failing in duty.

God created Adam and Eve pure before Him. They were in the garden having daily communion with Him, but the devil was work-

ing to cause them to sin. Right in the midst of that paradise, the devil started a conversation with Eve.

The devil wants to get you in a conversation with him. He is going to work no matter where you are or what your situation is. It might be in the early hours of the night, but he is going to work on you. You can be assured of that. You know that while he is talking, he is selling sin.

God told Adam and Eve not to eat of one particular tree; that was the commandment. Sin comes to life the moment you transgress what God says; that is sin. While the devil was talking to Eve in the garden, he was selling her all the benefits of

disobeying God. If I want to sell something and I begin by telling someone something negative about a product, I am not going to make that sale. The devil will tell you all the good things about sin, but he is not going to tell you about the consequences. However, God is faithful to every soul and tells the consequences.

Romans 7:7-9 reads: "What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, [In other words, sin was using this command-

ment. When you know something is wrong, the enemy will try to make you wonder what it would be like to do it. If a mother tells a child not to get into the cookie jar, there may be a fascination to it. He knows that he is not supposed to get in there, but he likes what is in there.] wrought in me all manner of concupiscence [which is lust]. For without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came [when he realized that he was a sinner], sin revived, and I died."

Paul was a Hebrew of the Hebrews and of the stock of Benjamin. He grew up around their religious culture. So this nonsense that this was his life as a saved man makes no sense. He knew the Law. What was Paul talking about? He was speaking of the time prior to his conversion.

Matthew 7:26 reads, "And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand." Proverbs 15:29 says, "The LORD is far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous." Once you lose God's will and power, you fall into your own way. Friend, falling into your own way will get you into trouble. I tried my way for thirty years, and I made a mess. I wanted to do right, but without God I had no power.

Sin will knock you out. You will wake up one day and say: "What has happened to me? I have to do better. I have to turn over a new leaf, so to speak." What a foolish statement! The devil laughs when you say you are going to turn over a new leaf. He has heard that for thousands of years. Many people who want to turn over a new leaf know there is no such thing. It takes salvation.

### **Lacking God's Power**

Sin is powerful, and when you face it, you want to do your best to avoid it, but on your own you know

that you will be defeated. Before I was saved, in my mind, I watched this scene too many times. My will was there to do better, but there was no power to perform. The power to perform is with God. There is no other way in Heaven or earth to make Heaven your home without the salvation of Jesus Christ.

All these false religions and false prophets are deceiving people and leading them away from the way of life and from living right. When you get down to it, living right is all that matters. God simply wants you to live right. He does not ask you to do anything that is out of character. He does not ask you to do something that you cannot perform. All He asks you to do is to live right.

God is faithful to your soul. Friend, as long as He sees that your heart is right, He will work with you and help you. God is faithful, and He can see your heart. As long as you have a will to do right, Jesus Christ will come to your rescue. He will help you every single time. Your will is the faculty for deciding what you will do.

When you lose God, you lose your capacity to serve God. The will is a powerful thing. There are people who do unbelievable things with the human will. You can accomplish lots of things if you really want to. If you want to do this or that, the will is powerful, but without God in that will, it is useless. You cannot defeat the devil in your own power, and you never will. You will never figure him out, and you will never figure out a better way than God's way, because He is your Creator. He is the potter, and you are the clay. God is still in control.

No man can say to God, "What doest thou?" You can question Him all day long, but it is not going to change anything. He is going to do exactly what He wants to do. When you operate according to your own will, you are in trouble.

It is recorded in the Old Testament how Samson played around with a woman, and this woman was not of his kindred or of his faith, and

that is where he got into trouble. Young person, if you want to get yourself into trouble, go out and find worldly girlfriends or boyfriends. One day that young man or young woman is going to become older and that beauty that you are so taken by (if that is the only thing that you are looking at) is going to grow old. If that person is contentious, your life will be miserable. If you find a man that becomes a drunk, or an alcoholic, he will make your life a living hell.

I met an affluent couple, and his wife was an attractive lady. After that, I saw the husband alone another day, and he began to talk to me. He got really serious and said, "You know, people always ask me what would I do if my wife died, who I would marry." I could tell by listening to him that he was not happy, because she was not a good wife to him. He said, "All I hear is, 'Wow! You are so lucky to be married to her,' and I get so sick of hearing it." I could tell there was contention in that home. He said if he had to do it all over again, he would have married someone else.

Dear one, it is very important whom you marry. I have a wonderful godly wife. If we were fussing and fighting all the time, it would be very difficult to study for a message. I do not like contention at work, and I do not want contention in my home. It will consume you. God will bring peace to the godly home.

We read about Samson in Judges 16:17-18: "That he told her all his heart, and said unto her, There hath not come a razor upon mine head; for I have been a Nazarite unto God from my mother's womb: if I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man [when you sin, you become like any other man; there is no distinction]. And when Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called for the lords of the Philistines, saying, Come up this once, for he hath showed me all his heart. Then the lords of the Philistines came up



unto her, and brought money in their hand."

This is an account of Samson telling the secret of his strength, and it cost him dearly. It cost him his connection to God. Christian friend, you, too, can lose that connection. When the "Philistines" appear and you are without God, what are you going to do? Samson said, "I will go out as at other times before and shake myself. And he wist not that the LORD was departed from him" (verse 20b). He did not realize it until he was defeated. Every time you try to face the devil without God, you are going to lose the battle. You cannot solve your problem unless you have the power of God working in your life.

### **Power to Stop Sinning**

I want to drive this point home: when the Philistines show up in your life and begin to afflict you, to whom are you going to turn? Are you going to shake yourself? Have you ever heard the expression, "You and what army?" You and what army are going to take on the forces of evil in your life? It must be God Almighty. Sin does not get any better. As you get older, does your body get better? Does your car get better with age?

Once you start down the road of sin, you are on a slippery slope, and you have no idea where it is going to lead you. No doubt, you have noticed the mile-markers along the highways. Suppose you were to say, "I am going to stop at this mile-marker, and I am not going to go any farther." Friend, whether you want to stop or not, sin is going to take you down to the next mile-marker, and to the next one, and so on. Before you know it, you are going to be in a foreign land, feeding with the pigs and wondering how you ever got in that shape. You did not have the power in your life to stop. You kept passing those mile-markers. The only good life is with God.

God's saints are pillars and

anchors in the Church of God. They are stable. They do not hopscotch around, get angry, get wrong attitudes, and leave a congregation. If people did this in the work place, can you imagine how large the turnover would be? The turnover in the retail industry is bad enough, but can you imagine what would happen if every time somebody got up a miff tree they would change jobs? God, in His infinite mercy, is going to let you do exactly what you want to do. He wants to see whether or not you really love Him.

When you get into situations where someone rubs you the wrong way, you need to call on God to help you. When you work for God, you have to rub shoulders with others, and they may rub you the wrong way. The beauty of the Church of God is that it holds people together. Why? Because we love our Savior.

Jesus Christ hung on the Cross after He had been severely beaten. He was treated cruelly. Matthew 27:46 tells us that when Jesus hung on the Cross, He cried with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Do you believe that Jesus hung on the Cross so that you could go out and live your own way and yet make a profession of salvation? Do you mean that Christ went through the worst agony of His life so that you can go out and sin? Friend, if you are not reading the Word of God, you are missing the instructions for life.

### **The Wickedness of Man**

Ananias and Sapphira sold a property and brought a portion of the money to the Apostles, but they held back some, yet they said they gave it all. They wanted to appear righteous. Peter said in Acts 5:3, "Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost. . . ?" Ananias dropped dead right there. He sinned against light. If you sin against light, your communion with God will be bro-

ken. God will not fellowship sin; He cannot. He turned His back on His Son because He was taking on the sins of the whole world. God would not even look at the sin. It is the same way with us. God will not look at sin. You must have a sin-free heart that is perfect toward Him.

You are either standing on the Rock or you are lodged in the sand. The storms of life are going to come sweeping your way one day, and either you are going to hold your ground through Christ or you are going to get swept away. Once you get swept away, you have no idea where you will end up.

I love this verse in Proverbs 30:26, which says, "The conies [they are extinct now, but they were little four-footed beasts] are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks." It is impossible to stay with God while in the world. Friend, you cannot do it. Genesis 6:5 says, "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." If your thoughts are evil continually, the Bible calls you wicked, and you need to seek the Lord. You are not going to get better; you are only going to get worse.

I work in the cell phone industry, and it is amazing the filth that is on some people's phones. This is what many people have on their cell phones, and if there is that much filth on their phones, how much more is in their minds?

Wicked thoughts and actions are happening all across our country. Why is it? Because there is more access to filth than ever before. A young man who is fifteen years of age and is playing around with pornography cannot handle that. Friend, no one can. If you open your mind to the devil, he will start bringing nasty, filthy things into your life. You have no idea how far he will lead you down that road of destruction.

Genesis 19:13 says, "For we will destroy this place, because the cry of

them is waxen great before the face of the LORD; and the LORD hath sent us to destroy it." The Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 6:19, "I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness." The Amplified Bible states, "I am speaking in familiar human terms, because of your natural limitations. For as you yielded your bodily members [and faculties] as servants to impurity and ever increasing lawlessness."

Ever increasing lawlessness is like starting a little snowball, and by the time it gets to the bottom of a hill, it is huge. Look at yourself and you will say, "How can I ever get out of this mess?" There is only one way that you can stay pure and clean before God. Second Corinthians 4:16 says, "Yet the inward man is renewed day by day." This is what the world cannot understand. The world cannot see God pumping that renewing oil mentioned in the book entitled "Pilgrim's Progress." When the devil is throwing water on the fire in your soul, Jesus Christ is behind the wall pumping oil into the fire. Can people see that fire in your life? Do they wonder how you can live this way? The secret is God. Salvation will cause a man who does not care about God, who has never known Him, and who wants to go his own way to repent, and in the twinkling of an eye, get up from an altar of prayer a different man.

### **Becoming a Vessel of Honor**

There is no greater story in this world than to hear about the power of God working in a person's life. No matter how far down the road of sin you have gone or how down-and-out you are, when you repent, God will transform you. He can make you a vessel unto honor, and you will walk uprightly. You can go to work for God and say, "This is my new life, and I am not ashamed of

the way that I live." When I look at my co-workers, I can see that they are searching, but they just keep living this sinful life day in and day out. There is something so much better, and it is found in Jesus.

If you are in an airport, and you see a sign where they are selling cheap tickets, you would probably check it out and inquire, "Why are the tickets so cheap?"

Suppose they say, "We only do maintenance on our planes once a month to save money."

Would you get on one of their flights? Of course not! You want a plane that is maintained daily. If I am going up in the air, I want that plane to be working properly. It is the same way spiritually. Without daily maintenance on your soul, you are going to get yourself into trouble. The inward man must be worked on day by day. You are not going to go up in a plane that only gets maintenance once a month. You are not going to walk with God if you are not maintaining your experience day by day. It is not going to happen.

If you were to search the Bible from cover to cover, you would never find an instance of sin getting better; it only gets worse. In God's kingdom and in the devil's kingdom, both God and the devil are looking for workers. Two forces are working in this world, and they both are looking for laborers. God desperately needs people to stand up and work for Him, because the devil is seemingly prospering. God needs people to stand up for Him and do His Work.

There is always plenty to do. First Peter 5:8 says, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." The devil is seeking you, friend, and he wants you to have a conversation with him. All you have to do to work for him is nothing. You can live in pleasure and do what you want for a while, but he is not going to tell you what is at the end of your life. The end is death,

spiritual death, and separation from God forever. These things are serious. May God help you to take heed to these things. I am talking about where you are going to spend your eternity.

### **God Has a Better Way**

Second Chronicles 16:9a tells us, "For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him." God's Word has a satisfaction guarantee on it. When someone comes in the store where I work, and I want to find out if the customer is just talking or if he is serious, I tell him he can try the product for thirty days, and if he does not like it, he can return it. I say that the product works, and I can guarantee it. God's Word is also guaranteed to work, and it will never fail; it will never lose its power. Heaven and earth will pass away, but God's Word will never pass away. I am thankful for His Word.

You may ask, "What are the wages of sin?" Romans 6:23 tells us, "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." The world is so steeped in sin. Many young people in the shopping malls talk filthy because they do not know any better. It is not their fault that they have not been raised godly. There is a tattoo parlor next to the store where I work, and it is scary what you see. Some people come out of there tattooed from head to toe, and usually there are little children with them. I always think, "What chance do those little children have?" They see their mom and dad tattooed and doing who knows what at home. It is no wonder that we have so many problems in society. Their children have no proper training. If you have been raised in the Church of God, you are blessed. If you have a knowledge of God, know who He is, and know how to get to Him, you are blessed.

False religion will tell you lies.

Do you know what false religion is? It is merely lip service to God. God will not fit in your lips, but He will fit in your heart. False preachers seldom mean anything they say, because they are preaching for the money. There is money in religion. All you have to do is look and see how some of them live. A true man of God does not care about worldly things. He wants to see souls saved. He wants to see people get help and live right.

The world has accepted sin, and it is not something to marvel at. You may ask: "How can a minister want to do wrong to me? He carries a Bible, he is dressed nice, he says nice things, so how do I know? Doesn't he have my best interest at heart?" Let us read it from the Bible. Second Corinthians 11:13-15 reads: "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works." How is your living? That is all that

really matters. I will never be kept out of Heaven for using improper grammar, but I would be turned away if my life was not right.

I could come up to the judgment bar with many college degrees and speak Greek and Hebrew, but if I have sin in my heart, I would be turned away from Heaven's door. Serving God is all about living right. God gives His creation a choice. To reject the remedy of the Lord Jesus is to reject your only hope. You have no hope without Jesus Christ and faith in the Gospel. This journey to God can be a long one. For me it was a long journey. It is essential to seek the Lord with your whole heart. When God sees that you are tired of living your way and you want to live a better life, that is when God is going to come really close to you. That is when He is going to start drawing you to Him and opening your eyes of understanding. He is going to open your eyes to the things of God and to what is required of you.

If you are a sinner, you are carrying a death sentence upon your soul. As the Gospel goes forward, God is saying, "Come to Me, and I

will give you a pardon." You can take this death sentence and hand it to Him, and He will exchange it for life everlasting. If God calls you, He is giving you a chance. Unless God has mercy on you, you could be lost forever. Friend, do not play around with your soul.

Child of God, you should be thankful for the Truth, thankful for what God has done for you, and thankful for the power to live a holy life. There is no greater mystery than to live above sin. The world says you cannot do it. The Bible says you are to walk as Christ walked. He did not live a sinful life. You are to walk as He walked, and you can live above sin.

I flourished when I found the Truth. God saw the intent of my heart, and He has blessed me ever since. I am thankful for the Church of God. Sinner friend, God wants to save you and give you the best life you can ever imagine. There are things that God will do for you that you cannot do for yourself. I would not trade Him for anything in the whole world.

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[Guest Editorial—continued from page 2] was not interested in receiving *The Gospel Trumpeter*. Dear one, we do not want to refuse any soul from receiving this paper, but we do feel that God expects us to be wise as to where and to whom we send it. Unfortunately, some people are neither concerned about spiritual things nor interested enough in their own soul's eternal welfare to read this religious periodical. Endeavoring to send the paper to that one may only aggravate him or her and cause the Gospel to be evil spoken of.

Many honest hearts out there are seeking and searching for the good news of the Gospel. There are individuals who are asking for the old paths and are looking for the good way so they can walk in the Truth.

You can be assured that they are out there. It is going to take the Spirit of God to lead someone to where they are.

Allow me to remind you that this is a united effort. We all are workers together with the Lord for the purpose of winning souls to Christ. Please do not ever feel that your efforts or help is unneeded, unnecessary, or insignificant. Many hands are needed to accomplish the task, along with much prayer. May God guide and direct those who are financially able to support this work in this financially unstable time in which we live.

When this life is finished and the rewards are given, each one will be grateful to have had a part in winning men and women to Christ and

to His true church. Our desire and intention is for this publication to be a means to "proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to them that are bound" (Isaiah 61:1), to cry aloud, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city" (Revelation 14:8). Also, it is to see the people of God, "stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God" (Revelation 15:2).

If you are not all ready carrying a burden for this work of publishing the good news, we sincerely ask you to join us now. Your efforts will be greatly appreciated! Again, we say, "A special thanks to you."

The Staff

John 9:1 And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth.

2 And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?

3 Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.

4 I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.

5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

6 When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay,

7 And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.

8 The neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged?

9 Some said, This is he: others said, He is like him: but he said, I am he.

10 Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened?

11 He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight.

12 Then said they unto him, Where is he? He said, I know not.

13 They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind.

14 And it was the sabbath day

when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes.

15 Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see.

16 Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them.

17 They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? He said, He is a prophet.

18 But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight.

19 And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see?

20 His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind:

21 But by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself.

22 These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue.

23 Therefore said his parents, He is of age; ask him.

24 Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner.

25 He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.

26 Then said they to him again, What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes?

27 He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? will ye also be his disciples?

28 Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples.

29 We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is.

30 The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes.

31 Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth.

32 Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind.

33 If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.

34 They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out.

35 Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God?

36 He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?

37 And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee.

38 And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.



# Why Do Bad Things Happen to Good People?

*Brother Larry Dishman*

## **One of Satan's Devices**

I believe that we all at some time have had bad things happen to us. That is when the devil attacks us. He will say, "Now, if you were really a man of God, if you were really a Christian, or if you were a sister who was really following the Lord, these bad things would not be happening to you." The Bible tells us we should not be ignorant of Satan's devices. When Satan harasses you about bad things, that is another one of his devices. I bring this message to try to encourage your heart.

Why do bad things happen to good people? When we boil it down, what I really want to ask is, why does God let bad things happen to good people? We certainly know that God has promised in His Word

in Hebrews 13:5, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." That is a promise in God's Word. The question is not a new one. The disciples, while walking with Jesus, came upon a man who had been blind from birth, and their assumption was, this man's blindness was the result of sin. It must have been that either the young man sinned or his parents sinned.

Before we consider our main question, we need to explore a couple of thoughts. Good things should happen to good people and bad things should happen to bad people. That is what many people think. They think that if a person lives a bad life, bad things should follow that individual. Often people have the tendency to believe that if they are living a life of holiness and righ-

teousness, then only good things will follow. Therefore, we need to explore these two assumptions to see if they are really supported by the Word of God. The Bible says in Job 14:1, "Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble." He did not say sinners are born this way, but I believe that man in general, both saved and lost, is full of trouble. The Word of God tells us that Joseph was a good man, but bad things happened to him.

There are good people in this world. Paul acknowledged this in Romans 5:7, saying, "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die." We must also consider the flip side to our question. Why do good things happen to bad people? Certainly, that is

something that we should think about. In Psalm 73:3 the Bible says, "For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked." This is what the wicked are like. They seem to be carefree and increasing in wealth. In verse 12 the Psalmist went on to say, "Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches."

### **Faithful People Suffer Untold Difficulties**

When we are having a hard time and bad things are happening, if we are not careful, we will look at someone out in sin and wonder how could this be? Why should it be this way? It might be someone who has left the church and seemingly is prospering.

It is always frustrating to notice that there are wicked people who are getting rich and seem to be without a care in this world. It is clear from reading the Scriptures that it is not at all uncommon for bad things to happen to good people. We often focus on the blessings that we have in Christ and ignore the suffering that may be involved in serving Him. We would simply like to disregard any teaching that mentions hardships. However, a close reading of the Bible, especially the Book of Hebrews, Chapter 11, reveals that godly, faithful people suffered untold difficulties. All through the Bible, in both the Old and the New Testaments, good people, righteous people, godly people suffered some bad things. You may not believe this, but sooner or later, we all will have a reason to ask the question: "Why me, Lord? Why me?"

When bad things happen, it is amazing how prone we are to say, "Why me?" Have you ever noticed that when God is pouring out the blessings, we never say, "Why me?" We never think about that. Every person who lives long enough will eventually encounter circumstances that are difficult to explain. Cancer,

sudden infant death, divorce, rape, loneliness, rejection, or a million other things can cause us to question sometimes, "Why did that have to happen to me?"

One of the most hurtful things is divorce. It is so hurtful, especially when children are involved. As one man who went through it explained to me, death is different because when your companion dies, over time God heals your broken heart. However, in a divorce with children involved, every week you have to face the problem because of visitation rights. It becomes very hurtful.

Everybody who comes to church has a story that includes pain and suffering. However, some come to church smiling great big smiles. I believe that many times behind those smiles there are pain and difficulties. There are heartaches and many unanswered questions. Though they may put a smile on their faces, down deep there are some unanswered questions. It is not that they are unhappy. I believe God's people *are* happy, but I have to tell you, no one gets a free ride through life. Into each life some rain must fall; no one lives in the sunshine forever. There is a cross for each of us to carry. Your heartache and your problem may not be mine, but we each have a cross.

### **God's Grace Is Sufficient**

I like the story that I read one time about a man who was talking to the Lord. It felt as though his cross was more than he could bear; it was just too heavy. He asked the Lord: "Is there any way that I could trade crosses? I cannot bear this cross anymore." The Lord said, "Yes, sir." Then He invited him into a room and said, "Just lay your cross down right there." This was a large room, and it was filled with all kinds of crosses. The Lord said, "Just pick up any one of these crosses that you want." So the man searched through all the crosses, and when he got finished, he picked up the one he had laid down. The Lord said,

"That is the very one that you carried in here." You see, God gives a person grace for the cross that he carries, and His grace is sufficient.

In the Book of Job, we can read of how Job had a beautiful life. God had really blessed him with lots of sheep, many children, much land, and lots of money. Indeed, he had a wonderful life. Job was also a man of prayer. He gave offerings as he was supposed to do. Then all of a sudden one day, in just a short time, Job lost everything.

Job had three friends who showed up to try to comfort and help him. Some comfort they were! Basically, they tried to tell Job: "You must have sinned somewhere, Job. You have done something wrong. Nothing like this has ever happened to us. So we will tell you what you need to do, Job. You need to search your life really well, so that you can see where you failed God. Then you need to repent and get right with the Lord." Job was a good man, but some bad things happened to him.

First and foremost, there are certain laws of nature that have been in existence since the beginning of time. The earth has always had hurricanes, tornados, floods, earthquakes, fires, and drought. Every time one of these things happens, it does not always mean that it is God's judgment. We are living in a world where things happen. In our society, we understand these things. We understand that when it thunders, it is not the sound of angels bowling over in Heaven. When we have rain, it is not because God is crying. When we have earthquakes, it is not because God is stomping His feet. When we have tornados, it is not because God is turning His finger and making funnels. Hurricanes do not start because God sneezed.

There are natural events which are part of nature and have been around since the creation of the earth. When we finally reach Heaven, we will discover that God Himself was with us every step of the way. We will stand in His pres-

ence redeemed and glorified, and every trace of this decaying world will be left behind. The sufferings of this life will be but a dim memory, fading into the mist of forgotten yesterdays. Until then, since we cannot see the face of our God, let us trust under the shadow of His Almighty wings.

While the Apostle Paul was serving the Lord in Asia, he related some things that he experienced there. I want you to notice the sufferings that he listed, and remember these are things that happened to him while he was faithfully obeying God's commands. Once again we ask this question: Why do bad things happen to God's people and to good people?

Was Paul a good man? Was Paul not a man of God? He said in 2 Corinthians 11:23-28: "Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches."

Bad things happened to the Apostle Paul, but it was not because he sinned or failed God. We need to remind the devil of these things. The next time something bad happens in your life and the devil attacks you, saying, "You cannot be right with God; you cannot be saved," You need to remind him of the beloved Apostle Paul. What a good man Paul was, but bad things happened to him! Therefore, we know it is not

uncommon for bad things to happen to good people.

### **God's Natural Laws**

With these thoughts in mind, there are ten reasons why Christians suffer. There are probably more than that, no doubt, but I want to share ten with you. First, it is the common lot of all. Bad things happen to everyone, both good and bad. The simple truth is, according to the Word of God, it rains on everybody. Matthew 5:45 reads, "That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." As I said before, there are natural laws that control much of our existence. These laws are for everybody, not just for the good people or for the bad people. Jesus said it rains on the just and the unjust.

Gravity is a fact. The earth orbiting the sun is a fact. Free will is a fact. If God were to change any of these, it would be the end of the universe as we know it. If a child were to fall out of a ten-story building, there is a law of gravity, whether the parents were Christians or sinners. It is amazing how when a child falls because somebody forgot to close the window or shut the door, people say, "Look what God did." God gets so much blame for things that are just a part of His natural laws.

If a little child falls into a pool of water and cannot swim, whether the parents were saved or lost, if the child was under the water long enough, that child is going to die. That is one of God's laws. So many times when things happen, people get frustrated at God. I am thinking now of a young man and his wife who had a child that was deformed. Someone was talking to the young man about the Lord, but do you know what he said? "Well, the Lord sure did a good job on my little son, did He not?" The fact of the matter is, the mother and father had been

using strong drugs, which were probably the cause of the child having those problems. However, God received the blame. I am not trying to say that God is not all powerful. God is all powerful, but we must realize, as thinking people, that God simply does not change the basic principles that He Himself has put into motion from the beginning of time. God put those laws in motion. They have always been in motion, and they always will be.

Sometimes bad things happen to good people because of the sins of others. The people in John, Chapter 9, came to Jesus and wanted to know who caused this blindness. The people asked Jesus if the man was born blind because of his own sin or the sin of his parents. That was not only an unkind question but also a foolish question. I want you to think about how foolish it was. How could someone sin before he was born? He was born blind, and they asked a foolish question.

Sometimes parents do cause their children suffering. We are aware of the countless babies in our country who are born addicted to drugs or who are born infected with sexually transmitted diseases. They suffer because of the sins of their parents. Yes, sometimes good people suffer because of someone else's sins.

### **Closer Fellowship Through Suffering**

Jesus, the sinless Son of God, was not only good but also perfect. He did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth, but He was crucified by wicked men. Acts 2:32 says, "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses." Bad things happen to good people because of other men's sins.

It is possible that something bad could happen because of one's own sin. There is a possibility that you could yield to temptation. It is possible for a Christian to sin or we would not read in the Word of God about an advocate. That proves it is

possible that a person could be overcome, and should that happen, God may allow something to bring that person to his knees. First Corinthians 11:30 says, "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep."

Why do bad things happen to good people? To keep us from sinning, God desires a close relationship with us, and sin will always come between us and God. Sometimes God allows suffering to keep us close to His side and close to His heart. The Psalmist said in Psalm 119:67, "Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word." First Peter 4:1-2 says: "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God."

Why do bad things happen to good people? One reason is to bring us to prayer. Saint, it is easy to become slack in your prayer life when everything is going smoothly. How many of us pray more when something bad happens? Times of crisis and times of suffering nearly always bring us to our knees. When we have exhausted human resources and abilities, we turn to God. God desires our prayers and longs for us to come to Him for help. James 5:13 reads, "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms." Hebrews 4:16 says, "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

Sometimes bad things happen to good people to draw us into a closer fellowship with Jesus Christ. This is an incredible thought. This is not how we want to become closer to Jesus. However, Paul knew there would be a closer fellowship through suffering that would allow him to know Christ better. He said in Philippians 3:10, "That I may know him, and the power of his

resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death." He also wrote in 2 Corinthians 12:9, "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."

### **Being a Blessing to Others**

Why do bad things happen to good people? It could be so that we might be a blessing to someone else. God knows what you are made of. God knows you, and He knows He can use you to be a blessing to someone else. In 2 Corinthians 1:1-4 we read: "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia: Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."

God comforts us, thank God, but one of the reasons He comforts us is so that we might be able to comfort other people who are going through hard places. Most of us know someone who is going through a hard place. No doubt, you have visited others to encourage them, and you left encouraged; they encouraged you.

Why do bad things happen to good people? It could be so that we might share His throne. The Bible tells us there is a special reward for God's saints who suffer. While this is not something that any of us desire, it is a promise that God will keep not only in this life but also in eternity. Notice it says in the last verse that our afflictions do not seem light to us while we are going

through them, but God wants us to know that when we do receive His reward, our affliction will seem light and momentary.

We read in 2 Timothy 2:12, "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us." Yes, "our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Corinthians 4:17). If you could put all the difficulties of your life on one side of the scale and all the glory that will someday be revealed to you on the other side of the scale, the glory would be so much heavier. The present sufferings would be blown away as a feather.

While we are going through the sufferings of this life, they seem terrible. However, according to the Word of God, they are not even worthy of comparing to the greatness of the glory that will be revealed to us. If you would realize that God has an incomparably greater reward for you than what you are going through right now, it would revolutionize the way you look at your problems.

Why do bad things happen to good people? Sometimes they happen to manifest His wonderful works. Go back for a moment to our Scripture text in the Book of John. Those asking the question assumed someone had to have sinned to cause this suffering. Jesus answered them by saying, "Neither this man was blind because of his sins, nor because of his parent's sins." The Bible reminds us that God's thoughts are not our thoughts. We do not always have the answer to what God is doing. We are sure that it is either this or that, but God has a plan in mind. We may not understand that plan for many years. We may not even understand that plan until we get to Heaven. Jesus' answer reveals that God's plan in the blind man's life was for the works of God to be manifested for the glory of God.



## God Intervenes

I would like to share a few things that I went through in my life when we started evangelizing. I am relating these stories to give God the glory. I remember one particular time when we were on the way to a meeting. We were driving down the road pulling a travel trailer somewhere around Atlanta, Georgia, when someone went around us honking his horn. I looked through the rear view mirror and smoke was everywhere. It looked like the trailer was on fire. I pulled over to the side of the road as quickly as possible and found that the springs on the trailer had broken and the dual tires were rubbing together. That rubber was causing all that smoke.

We were members of the American Auto Association (AAA), so we called them about 6:00 o'clock. At 12:00 o'clock, we were still waiting. There we were, with all our children by the side of the road with lots of traffic. The devil went to work on my mind and said, "Now, if God really wanted you to preach these revivals, why do you think this happened? Don't you think that God is trying to tell you something, like maybe you are not supposed to be out holding revivals and preaching the Word of God?"

While I was thinking about that, my wife said, "Honey, don't you think if God wanted us to hold revivals, we would not have problems like this?" The devil was telling her the same thing.

About 12:00 o'clock, AAA called us. They said: "We're sorry, but we have tried to find someone within a seventy-mile radius of where you are, and we cannot find anybody that can pull a 31-foot trailer and a van. If you can find somebody to do it, we will reimburse you." If they could not find anybody, how was I going to find somebody? So I called the police and said I was stuck on the side of the road and needed some help.

The police told me they knew somebody who might be able to

help me. They sent a guy out who knew exactly what to do. He crawled underneath my trailer and jacked those axles apart, and then lodged a piece of wood in between. He said, "Now you follow me." I followed him out in the country to a deserted-looking junkyard. We slept there that night in my travel trailer at the junkyard.

The devil was working on my mind all the time, saying, "How are you going to get to the revival?" I had owned that travel trailer long enough to know that no one was going to have any parts. I knew those parts were not at the local store. They would have to be shipped to us from Indiana where they make those things. I thought, "What in the world are we going to do?" The next morning when the guy came and saw my situation, he said: "I think I have one of those parts back here. We ordered one the other day." It was just the right size for my trailer. You can say it was a bad thing, but things like that increase your faith. God worked a miracle; everybody knew it was amazing how God worked that out.

We started with a 1977 Class C motor home. When you buy old motor homes that have been sitting around, everything in the world will go wrong with them. We had so many problems. The motor home was small, but ten of us traveled around and held revivals in that vehicle. Later we found a 1979 Class A motor home and traveled in it. Just before we left for Pennsylvania to attend a revival, I had the carburetor rebuilt. Well, the mechanic left something out, and it was taking us forever to get to the revival. We finally called the pastor and told him that we were not going to make it on time.

When we finally arrived, I went down the wrong road at the campground. I got to the end of the road, and there was a gate, but it was locked. The people who owned the campground had gone home with the key. Not only did I have a motor home, but I was also pulling a little

trailer behind it. I could not see to back up, and we were going the wrong way, and it was a winding road. I was stuck. Then a thought came to my mind to try the key that fit the back of my trailer in the lock on the gate. Lo and behold, it opened the lock. Once again, God worked a miracle.

Bad things happened to us, but it was for a reason. We had traveled many miles, and one day as we were getting ready to leave and had the camper all loaded, we took all the children out to the van. I looked at the trailer, and it was almost sitting on the ground. I looked underneath the trailer, and while it sat in my driveway, underneath where the hitch was bolted, it ripped off all the way down. That means all those miles we traveled this was happening, but God did not let it fall until I got in my driveway. It was a bad thing, but I give God the praise that He waited until we got home.

Another time, I was in North Carolina in revival, and I was in a tight place. When I backed up our 31-foot trailer, it made a noise that sounded like a shotgun going off. I thought, "What has happened now?" I looked all over, but I could not find anything wrong.

From there, we went to Indiana, and then on to Missouri to hold meetings. We traveled for weeks, and when we got home, I pulled into my driveway, but did not back in my camper like I normally did. The next morning, I went out to back up my trailer, and as soon as I put it into reverse, the whole trailer fell to the ground. The hitch had broken completely in two, right beyond the ball. We had traveled all those miles, went up all those mountains, around all those curves, and God waited until we got into the driveway again. God is a good God. Bad things happen to good people sometimes, but it is for a reason.

### **"Bear Well All the Lord's Will"**

We continued to hold revivals, and even though we experienced

difficult situations, God always worked it out. During those times that seemed hard, God was good. It was worth it all to see the altars lined up with sinners praying through to victory. God is a good God, but He allows bad things to happen to good people.

There were ten of us. We had eight children in the home, and sometimes it was tight financially. Sometimes we had just enough money to get to the next revival. I found that all ten of us could drink water and eat biscuits and gravy at Cracker Barrel restaurant for approximately seventeen dollars. That was a good deal. I said to the children, "I am sorry, but we are all going to have to eat biscuits and gravy and drink water." I did not order something different for myself. We all did it, but God blessed us. He never forsook me.

There were some things that happened, and I still do not know why, but I am going to understand it better by-and-by. Perhaps all the sufferings are permitted that the work of God may be manifested in your afflictions, by your holy patience. Charles Spurgeon said, ". . . by your holy patience, your submission to the divine will, your persevering holiness amid all your poverty and trials. All this is

sent that God's grace may be seen in you. Will you look at your afflictions in that light and believe that they are not sent as a punishment, but as a platform upon which God may stand and display His free grace in you? Bear well all the Lord's will, for your trials are sent for this purpose, that God's works may be manifested in you."

Do you understand what Charles Spurgeon said? Your afflictions are not sent as punishment. Often we think, "God sent this trial, this affliction, this problem to punish me." However, he said they are not sent as punishment but as a platform upon which God may stand and display His free grace to you. The blind beggar in our Scripture text became a great testimony for the Lord Jesus Christ. When you read that entire chapter, that man's testimony was amazing, because he said: "There is one thing that I know. I was blind, but now I see."

Last, but not least, why do bad things happen to good people? They happen for the glory of God. The Bible says in John 11:4, "When Jesus heard this concerning Lazarus, he said this sickness is not unto death but for the glory of God that the Son of God might be glorified thereby." In other words, this sickness is not going to end in death. No, it was for

God's glory, that the Son of God may be glorified through it.

It is all right, my friend, to have the thought come to your mind, "Why did this happen?" However, you need to remember these ten things. As in the lives of Christ and Paul, if God does not remove the suffering, then your response should be to know that He is with you and that the suffering that He has for you is an eternal weight of glory. My favorite poem reminds us that regardless of our current circumstances and how it appears that things are out of control, God has never left us, and He will never leave us. Psalm 121:1-2 reads: "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth."

Maybe there are some things in your past or some bad things are going on right now that you feel God has allowed to come your way. I like the song that tells us: "*I don't understand the reason for this trial.*" Many times we do not understand the reason for our trials, but one thing that we can do is hold on to His hand.

(Compact Disc TR-1234)

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## MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

**MOSS POINT, MS**  
March 23-30

**FELLOWSHIP MEETING:** Pine Grove Church of God, 11629 Highway 614, Moss Point, Mississippi 39562. (The church is located 18 miles west of I-65 Mobile, Alabama, on Airport Blvd., which turns into Highway 614). *Pilgrim's Progress* by Sis Karen Wilks. Inspirational singing and preaching. We welcome everyone. Service times: Sundays 10:00 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.; Monday-Wednesday 7:00 p.m.; Thursday-Saturday 10:30 a.m. & 7:00 p.m.

**Lodging Closest to the Church (ask for Church of God Fellowship Meeting rates):**

**Rodeway Inn & Suites**, 5635 Tillman's Corner Parkway, Mobile, AL 36619. Phone: 251-660-9101. Free Continental Breakfast. Room Rates: \$56.99 nightly (incl. tax); 2 beds 7 nights, \$319.13 (incl. tax); 2 beds 5 nights \$227.95 (incl. tax). Ask for Lacinda or Peggy.

**Hampton Inn & Suites**, 525 Providence Park Dr. E., Mobile, Alabama 36695. Complimentary hot breakfast bar included. Phone 251-776-5866 (Airport Shuttle included) Room Rate: \$109.00.

For more information contact: Pastor Larry Dishman, 11629 Highway 614, Moss Point, MS 39562 Telephone: (Home) 228-588-6288; (Cell) 251-776-2100

# 2014 Camp Meeting Dates

*June 15-22*

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